

Louise Beilby
Senior Access Executive



2 October 2025

Akaash Bhandari
Franchise and Access Manager
Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd
Baskerville House
Centenary Square
Birmingham
B1 2ND

Sue Rhymes
Track Access Manager
First Trenitalia West Coast Rail Ltd
Victoria Square House
Victoria Square
Birmingham
B2 4DN

Dear Akaash and Sue

Approval of the 29th supplemental agreement to the track access contract between Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (Network Rail) and First Trenitalia West Coast Rail Limited (trading as Avanti West Coast (AWC)) dated 1 December 2022

We have today approved the above supplemental agreement submitted to us formally on 1 October 2025 under section 22 of the Railways Act 1993 (the Act). This follows an earlier informal submission of a draft agreement for our consideration. This letter explains the reasons for our decision.

Purpose

The purpose of this agreement is to extend a currently operating weekday evening service from Birmingham New Street to Wolverhampton, calling at Sandwell & Dudley, which has been operating since the Subsidiary Change Date (SCD) in May 2025 under contingent rights. These rights were due to expire on the Principal Change Date (PCD) in December 2025 but this application extends them for a further timetable period to SCD 2026.

Industry consultation

Network Rail undertook the usual industry consultation for four weeks from 12 August 2025. Comments in support or stating no objection were received from Transport Focus, West Midlands Trains, CrossCountry and Great Western Railway.

ORR review

Our review of the application raised no operational, performance or economic concerns. We advised the applicants that they would need to carefully consider the effective dates and times of this supplemental agreement alongside others that are due to become effective during PCD 2025, and draft them so that they do not cancel each other out.



Our duties under section 4 of the Act and our decision

We have concluded that approval of this supplemental agreement strikes the appropriate balance in discharging our statutory duties under section 4 of the Act; in particular, those relating to protecting the interests of users of railway services (section 4(1)(a)), promoting the use of the railway network for the carriage of passengers (section 4(1)(b)) and enabling persons providing railway services to plan their businesses with a reasonable degree of assurance (section 4(1)(g)).

Conformed copy of the track access agreement

Under clause 18.2.4 of the track access contract, Network Rail is required to produce a conformed copy, within 28 days of any amendment being made, and send copies to ORR and the Train Operator. Please send the conformed copy to me at ORR.

Public register and administration

Electronic copies of this letter, the approval notice and the agreement will be sent to the Department for Transport and Network Rail's Policy and Access Team. Copies of the approval notice and the agreement will be placed on ORR's public register (website) and copies of this letter and the agreement will be placed on the ORR website.

Yours sincerely

Louise Beilby