

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:

Northern Trains Limited (NTL)

1.2 Facility owner details:

Network Rail:	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Region:	Southern <input type="checkbox"/>	Eastern <input type="checkbox"/>	North West & Central <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Wales & Western <input 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 type="checkbox"/>	18 <input type="checkbox"/>	22 <input type="checkbox"/>	22A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Supplemental Number:			60th
Current contract date:			03 rd March 2016
Current contract expiry date:			PCD 2027

1.4 Applicant status:

Public Service Operator <input type="checkbox"/>	Public service contract start date:	01 st March 2020
	Public service contract end date:	PCD 2027
	Name of funder (e.g. DfT, Local Authority):	DfT
	Does the funder support this application?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Open Access <input type="checkbox"/>		
Charter Operator <input type="checkbox"/>		

1.5 Executive summary of the proposed contract or amendment:

Northern's 68th Supplemental Agreement is for minor amendments to access rights in North West and Central, required to deliver the December 25 timetable.
The proposals were not contained within the 59th or 60th SA's which were submitted as part of the competing access rights applications in May 2024 as the areas affected by this SA did not form part of the geography included within the May 2024 ask.

ED02 Lancashire and Cumbria – minor housekeeping changes to reflect some service alterations on the Cumbrian Coast
ED08 North Manchester – minor amendments
ED09 Merseyrail City Lines – removal of 319 as a timing load and replaced with 323, minor amendments
ED10 South Manchester – minor amendments
ED11 Lancashire and Cumbria Inter Urban - removal of 319 as a timing load and replaced with 323, minor amendments

As with all proposals for Dec 25, Network Rail do not currently support this application, although the timetable has now been offered to Northern.

Proposed commencement date:	PCD 2025
End date:	PCD 2027
Date approval or directions wanted by:	ASAP

1.6 Industry consultation:

Who carried out the consultation?	Network Rail on behalf of NTL		
Consultation start date:	24/06/25	Consultation end date:	22/07/25
Not carried out <input type="checkbox"/>			

1.7 Applicant details

Facility Owner Company: Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (NR) Contact name: Job title: Address: Baskerville House, Centenary Square, Broad St, Birmingham B1 2ND Phone: E-mail:	Beneficiary Company: Northern Trains Limited (NTL) Contact name: Job title: Address: George Stephenson House, Toft Green, York YO1 6JT Phone: E-mail:
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1.7 Date of application to ORR:

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:

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.

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).

ED02 Lancashire and Cumbria

Change in origin in the line of entry 'Barrow in Furness to Maryport'. Now reads 'Lancaster to Maryport'.

- +1 SuO Firm right between Maryport and Barrow in Furness
- 1 SO Firm right between Carlisle and Barrow in Furness
- 1 SO Firm right between Whitehaven and Carlisle
- +1 SuO Firm right between Carlisle and Lancaster via Barrow
- +1 SO Firm right between Carlisle and Preston via Barrow
- 1 SuO Firm right between Carlisle and Preston via Barrow
- 1 SX Firm PM Peak right between Preston and Carlisle via Barrow
- 1 SO Firm right between Preston and Carlisle via Barrow
- 1 SO Firm right between Lancaster and Barrow in Furness
- +1 SX Firm PM Peak right between Lancaster and Carlisle
- +1 SO Firm right between Lancaster and Carlisle
- 1 SO Firm right between Lancaster and Morecambe
- 5 SuO Firm rights between Lancaster and Morecambe (relates to quantum in ED04 Leeds to Morecambe)
- 2 SO Firm rights between Morecambe and Lancaster
- 5 SuO Firm rights between Morecambe and Lancaster (relates to quantum in ED04 Morecambe to Leeds)
- Removal of entry Preston to Millom as all columns have 0 entries
- +1 SuO Firm right between Blackpool North and Wigan North Western

Removal of references to Class 319 timing load. Replaced with Class 331

- 1 SX Firm PM Peak right between Liverpool Lime Street and Preston
- 1 SO Firm right between Liverpool Lime Street and Preston

ED08 North Manchester

- 1 Firm SX Off Peak right between Wigan Wallgate and Manchester Victoria
- 1 Firm SO right between Wigan Wallgate and Manchester Victoria

- +1 Firm SX Off Peak right between Wigan Wallgate and Rochdale
- +1 Firm SO right between Wigan Wallgate and Rochdale

- +1 Firm SX Off Peak right between Blackburn and Manchester Victoria
- +1 Firm SO right between Blackburn and Manchester Victoria

- 1 Firm SX Off Peak right between Manchester Victoria and Rochdale
- 1 Firm SO right between Manchester Victoria and Rochdale

ED09 Merseyrail City Lines

Removal of references to Class 319 as a timing load and replaced with Class 323

- +1 Firm SuO right between Liverpool Lime Street and Manchester Airport
- 1 Firm SuO right between Liverpool Lime Street and Wilmslow (linked to above)

ED10 South Manchester

- +1 Firm SuO right between Chester and Manchester Victoria
- +1 Firm SuO right between Manchester Victoria and Chester

ED11 Lancashire and Cumbria Inter Urban

Removal of references to Class 319 as a timing load and replaced with Class 323

- 1 Firm SX right between Barrow in Furness and Manchester Airport

-1 Firm SO right between Barrow in Furness and Manchester Airport
+1 Firm SX right between Barrow in Furness and Manchester Victoria
+1 Firm SO right between Barrow in Furness and Manchester Victoria
(Same train but goes to Manchester Victoria vice the Airport)

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).

N/A

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](#).

N/A

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.

N/A

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.

The version on the ORR website is the most up to date.

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.

The rights contained within this application align with the timetable offered to Northern and will provide long term operational certainty for Northern and its customers.

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.

The rights contained within this proposal relate to services which have been validated and offered by Network Rail for the Dec 25 timetable.

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.

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

None

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.

Full details are shown in section 3.1 as well as the marked up Schedule 5 tables appended to this application.

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

All paths are subject to the usual flexing by Network Rail System Operator as part of the Dec 25 timetable validation process which has now been offered to industry.

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.

N/A

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.

N/A

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:

N/A

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.

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.

N/A

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

All services are subject to the usual industry performance monitoring.

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.

N/A

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).

N/A

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.

N/A

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.

N/A

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.

N/A

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.

N/A

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.

Abellio ScotRail Limited
East Midlands Trains Limited
TransPennine Trains Limited
Transport for Wales Rail Ltd
London North Eastern Railway Limited
Merseyrail Electrics 2002 Limited
Serco Caledonian Sleepers Limited
West Coast Trains Limited
West Midlands Trains Limited
XC Trains Limited
East Coast Trains Limited
Grand Central Railway Company Limited
Grand Union Trains
Hull Trains Company Limited
Nexus
North Yorkshire Moors Railway Enterprises PLC
South Yorkshire Supertram Limited
Go-Op
Pre Metro Operations
Renaissance Trains
Virgin Trains
Direct Rail Services Limited
First Greater Western Limited
GB Railfreight Limited
Grand Central Railway Company Limited
Locomotive Services (TOC) Limited
Rail Express Systems Limited
West Coast Railway Company Limited
Rail Operations (UK) Limited
Vintage Trains Limited
Colas Rail Limited
DB Cargo (UK) Limited
Devon and Cornwall Railways Limited
Direct Rail Services Limited
Freightliner Limited
Freightliner Heavy Haul Limited
GB Railfreight Limited
Hanson & Hall Rail
Harsco Rail Limited
Loram UK Limited
Rail Operations (UK) Limited
SLC Operations
Varamis Rail
Vista Railfreight Limited
Vintage Trains Limited
West Coast Railway Company
Associated British Ports
Legge Infrastructure Services Limited
London Gateway Port Limited
Tarmac Trading Limited
Victoria Harbour Limited
Hutchison Ports (UK)
Maritime Transport Limited
MDS Transmodal
Transport for Greater Manchester
Merseyside PTE (Merseytravel)

South Yorkshire PTE
West Midlands PTE (Centro)
West Yorkshire PTE (Metro)
DfT
ORR
Rail Freight Group
Regulatory Reform
Transport Focus

Who conducted the consultation?

Network Rail on behalf of NTL

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

Transport Focus – No comments
WYCA – No comments
GWR – No comments
XC – No objections

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

No issues were raised.

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.

N/A

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

N/A

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 25th July 2025

Name (in caps)

Job title

For (company) Northern Trains Limited

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