

APPLICATION TO THE OFFICE OF RAIL AND ROAD FOR A PASSENGER TRACK ACCESS CONTRACT, OR AN AMENDMENT TO AN EXISTING CONTRACT

ORR ensures that train operating companies have fair access to the rail network and that best use is made of capacity. If a train operator wants to access the national railway network, it will need a track access agreement with Network Rail which requires ORR's approval under the Railways Act 1993. When determining access to the network, we must have regard to our [statutory duties](#), most of which are set out in section 4 of the Act. We must exercise our functions (which include the approval of access contracts) in a way that we consider best achieves those duties.

Use this form to apply to the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) for a passenger track access contract, or an amendment to an existing contract by a supplemental agreement, under sections 17-22A or the Railways Act 1993.

It sets out ORR's standard information requirements for considering applications. Our [track access guidance](#) (and our [making an application](#) guidance in particular) explains the process, timescales and the issues we will consider. Please read the guidance before completing the contract and this form.

If the facility owner and beneficiary have agreed terms, the facility owner should fill in the form. If not, the beneficiary should fill in the form.

A pre-application industry consultation is usually required before submitting an application. Please see the industry [code of practice for track access application consultations](#) for more information.

This form should be completed up to section 10 and sent to consultees along with a copy of the proposed contract or supplemental agreement. Sections 10 and 11 should be filled in after the consultation and before applying to ORR.

We are happy to talk to you informally before you apply. Please contact us [here](#). You can download a copy of this form, and of our model track access contract, from our [website](#). Please ensure that you are using the latest version of this form as published on our website. We may ask for applications which have not used the latest version to be resubmitted.

You may also use and adapt this form if necessary to apply to use railway facilities other than those of Network Rail. Do not use this form for HS1, for which a separate form is available on our [website](#).

1. Application Summary

1.1 Beneficiary company name:

Midland Central and Western Railway (MCWR)

1.2 Facility owner details:

Network Rail:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Region:	Southern <input type="checkbox"/>	Eastern <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	North West & Central <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Wales & Western <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Scotland's Railway <input type="checkbox"/>
Other Facility Owner:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Please state:			

1.3 Application under the Railways Act 1993 section:

17	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	18	<input type="checkbox"/>	22	<input type="checkbox"/>	22A	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Supplemental Number:			
				Current contract date:			
				Current contract expiry date:			

1.4 Applicant status:

Public Service Operator <input type="checkbox"/>	Public service contract start date:	
	Public service contract end date:	
	Name of funder (e.g. DfT, Local Authority):	
	Does the funder support this application?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Open Access <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Charter Operator <input type="checkbox"/>		

1.5 Executive summary of the proposed contract or amendment:

This application is for a 7-year operation of 8 Open Access Nottingham to Bristol services in each direction on Monday to Saturdays and 6 on Sundays, using the available and new East West Rail network capacity and Class 222 rolling stock (including first and standard class accommodation).

The train services shall call at Nottingham – East Midlands Parkway - Loughborough – Leicester - Kettering - Market Harborough - Bedford – Stewartby – Bletchley HL - Bicester Village - Oxford Parkway - Oxford - Swindon – Chippenham - Bath Spa - Bristol Temple Meads, and prospective new stations on the Marston Vale Line and at Wantage & Grove (Oxon) and Corsham (Wilts).

This will unlock wholly new direct 'cross-country' connectivity between the fast-growing communities of the East Midlands, Oxford-Cambridge Arc, Thames Valley and Bristol/West of England, and support several new stations, all swiftly expanding upon the new East West rail route's capability and supporting the government's fresh investment in the 'Oxford Cambridge Growth Corridor' announced by Rachel Reeves MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer on 29th January 2025.

Proposed commencement date:	December 2026
End date:	December 2033
Date approval or directions wanted by:	Earliest Opportunity

1.6 Industry consultation:

Who carried out the consultation?	Network Rail		
Consultation start date:		Consultation end date:	
Not carried out <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

1.7 Applicant details

Facility Owner Company: Network Rail Contact name: Gianmaria Cutrupi Job title: Aspirant Open Access Operators Manager Address: Waterloo General Office, SE1 8SW Phone: XXXXXXXXXX E-mail: XXXXXXXXXX	Company: MCWR Contact name: Ian Walters Job title: Managing Director Address: 4 Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2JB Phone: XXXXXXXXXX E-mail: XXXXXXXXXX
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1.7 Date of application to ORR:**10 February 2025****1.8 Checklist of documents attached to the application form:**

- Proposed new contract (S17 or S18) or supplemental agreement (S22 or S22A) ☒
- Marked up Schedule 5 (where applicable) ☐
- Marked up comparison to model contract (where applicable) ☐
- All consultation correspondence ☐
- Supporting documentation required for competing services (see section 6.2) ☐
- Other supporting documents, side letters or collateral agreements (please list):

2. Licence and railway safety certificate**2.1 Please state whether:**

- you intend to operate the services yourself; or ☒
- have them operated on your behalf. ☐
 - if so, please name the proposed operating company:

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2.2 Does the proposed operator of the services:

- (a) hold a valid train operating licence under section 8 of the Railways Act 1993 or an exemption under section 7, **and** ☐
- (b) hold a valid safety certificate under the Railways and Other Guided Transport Systems (Safety) Regulations 2006. ☐

If the answer to (a) **or** (b) is no, please state the point reached in obtaining a licence, exemption and/or safety certificate.

MCWR is working towards obtaining a Passenger Operating Licence and a valid safety certificate in parallel with the open access application process. The MCWR leadership team has experience and capability of successfully achieving rail operator safety certification for both franchised and Open Access operators.

3. The proposed contract or amendment

3.1 Application overview: Please detail the proposed contract or amendment. This should cover the services, the commercial terms, and the reasons for making the application in the terms proposed. This information should be laid out clearly and concisely and fully highlight the changes from the previous version of the contract (in the case of an amendment).

Services

MCWR is applying for a Track Access Contract to operate services using Class 221/222 'Voyager' 5 car 125mph rolling stock between Nottingham and Bristol, via the new East West Rail (EWR) Bletchley-Bicester route, calling at East Midlands Parkway - Loughborough - Leicester - Kettering - Market Harborough - Bedford - Stewartby - Bicester Village - Oxford Parkway - Oxford - Swindon - Chippenham - Bath Spa - Bristol Temple Meads.

These could call in future at one of the EWR Marston Vale 'Existing' regenerated or 'Consolidated' new stations (see EWR Consultation 2024 - <https://eastwestrail.co.uk/consultation2024>) and proposed new stations at Wantage & Grove (Oxfordshire) and Corsham (Wiltshire).

MCWR's services will provide 4 new forms of direct train service connectivity currently unavailable to communities across this substantial c. 200 mile wide east-west 'cross country' corridor across central southern England which has extensive housing and population growth to come in the next 10-15 years:

1. **Eastern Section** - Between the East Midlands, the EWR Corridor and Oxford/Thames Valley via the EWR route opening between Bletchley and Oxford this year, 2025, and the existing Marston Vale Bedford-Bletchley route.
2. **Central Section** - Between Bedford, Bletchley and Oxford in advance of EWR's services planned for 2030, and offering new connectivity at Bletchley to the West Coast Main Line for East Midlands communities south of Leicester.
3. **Western Section** - Between Oxford, Swindon and Bristol, currently with such direct connectivity confined to 2 Great Western Railway experimental services per day on Saturdays only.
4. **Full 'cross-country' Corridor** - Strategic 'inter-city/cross country' connectivity between the East Midlands, the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, Thames Valley and Bristol/West of England, connectivity which simply does not exist today with travellers required to go via and across London or via Birmingham and multiple connecting services.

The benefits of the proposed service, which will support the government's plans to deliver the 'Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor' and boost the UK economy by up to £78 billion by 2035 (announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 29 January 2025), are set out at Section 4.1 below.

Train Service Timetable

An initial draft timetable has been developed, using industry recognised tools, based on the December 2024 timetable and Class 221/222 timings, and will be shared with Network Rail in parallel with this submission for its consideration. The proposed indicative Monday to Friday timetable is shown below.

We are assessing the feasibility of including calls at East Midlands Parkway and Oxford Parkway.

Nottingham - Bristol				Bristol - Nottingham			
	arr	dep	JT		arr	dep	JT
Nottingham		12:23		Bristol Temple Meads		12:39	
East Midlands Parkway	:	:	:	Bath Spa	12:53	12:54	00:14
Loughborough	12:37	12:38	00:14	Chippenham	13:05	13:06	00:26
Leicester	12:51	12:54	00:28	Swindon	13:20	13:21	00:41
Market Harborough	13:07	13:08	00:44	Oxford	13:58	13:59	01:19
Bedford	13:31	13:32	01:08	Oxford Parkway	:	:	:
Stewartby	13:39	13:40	01:16	Bicester Village	14:13	14:14	01:34
Bletchley High Level	13:54	13:55	01:31	Bletchley High Level	14:28	14:29	01:49
Bicester Village	14:10	14:11	01:47	Stewartby	14:42	14:43	02:03
Oxford Parkway	:	:	:	Bedford	14:52	14:53	02:13
Oxford	14:25	14:26	02:02	Market Harborough	15:16	15:17	02:37
Swindon	15:01	15:03	02:38	Leicester	15:30	15:31	02:51
Chippenham	15:16	15:17	02:53	Loughborough	15:40	15:41	03:01
Bath Spa	15:30	15:31	03:07	East Midlands Parkway	:	:	:
Bristol Temple Meads	15:43		03:20	Nottingham	15:58		03:19

We propose 8 services per day in each direction with departures from Nottingham and Bristol prospectively in the hours 06.xx, 08.xx, 10.xx, 12.xx (as with the illustrative paths above), 14.xx, 16xx, 18.xx and 20.xx.

We propose 6 services in each direction on Sundays.

Comparative journey times (against 'typical standard off-peak hour in 2025') include:

- Oxford - Nottingham : current 2h 36m / 1 change – MCWR 1h 59m direct
- Bletchley - Leicester : current 1h 48m / 2 changes – MCWR 1h 01m
- Bristol - Market Harborough: current 3h 23m / 2 changes – MCWR 2h 37m direct
- Bath Spa - Bedford : current 3h 9m / 2 changes – MCWR 1h 58m
- Swindon - Bicester Village : current 1h 25m / 2 changes – MCWR 52m

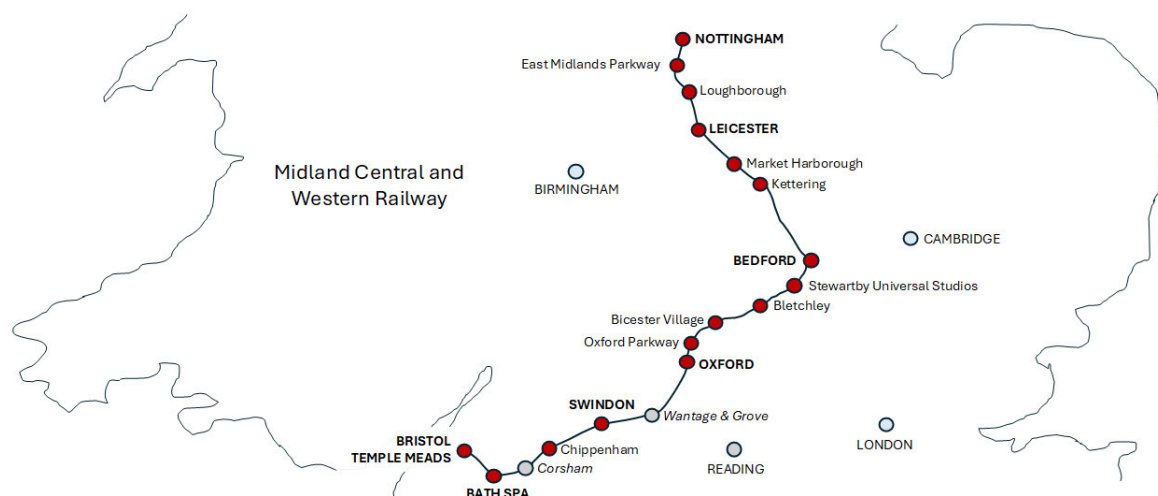
The table below gives a matrix of estimated journey times between key points along the route, focusing on the section-to-section movements where new direct journeys will be possible. Our initial analysis suggests that overall, with the many new journey opportunities created, the service can meet the 'Not Primarily Abstractive' test threshold.

Indicative journey times		Central Section				Eastern Section		
		Oxford	Bicester	Bletchley	Bedford	Leicester	Loughborough	Nottingham
Western Section	Bristol Temple Meads	1h 19	1hr 34	1h 49	2h13	2h 51	3h 01	3h 19
	Bath Spa	1h 04	1h 19	1h 34	1h 58	2h 36	2h 46	3h 04
	Chippenham	0h 52	1h 07	1h 22	1h 46	2h 24	2h 34	2h 52
	Swindon	0h 37	0h 52	1h 07	1h 31	2h 09	2h 19	2h 37
Central Section	Oxford					1h 31	1h 41	1h 59
	Bicester					1h 16	1h 26	1h 44
	Bletchley					1h 01	1h 11	1h 29

Cognisance has been taken of:

- Ongoing delivery of Midland Main Line Electrification
- East West Rail's staged proposals for introduction of Milton Keynes – Bletchley – Bicester – Oxford services in 2025, and extension to Bedford in 2030.

Overall route geography is shown below.



MCWR will work with Network Rail and East West Rail in respect of infrastructure enhancements supporting our service proposition and with Third Parties on new station proposals.

Track Access Contract

The proposal uses the 'Model Clause' Track Access Contract and does not seek to alter the terms.

This application is made under Section 17 of the Railways Act 1993. MCWR will commence discussions with Network Rail in parallel with this submission to ORR, with a view to reaching agreement enabling the use of Section 18.

3.2 Safety risks: Please explain any important safety risks that have been identified arising from the proposal and how these will be controlled (by reference to the facility owner's safety authorisation and the train operator's safety certificate).

MCWR has not identified any safety risks outside those associated with the normal operation of railway services.

The MCWR leadership team has experience and capability of successfully achieving rail operator safety certification for both franchised and Open Access operators.

3.3 Contract duration: For new agreements or extensions to existing agreements, please provide justification for the proposed duration and, if more than 5 years, with reference to the [Railways \(Access, Management and Licensing\) Regulations 2016](#).

MCRW seeks an initial 7 year Track Access agreement from December 2026 to December 2033.

3.4 Terms not agreed with the facility owner (for applications under sections 17 or 22A only): Please explain any areas of the application which have **not** been agreed, the reasons for the failure to agree and the reasons for seeking these provisions.

This application is made under Section 17 of the Railways Act 1993.

MCWR will commence active and constructive discussions with Network Rail in parallel with this submission to ORR, with a view to reaching agreement enabling the use of Section 18.

3.5 Bespoke provisions (departures from ORR's model access contracts)

Does the proposed contract include any departures from ORR's model access contract:

Yes

☐

No

☒

If yes, please set out and explain any:

- areas where the drafting of the application changes ORR's published template access contracts (as appropriate, cross-referencing to the answers below). Please also explain why these departures have been made.

n/a

- instances where the proposal departs from the charging and/or performance regimes established by ORR's latest periodic review (or subsequent interim reviews) as reflected in ORR's model access contracts, including the financial implications (e.g. establishment of an access charge supplement or rebate).

n/a

- new processes (e.g. a self-modification provision) which have been added. Please also demonstrate fully how this new process is robust and complete.

n/a

3.6 Consolidated contract

For amendments to existing contracts, is the version of the consolidated contract on our [website](#) fully up to date? If not, please explain why not.

n/a

4. The impacts of the proposal

4.1 Benefits: please set out what specific benefits the proposal will achieve. Please describe the benefits to passengers and any impact on other operators, including freight operators.

Economic, growth and environmental context

MCWR's proposed new services would serve a substantial population of c. 3.8 million people along the 22 local authorities of the route, set to grow overall between 2025 and 2040 by 7% to 4.07m, more than a quarter of a million people (c. twice the size of Oxford or equivalent to Milton Keynes), with significant growth hotspots in Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Bristol/Bath (source – Office of National Statistics [ONS]). Higher mandatory housing targets for all local authorities announced by Government in December 2024 will substantially increase this growth number.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/planning-overhaul-to-reach-15-million-new-homes>

The Nottingham-Bristol Corridor described here contains multiple components across the breadth of Britain's economic sectors, covers all of the 8 'Growth Driving Sectors' identified in the Government's November 2024 'Invest 2035' Industrial Strategy Green Paper, and is supported by 11 universities, including the world's leading university at Oxford. Together the 22 local authorities generate £148bn GVA p.a. (2022: ONS), just under 8% of GVA for England.

Yet the existing and potential agglomeration benefits of 'east to west' connectivity between the Corridor's economies are poorly supported, and possibly suppressed, by the limits of the current National Rail Network. MCWR's Open Access service would provide direct rail connectivity wholly (and remarkably) unavailable today for journeys between significant cities and towns such as:

- Nottingham & Leicester and the geographically close but rail-distant economies of Milton Keynes and Oxford
- Nottingham, Leicester, Bedford and Milton Keynes and Swindon, Bath and Bristol
- Oxford and Swindon
- Oxford and Bath & Bristol

Delivery and ongoing development of East-West Rail, supported by successive governments, will play a significant and positive part in unlocking such connectivity on a long term strategic basis, but MCWR's proposal will both open up Bedford - Milton Keynes - Oxford connectivity some 4 years sooner than proposed by East-West Rail, and create new East Midlands-Thames Valley-South West connectivity that is not otherwise currently proposed by the rail industry.

Given the urgency expressed by government for speedy growth in the UK economy, underlined by the announcement of the 'Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor' by Rachel Reeves MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer, on 29 January 2025 <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/chancellor-vows-to-go-further-and-faster-to-kickstart-economic-growth>, just as this Form P was being completed, MCWR's expeditious proposals are thus timely, offering early new connectivity building on that government investment in East West Rail, and meeting Ms. Reeves' expressed ambitions to go "further and faster to unlock the potential of the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor."

MCWR's proposal will both respond to wider economic, housing, population and leisure facility growth, and actively stimulate new regional and 'inter-city' desire lines for travel, supporting business location decisions and people's choices about where to live and work, and do so with a strong 'inter-city' quality capable of attracting 'new to rail' passengers.

Given the scale of the highway capacity and congestion challenges of key routes on the corridor, both towards London and on east-west axes, such as the A1(M), A428, M1, M69/A46, A43, A34, A420 and M4, new direct rail connectivity will not only offer potential relief but also support sustainable Net Zero policies at both national and local authority levels.

Adding value to other public and private sector investment

MCWR's proposal will build on and add value to the Government's public sector investment in the East West Rail route, supporting the newly announced 'Oxford Cambridge Growth Corridor' whilst demonstrating quality, value for money and new market generation as evidenced by existing Open Access services on routes such as the East Coast Main Line.

It directly aligns to East West Rail's intention to "*contribute to improved journey times and inter-regional connectivity by connection with north-south routes and routes beyond Oxford and Cambridge*" (p.18 EWR Consultation 2024 - <https://eastwestrail.co.uk/consultation2024>).

Meeting Open Access principles and requirements

MCWR believes its proposal also meets the specific expectations for Open Access services set out by the Rt. Hon. Heidi Alexander MP, Secretary of State for Transport, in her letter of 6 January 2025 to the ORR, where she recognises "*the benefits that can be provided by Open Access operators in the right circumstances and that both existing and new Open Access operators can open up new markets, drive innovation and offer choice to passengers.*" It does so:

- In opening up direct markets that do not exist today and have not existed for many years, often since the 1960s.
- In offering real choice to passengers between lengthy, complex journeys, often on several operators of different types and much simpler through services of inter-city quality.
- In promoting innovation in terms of quality, accessibility and progression towards net-zero' rolling stock, all of which will encourage passengers to use MCWR, essential to us given the commercial and financial risk we will, de facto, hold as an Open Access operator.
- In offering potential to serve future new stations such as those proposed by East West Rail between Bedford and Bletchley, and Wantage & Grove (Oxon) and Corsham (Wilts) proposed by their respective local authorities.
- In supporting major tourism and leisure initiatives such as Universal Studios theme park and resort project at Stewartby, Bedfordshire.

These outcomes of MCWR's proposal are positive circumstances actively consistent with Ms. Alexander's expectations for Open Access submissions.

This application also notes the DfT's 04 February 2025 letter to the ORR in respect of '*Live Open Access applications, received during pre-election period*' which sets out its support for only 1 of the 9 relevant applications, namely that of the Wrexham, Shropshire and Midland Railway (WSMR).

DfT notes that it does not support the other 8 applications given its concerns regarding revenue abstraction from contracted operators, NPA scores not meeting the 0.3 threshold specified in ORR guidance, together with risks to network performance.

DfT notes its in-principle support for WSMR's application, subject to performance assessment, given it meets the 0.3 NPA threshold and provides "*new direct services [...], enhancing connectivity and providing tangible benefits for [...] communities, particularly those in a wide hinterland that can then access direct long distance services*" whilst also "*improving regional connectivity.*"

MCWR believes the outcomes of its service proposals also reflect and actively align with DfT's interpretation of Open Access criteria.

Commercial impact on other operators

MCWR is thus supportive of the original principles and spirit of Open Access and in developing the concept for this service has sought to create significant numbers of new and direct opportunities to travel.

We have undertaken preliminary timetable assessment which supports our assertion that this new service would be very strongly generative and will grow the rail market substantially along this new east-west axis between the East Midlands, central southern and the west of England.

We have undertaken initial MOIRA.1 runs of our timetable which suggest that, with the many new journey opportunities created, the service can meet the 'Not Primarily Abstractive' test threshold.

MCWR Customer and Stakeholder Benefits

MCWR will provide high quality 'inter-city' ambience services, with accessible, easy-to-use ticketing with value-for-money fares. New jobs will be created, benefiting supply chains across the route, and MCWR will work in partnership with communities, local authorities and other operators to enhance existing stations, develop, finance and deliver new stations, and support integration with other forms of public transport and Active Travel modes.

4.2 Capacity: How have you satisfied yourself that there is enough network capacity for the services in the proposal? Please include details on all relevant capacity considerations, including but not limited to track, platform availability, and power supply traction.

Timetable

The proposed timetable underpinning the requested track access rights has been developed by a recognised industry timetabling and performance specialist using recognised industry planning tools. MCWR will undertake performance modelling during the application process.

Proposed Equipment

The proposed equipment – Class 22x diesel powered rolling stock - is currently in use and well understood on the Nottingham-Bedford and Oxford-Bristol routes but will require acceptance on the Bedford-Oxford route.

4.3 Performance: What is the impact on network performance? Please outline your assurance process that shows that any performance risk is tolerable in comparison to the benefits of the application. Please explain any risk mitigations. Please attach any associated evidence to support your case.

MCWR will undertake detailed performance modelling during the application process.

4.4 Maintenance and renewals: Are there any implications for the facility owner's maintenance and renewal activities?

No

5. The expression of access rights

5.1 Changes to rights: please provide full descriptions of any new rights required, as compared to the previous contract (in the case of an amendment). Please attach a fully marked-up version or document comparison of any tables in Schedule 5 which are being modified as a result of this application.

MCWR is seeking new rights to operate services between Nottingham, East Midlands Parkway, Loughborough, Leicester, Kettering, Market Harborough, Bedford, Stewartby, Bletchley HL, Bicester Village, Oxford Parkway, Oxford, Swindon, Chippenham, Bath Spa and Bristol Temple Meads.

The proposed contract is based on the Model Clause Open Access Passenger Track Access Contract and does not seek to alter the terms.

The quantum of rights is proposed as:

- Monday to Saturday – 8 services in each direction
- Sunday – 6 services in each direction

5.2 Flexing rights: Please explain any limitations on the facility owner's flexing rights in the proposal and the rationale for such limitations.

None

5.3 Specified equipment: Please explain any changes to specified equipment (rolling stock). Has the vehicle and route acceptance procedure in the Network Code (Part F) has been completed? Please explain whether you have, or will have, the rolling stock necessary to exercise the rights.

MCWR is proposing to utilise Class 22x units which we expect to be available to exercise granted rights.

5.4 Contractual obligations: Are the proposed services necessary to fulfil obligations under a public service contract? For publicly contracted operators seeking additional access rights, we will expect to see evidence of funder support for the specific rights and of operators' intent and ability to operate the new services.

n/a

5.5 Public funding: Other than the DfT, Welsh Government or Transport Scotland, are the proposed services subject to financial support from central or local government including PTEs. If so, please give details.

n/a

5.6 Long Term Planning Process: Is the Long Term Planning Process (or similar devolved authority or regional service delivery project) relevant to this application? If so, please explain how the proposed rights are consistent or inconsistent with this.

MCWR's proposal is consistent with the purpose of East West Rail to form a strategic rail link between East Anglia and Central, Southern and Western England, and its current delivery programme for Oxford to Milton Keynes services this year, 2025, and to Bedford from 2030.

It can provide early use of East West Rail to support long established stakeholder aspirations for direct connectivity between Oxford, Swindon and Bristol, and add value to public investment in East West Rail.

It can add also value to Network Rail investment in the ongoing Midland Main Line electrification, due to be completed to Wigston Junction, south of Leicester, in 2025.

6. Competing passenger services:

We would expect to apply the 'not primarily abstractive' test to:

- (i) a new open access service which would compete with franchised services and so impact on the public sector funder's budget;
- (ii) a new franchised service which would compete with an existing franchised service, where we would expect to focus the test on areas where the competing franchised services are operated on behalf of different funders or where for some other reason there are particular concerns over the impact on a funder's budget; and
- (iii) a new service, which might be open access or franchised, which would compete with an existing open access service and which, if it caused the existing open access operator to withdraw from the market, could reduce overall competition on the network.

6.1 Please state if your application is for a competing passenger service, and if so please describe the nature of the competition:

MCWR's principal purpose is to create new direct connectivity where it currently does not exist.

As such MCWR is not seeking to directly compete with well-established services operated via existing franchises/contracts.

This meets the expectations set out by the Rt. Hon. Heidi Alexander MP, Secretary of State for Transport, in her letter of 6 January 2025 to the ORR, where she recognises "*the benefits that can be provided by Open Access operators in the right circumstances and that both existing and new Open Access operators can open up new markets, drive innovation and offer choice to passengers.*"

6.2 For competing services, please also confirm that you have attached as part of your submission to ORR the following:

- Business plan, including details of: ☐
 - forecasts of passenger traffic and revenues, including forecast methodology;
 - pricing strategies;
 - ticketing arrangements;
 - rolling stock specifications (e.g. load factor, number of seats, wagon configuration);
 - marketing strategy;
 - estimated elasticities of the services (e.g. price elasticity, elasticity with respect to quality characteristics of the services).
- Demand forecasting (including associated spreadsheet models) demonstrating modelled generation : abstraction ratio. ☐
- Indicative timetables, including associated .spg files ☐

7. Incentives

7.1 Train operator performance: please describe any planned performance improvement initiatives and/or enhancement projects associated with the operation of the proposed services aimed at improving operator performance.

MCWR will undertake performance modelling during the application process and seek to implement interventions that emerge from this analysis.

In preparing the Specified Equipment for the proposed operation, MCWR will baseline the status of the small fleet of Class 22x units and implement any required performance-based improvements.

7.2 Facility owner performance: please describe any planned performance improvement initiatives and/or enhancement projects associated with the operation of the proposed services aimed at improving the facility owner's performance.

As 7.1

7.3 Monitoring of services: Will all proposed services be monitored for performance throughout their journey? If not, please explain.

Yes

7.4 Performance regime changes (for applications under sections 17 or 22A only): where applicable, please provide justification for any changes to Schedule 8 of the track access contract in the proposal. If necessary, please provide any relevant information in support of the changes proposed.

None proposed.

8. Enhancement

8.1 Enhancement details: where the proposal provides for the delivery of any network enhancements, or the services in the proposal are subject to any planned network enhancements, please give full details of the relevant enhancement schemes, including a summary of outputs from the scheme, timescales and the extent to which the network change procedure in the Network Code (Part G) has been completed (where appropriate, by reference to submissions made under ORR's enhancement reporting framework).

MCWR will align its service development and operation with the ongoing Network Rail Midland Main Line upgrade, delivery and development of East West Rail, including EWR's 'Existing' or 'Consolidated' approaches to stations on the Marston Vale Bedford-Bletchley route, Oxford Corridor enhancements and Third Party/local authority proposals for new stations on the Great Western Main Line at Wantage & Grove (Oxfordshire) and Corsham (Wiltshire).

8.2 Enhancement charges: please confirm that the arrangements for the funding of any network enhancements are consistent with the [investment framework](#), and summarise the level and duration of payments, and the assumed rate of return.

Pending understanding of extent of required enhancements, and the associated costs.

9. Other

9.1 Associated applications to ORR: please state whether this application is being made in parallel with, or relates to, any other current or forthcoming application to ORR (e.g. in respect of track, station or light maintenance depot access contracts). Where the application is being made in parallel with any other application from the same operator, please ensure the applications are consistent with one another. Where the application relies on another operator relinquishing access rights, please provide evidence that this process has been completed.

None

9.2 Side letters and collateral agreements: please confirm here that the whole of the proposal between the parties has been submitted with this application and that there are no side letters or other documents which affect it.

No side letters.

9.3 Confidential redactions: please list any information that you have redacted from any documentation sent to consultees. If there has been no pre-application consultation, please list any information you want us to exclude from publication. Please provide full reasons for any redactions.

None

10. Pre-application consultation

10.1 The consultation:

If consultation has not been carried out, explain why not. If it has, please list the consultees.

This draft application has been prepared for this consultation.

Who conducted the consultation?

Network Rail

List all consultees who responded and include their responses and any associated documentation or correspondence between the parties.

MCWR will comply with this requirement in advance of consultation.

10.2 Resolved issues: please explain any issues raised by consultees which have been resolved.

This awaits the consultation process.

10.3 Unresolved issues: Please explain any issues raised by consultees which have ***not*** been satisfactorily resolved and why you think these issues should not stop ORR approving the application.

This awaits the consultation process.

10.4 Subsequent Changes: Have any changes been made to the proposal following consultation?

This awaits the consultation process.

11. Certification

Warning: Under section 146 of the Railways Act 1993, any person who, in giving any information or making any application under or for the purposes of any provision of the Railways Act 1993, makes any statement which he knows to be false in a material particular, or recklessly makes any statement which is false in a material particular, is guilty of an offence and so liable to criminal prosecution.

For agreed applications under section 18 or 22, Network Rail should complete the information below. For disputed applications under section 17 or 22A, the beneficiary should complete it.

I certify that the information provided in this form is true and complete to the best of my knowledge

Signed



Date 10 February 2025

Name (in caps) IAN WALTERS

Job title Managing Director

For (company) MCWR

12. Submission

12.1 What to send: please supply the application form, the proposed contract or amendment and, where possible, any other supporting information, in electronic form by e-mail, **in plain Microsoft Word or Open Document Text format** (i.e. excluding any macros, auto-para or page numbering, or other auto-formatting).

12.2 Where to send it:

Email: track.access@orr.gov.uk