

Alliance Rail Industry Consultation Responses

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From: @gwr.com

Sent: Friday, January 31, 2025 4:24 PM

To: @networkrail.co.uk

Subject: Re: Industry Consultation – Alliance Rail Southern, Section 17 Application, Marchwood-Southampton Central/London Waterloo

Hello

Many thanks for this.

The proposed route crosses our main Cardiff - Portsmouth service at Southampton.

Whilst we have no material abstraction concern, we do have concern re congestion at and through Southampton.

1: GWR did some work recently on our Portsmouth service, for the Solent Connectivity strategic work. The outputs showed that we lose a lot of performance around the Southampton area (in both directions), and on investigating the timetable, it was found the timetable planning rules were sound including sectional running times, so the implication is that it's outside factors creating the problem. Because of this we do not wish a further performance risk in the Southampton area;

2: Without detailed times it is difficult to know if it affects us directly or not. We believe the pinch point will be Southampton tunnel, where extra trains could put it nearer to capacity;

3: The latest work by Network Rail on strategic advice has shown that if additional services are operated between Portsmouth and Southampton the GWR Portsmouth service will have to leave Portsmouth eight minutes earlier than now each hour yet wait outside Southampton to regain its current path there as congestion at the station is so acute.

I should be very grateful if you would help arrange for these points to be considered please.

Many thanks.

Network Access Manager | Great Western Railway

1 Milford Street | Swindon | SN1 1HL

First Greater Western Limited | Registered in England and Wales number 05113733

Registered office: Milford House, 1 Milford Street, Swindon SN1 1HL

Network Access Manager

GWR

8 April 2025

Dear

Alliance Rail application Marchwood – Southampton & London Waterloo

Thank you for your response to our application and I apologise for the delay in responding.

I note your concern regarding potential impacts on services and we are continuing to work with Network Rail on developing a compliant timetable. As we have done previously, we would look to work with all operators and Network Rail to ensure that minimal impact is made on services.

Regards

Managing Director

GRAND UNION TRAINS LIMITED

Riverside Lodge, Fulford, YORK, YO19 4RB

Registered Office: Audby Grange, Audby Lane, Wetherby, LS22 7RD

A Company registered in England & Wales No: 16133808

www.granduniontrains.com

From: @gtrailway.com

Sent on: Friday, January 31, 2025 4:20:36 PM

To: @networkrail.co.uk; @granduniontrains.com

Subject: RE: Industry Consultation – Alliance Rail Southern, Section 17 Application, Marchwood-Southampton Central/London Waterloo

Good evening

With regards to the above titled industry consultation, GTR has the following comments and observations:

GTR has a concern regarding one of our services: 1N BTN - SOU has a x2 20 min turnaround and effectively blocks a platform for 40 mins each hour + re-occupation bringing that closer to almost 50 minutes. GTR would not want any GTR services shunted out to the either of the loops at Southampton for the simple reason of:

- Not all Southern drivers sign the loops
- If a driver has worked all the way from BTN or Barnham, having the option to use facilities is very much welcomed now following feedback vice the old 6 minutes turnaround in previous timetables.
- Once services go into the loop, they don't always come back out on-time if other services are running late.

GTR also note the following:

- Ever since the timetable change where Southampton services operate now as BTN to SOU (not from VIC) the service appears to be running much better
- Any cancellations seem to be related to infrastructure faults
- Any Delay at the station to GTR services appears to be accepted as Dispatch conflict, with means if more services are added this could increase if Staffing numbers stay the same
- There is permissive working (platform sharing) in place at this location. And in the route guides there are some noted risks but this is an old document so this may have changed
- Depending on the time of the new service going in, regulation could be an issue as our SOU services have tight turnaround times so any delays going into SOU will mostly likely carry over onto the next working.

Kind regards

Track Access Contract Manager

Track Access Contract Manager

GTR

8 April 2025

Dear

Alliance Rail application Marchwood – Southampton & London Waterloo

Thank you for your response to our application and I apologise for the delay in responding.

I note your concern regarding one of your services and thank you for the accompanying notes concerning other matters. We would look to work with all operators and Network Rail to ensure that minimal impact is made on services.

In the meantime, we continue to work with Network Rail on developing and delivering a compliant timetable.

Regards

Managing Director

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A Company registered in England & Wales No: 16133808

www.granduniontrains.com

From: @swrailway.com

Sent on: Friday, January 24, 2025 3:47:09 PM

To: @granduniontrains.com; @networkrail.co.uk

Subject: RE: Industry Consultation – Alliance Rail Southern, Section 17 Application, Marchwood-Southampton Central/London Waterloo

Hi

Thanks for sending this over. Please note – [name] has retired hence the response from me. As soon as we fill [the] role – I will ensure the associated distribution lists are updated. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to contact me.

As requested, our response is detailed below:

1. Until March 2020 South Western Railway (SWR) operated three trains per hour between London Waterloo and Southampton. This was reduced to two trains per hour following the pandemic.
2. Across our network leisure journeys recovery is 120%, for Southampton (Central and Parkway) it's 131%; so the growth we've generated on this route outstrips our network growth, and we want to build on what we've achieved for the benefit of both our customers and the Secretary of State, whose objective is to reduce the taxpayer subsidy paid to the industry.
3. At the start of 2024 SWR started a project to assess whether a timetable re-cast could improve the balance between reducing net subsidy, improving operational performance and meeting customer needs.
4. A standard hour timetable for the South Western Main Line has been developed as part of that project which includes the reinstatement of the third train an hour between London Waterloo and Southampton, and then to Bournemouth. The re-cast will increase our overall mileage by approximately 8%.
5. As part of our Annual Business Plan submission sent to the Department for Transport on 2nd December we included a costed option to undertake this timetable re-cast as a project with the aim of reducing our overall net subsidy.
6. Initial discussions have taken place with colleagues from Network Rail Southern Region and Wessex Route regarding this timetable re-cast.
7. SWR intend, subject to successful public consultation and recruitment of additional operational staff, to operate the new timetable as soon as possible.
8. SWR currently lease sufficient vehicles to increase the service in line with our re-cast. The implication of not being able to gain the access rights required to do so is that the vehicles currently leased will likely remain unused.
9. If successful the Applicant will abstract revenue from SWR leading to an increase in the net subsidy required to operate our contract, as opposed to our timetable re-cast

which is intended to lead to a reduction in net subsidy. We refer you to a letter from the Secretary of State for Transport to the Office of the Rail Regulator dated 6th January 2025 on this matter.

10. In July 2020 we operated a “fact-finding train” to demonstrate the potential of the Waterside Line to Marchwood and Fawley.
11. SWR have engaged positively in discussions about restoring a service on that route during that time.
12. Development plans for the Waterside Line under the auspices of the ‘Restore Your Railway’ Programme were unexpectedly ended as recently as September 2024.
13. Network Rail issued a Network Change to remove part of the Fawley Line from the Passenger Network in November 2024 which was subsequently withdrawn.
14. The proposal could have a negative impact on the overall performance of the network, particularly the rescue and recovery arrangements of the rolling stock.

Kind regards

Head of Industry Partnerships

South Western Railway

4th Floor

South Bank Central

30 Stamford Street

London SE1 9LQ

www.southwesternrailway.com

Head of Industry Partnerships
South Western Railway
4th Floor, South Bank Central
30 Stamford Street
London SE1 9LQ

8 April 2025

Dear

Alliance Rail application Marchwood – Southampton – London Waterloo

Please find below responses in red to the various points raised by SWR during the industry consultation and I apologise for the delay in responding.

1. Until March 2020 South Western Railway (SWR) operated three trains per hour between London Waterloo and Southampton. This was reduced to two trains per hour following the pandemic.

2. Across our network leisure journeys recovery is 120%, for Southampton (Central and Parkway) it's 131%; so the growth we've generated on this route outstrips our network growth, and we want to build on what we've achieved for the benefit of both our customers and the Secretary of State, whose objective is to reduce the taxpayer subsidy paid to the industry.

3. At the start of 2024 SWR started a project to assess whether a timetable recast could improve the balance between reducing net subsidy, improving operational performance and meeting customer needs.

In reply to points 1, 2 and 3, colleagues at First will be in a position to advise of the significant benefits and growth that follows the introduction of a modest amount of open access services onto a route which benefits all operators. In addition, the Alliance proposal will introduce new services to a freight only line, benefitting a part of the Southeast which is among the top 10% most deprived areas in England, performs very badly in economic terms, and which has significant issues with road congestion, which in turn impacts on public transport provision. The Alliance application will also provide significant benefits for Hook, with a much reduced journey time to London and also offer more direct services for Totton and Eastleigh.

4. A standard hour timetable for the South Western Main Line has been developed as part of that project which includes the reinstatement of the third train an hour between London Waterloo and Southampton, and then to Bournemouth. The re-cast will increase our overall mileage by approximately 8%.

As we have a live application for access, it is disappointing that we have not been included in any ongoing timetable development as has happened elsewhere on the network when open access services have been proposed.

However, we understand that no significant changes are planned for the next timetable on the route.

5. As part of our Annual Business Plan submission sent to the Department for Transport on 2nd December we included a costed option to undertake this timetable re-cast as a project with the aim of reducing our overall net subsidy. While we understand that no significant increase in services is planned at this time, we would point out that the arrival of a small number of open access services elsewhere has shown to significantly increase overall route revenue for the benefit of all operators. A look at the ECML shows that alongside a number of open access services, LNER has continued to grow its own market share and revenue, while at the same time reducing the need for Government funding support. Alliance also believes there is sufficient capacity on the route for introducing further services alongside the small number of paths sought for new services from Marchwood. The Alliance plans do not impinge on that SWR aspiration.

6. Initial discussions have taken place with colleagues from Network Rail Southern Region and Wessex Route regarding this timetable re-cast.

As previously mentioned, as Alliance has a live application for access, it is disappointing that we have not been included in any future route timetable development and would expect Network Rail to ensure this position is corrected and does not arise again.

7. SWR intend, subject to successful public consultation and recruitment of additional operational staff, to operate the new timetable as soon as possible. Alliance understands that no significant changes are planned for the next timetable on the route.

8. SWR currently lease sufficient vehicles to increase the service in line with our re-cast. The implication of not being able to gain the access rights required to do so is that the vehicles currently leased will likely remain unused. Alliance understands the issues around surplus rolling stock and believes there is sufficient capacity on the route for introducing further services alongside the small number of paths sought for its new services from Marchwood. Alliance also has access to sufficient and suitable rolling stock.

9. If successful the Applicant will abstract revenue from SWR leading to an increase in the net subsidy required to operate our contract, as opposed to our timetable re-cast which is intended to lead to a reduction in net subsidy. We refer you to a letter from the Secretary of State for Transport to the Office of the Rail Regulator dated 6th January 2025 on this matter.

As has consistently been shown by your other First Group companies which operate, and will in future, operate open access services, the arrival of limited competition stimulates the market and improves the financial performance of all operators.

As mentioned earlier, LNER, despite facing competition on a number of inter-city flows has continued to see its market and revenue increase alongside other operators. The ECML, the only route currently with open access competition, has seen its growth far outstrip other routes where no such competition exists.

The issue of 'abstraction', so often quoted when trying to defend a monopoly, is purely a modelled number based upon an industry model that has not kept up with the changing pace of passenger choice and habits. It is over 25 years since Hull Trains began operations, and no actual empirical evidence of

abstraction has ever been provided by those objecting to competition.

10. In July 2020 we operated a “fact-finding train” to demonstrate the potential of the Waterside Line to Marchwood and Fawley.

11. SWR have engaged positively in discussions about restoring a service on that route during that time.

12. Development plans for the Waterside Line under the auspices of the ‘Restore Your Railway’ Programme were unexpectedly ended as recently as September 2024.

There was strong support from the detailed Network Rail study for the reopening of the line towards Fawley. Following a spending review the Government decided the cost was unaffordable. The Grand Union proposal is to reintroduce services at the earliest opportunity, building on the outputs from the study, upgrading and utilising the track currently in use, then working alongside Network Rail to invest in re-opening the rest of the route beyond Marchwood towards Fawley.

The Grand Union proposal also goes beyond the study by creating a new workforce of around 80 people to deliver the service, and by using bi-mode trains as opposed to diesel. The strategic case within the study has shown the significant changes that will happen in the Waterside area with the return of a passenger railway.

Currently only the A326 offers access into and out of the area, with road congestion affecting the journey time for buses, currently the only public transport available. The ferry service between Hythe and Southampton has not operated since September 2024.

13. Network Rail issued a Network Change to remove part of the Fawley Line from the Passenger Network in November 2024 which was subsequently withdrawn. Alliance is aware of the notice, and a later notice, but will be requesting information from Network Rail about the CP7 settlement and whether the route’s maintenance was, for example, specifically precluded from that settlement.

14. The proposal could have a negative impact on the overall performance of the network, particularly the rescue and recovery arrangements of the rolling stock. It remains disappointing that new operators always face this same objection. If Alliance’s proposal for a very small number of additional services would have a negative impact on overall performance, then logically, the larger 8% increase in services mentioned by SWR would have an even greater negative impact!

In respect of recovery arrangements, if the application is approved, then we will agree with Network Rail a robust plan on any recovery requirements.

Regards

Managing Director

GRAND UNION TRAINS LIMITED

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A Company registered in England & Wales No: 16133808

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23rd January 2025

Dear

XCTL's response to Proposed Application under Section 17 between Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd and Alliance Rail Southern.

This letter constitutes XCTL's formal response. Unfortunately, we are unable to support this Section 17 Track Access Application at this current time. After reviewing your response to the concerns we raised, we do not believe the proposal you seek is viable due insufficient information and clarification with several issues.

Whilst we greatly appreciate the responses from Alliance Rail Southern with the clarification we required to make an informed decision, there is still work required on this application before we can support this.

Firstly, we are concerned that there are conflicts between the proposed timetable and CrossCountry's current operation. Specifically, we do not believe there is capacity to operate Alliance's proposed 1B56 (17.45 Marchwood - Waterloo) alongside CrossCountry's 1M70 (17.45 Bournemouth - Manchester Piccadilly) and Alliance's proposed 1B58 (19.45 Marchwood - Waterloo) alongside CrossCountry's 1M78 (19.45 Bournemouth - Birmingham New Street) in the Winchester area. Therefore, we would require visibility of further timetabling work to prove (or otherwise) that their services can be accommodated alongside current trains, including our services.

Furthermore, some of the points we asked are below, you can see from the responses that work is very much ongoing.

There is no platform detail provided particularly at Southampton Central. Are you able to provide any further detail on this (main concern was at Southampton Central).

Platforming has not yet been addressed although the 'shuttles' are expected to use Platform 5, acknowledging that some upgrade is required.

Is there enough power in the third rail? Has the SRTs in different traction types been addressed?

There are less services now (post Covid) than when we looked initially in 2017 and power supply was not a major issue then. We would not expect it therefore to be an issue, otherwise we would be looking at full diesel operation (different units) which would be less than ideal environmentally. I would have expected NR to raise the matter as soon as we submitted if it was expected to be a problem.

What could rescue a Class 769 in an emergency/stranded train situation?
That will be part of the delivery plan being discussed with Porterbrook.

What is the view of Network Rail advanced timetabling team?

See above.

Can you provide ECS times to/from Eastleigh Depot?

We haven't yet done the ECS times as we need to get the TT agreed first. While Eastleigh has sufficient capacity and is our plan at this moment, we are also in discussions with ABP regarding Marchwood itself as a home for the fleet.

What's behind the reason for a Section 17?

It's possible that NR may yet support the application, as referred to in the Form P. If that support is not forthcoming, then it will be a S17 which enable the ORR to be considering the other aspects of the application while we continue to discuss with NR.

Network Rail have also confirmed that this application hasn't been fully assessed and were unable to comment on power capability or timetabling. It was explained to me that Network Rail expect to have a better understanding of the application in February 2025 and any key risks should arise following the completion of their internal reviews, they would be noted within their representation to the ORR.

XCTL would like Network Rail/Alliance Rail Southern to resolve the issues within before we will be in a position to support this application.

Yours Sincerely

Track Access Manager

Track Access Manager
XCTL

8 April 2025

Dear

Alliance Rail application Marchwood – Southampton & London Waterloo

Thank you for your response to our application and I apologise for the delay in responding.

I note your concern regarding potential impact with a small number of your services, and timetabling work has been on-going to create a compliant timetable. We would look to work with all operators and Network Rail to ensure that minimal impact is made on services.

You initially asked a number of questions which we responded to earlier, and we hope that once a compliant table is in place, we will be in a position to address any outstanding matters.

Regards

Managing Director

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**19 Rowlands Close
Chandler's Ford
Hampshire
SO53 3PF**

Web: www.hampshirecommunityrail.co.uk

Alliance Rail (Southern)
Riverside Lodge
Naburn Lane
Fulford
York.
YO19 4RB

Dear

Proposed Open Access Rail Service – Waterside, Southampton

I write with regards the above project and the proposals from Alliance Rail (Southern) to run "Open Access" Rail passenger services to and from Marchwood on the Waterside (adjacent Southampton and the New Forest)-Southampton and onwards to/from London Waterloo.

Firstly, sincere thanks to you and your colleagues for highlighting these proposals. It is evident from recent rail reopenings, these new rail services will bring a positive impact to this area and to Businesses, Health & Education, Tourism and the local Community.

The Hampshire Community Rail Partnership has supported the reopening of this railway for many years. We have worked with local Businesses, Communities, Developers & land owners, those in Education and Health, together with Network Rail and Local Authorities together with Members of all Political Parties at Parish, District and County level.

As part of the recent "Restoring your Railway" consultation organised by Network Rail, we are aware that there was a positive response, with in excess of 2,500 persons in support of the project.

Furthermore, to garner additional support as part of the reopening proposals, the Partnership collated 82 letters of support from amongst Businesses & Business Groups (eg: Chamber of Commerce/Federation of Small Businesses), the local community, Education establishments, Universities, MPs, Parish, District and County Councillors, Local Authorities and the New Forest National Park.

The demand for greater accessibility and connectivity to and from the Waterside is consistently rising, creating even greater environmental pollution and congestion pressures, especially affecting road transport on the only road into and out of the Waterside, namely, the A326.. The reintroduction of rail passenger services to/from the Waterside and beyond, is a welcome opportunity to help address many of the current transport issues and potentially relieve the pressure on the parallel strategic and local road network.

The reopening of the Waterside Line is also an aspiration of Campaign for Better Transport (CBT) and many local residents. The existence of a freight only line, further development

proposals in the area and the relatively low cost of reinstatement make a strong case for reintroducing a passenger rail service.

The area is poorly served by public transport due to heavy traffic congestion on the A326, the only major road in and out of the Fawley Peninsular. This also grossly extends travel times for car users. The Peninsular contains some areas that are amongst the 20% most deprived wards in the country, but there is also significant potential for new housing and employment development, which a re-instated passenger railway would help unlock. This scheme is further driven through the unlocking of housing and development projects whilst delivering a strategic connection in the area.

The Partnership is currently a member of the Network Rail Capacity Study for the Solent Region and there is a demand for more local rail services serving the locality, together with the potential additional rail services linking further afield, connecting with inter-regional services and to/from Winchester-Basingstoke-Hook-London Waterloo.

The Alliance Rail (Southern) scheme fits nicely with that narrative and the Partnership wishes you all the very best with these endeavours.

If the Partnership can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Chair & Director – the Hampshire Community Rail Partnership

From: Consultations <Consultations@Londontravelwatch.org.uk>

Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 9:49 AM

To: @networkrail.co.uk; @granduniontrains.com

Subject: RE: Industry Consultation – Alliance Rail Southern, Section 17 Application, Marchwood-Southampton Central/London Waterloo

Dear

Thank you for your e-mail.

Having reviewed the documentation, London TravelWatch would ask whether there is sufficient capacity at Waterloo station and on the lines of the proposed route. Whilst we would welcome the additional proposed services, we would not wish this to be detrimental to existing services.

Regards

Policy and Advocacy Officer

London TravelWatch, Europoint, 5-11 Lavington Street, London, SE1 ONZ

From: @granduniontrains.com

Sent on: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 9:56:02 AM

To: Consultations@Londontravelwatch.org.uk; @networkrail.co.uk

Subject: Re: Industry Consultation – Alliance Rail Southern, Section 17 Application,
Marchwood-Southampton Central/London Waterloo

Hello [name], Happy New Year and thank you for your response.

In relation to capacity there are [now] a number of paths available as some services have been reduced post Covid. Our TT planner has looked to develop a workable timetable and we are now looking to work with colleagues at NR to ensure a final TT is fully compliant. Platforming at Waterloo and all stations enroute are part of that work. We will of course only be operating a service every 2 hours or so (the maximum number for an open access operator).

Regards

Alliance Rail

Riverside Lodge

Naburn Lane

Fulford

York

YO19 4RB

From: @transportfocus.org.uk

Sent: Monday, December 23, 2024 12:17 PM

To: @networkrail.co.uk

Subject: Re: Industry Consultation – Alliance Rail Southern, Section 17 Application, Marchwood-Southampton Central/London Waterloo

Hi

Thanks for this. We would support this application given the positive impact that open access operations have had on passenger satisfaction on the East Coast Main Line, as well as the additional benefits of new services between Southampton and Marchwood.

Best regards



Campaigning for better services over a bigger rail network

www.railfuture.org.uk www.railfuturescotland.org.uk www.railfuturewales.org.uk

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Bellevue Road, Clevedon, North Somerset, BS21 7NP

Chair, Railfuture Wessex Branch

Alliance Rail Riverside Lodge Naburn Lane Fulford York YO19 4RB

17th February 2025

Dear

Open Access Bid Waterside to Southampton to Waterloo

Railfuture is Britain's leading independent campaigner for a bigger and better railway.

Railfuture Wessex welcomes the submission that Alliance Rail (Southern) has made to introduce an hourly service between Marchwood and Southampton with some trains being extended to London Waterloo. We believe this branch line will show the same success as other reopened lines across the UK. This service should provide new journey opportunities notably from Marchwood, Eastleigh and Hook. We believe extending choice should attract rail passengers currently using other forms of transport or who no longer use trains due to extended connections and poor service. Consistent two plus two seating, luggage stacks and catering provision should attract new leisure and business passengers to rail. There will be a clear environmental benefit using the proposed bi mode trains.

Your sincerely

Railfuture

Chair, Wessex Branch

www.railfuture.org.uk www.railfuturescotland.org.uk www.railfuturewales.org.uk

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