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Dear Michael,

## **Network Rail Year 1 CP7 Stakeholder Engagement review**

As you are aware, under Network Rail's (NR) network licence, one of the Core Duties is the Stakeholder Engagement Duty which requires that NR '...treat [its] stakeholders appropriately in line with their reasonable requirements, doing so in a diligent, efficient and timely way.'

In Control Period 6 (CP6) we ran comprehensive annual assessments which gave us a good baseline understanding of NR's stakeholder engagement and tracked its improvement. For CP7 we agreed to discontinue these detailed regional assessments as long as NR could demonstrate that it has appropriate governance and assurance in place, with targeted deep-dive reviews of specific issues if required.

On this basis, NR agreed to provide ORR with an annual report on its policies and approach for the delivery of stakeholder engagement activities. We agreed that this submission would take the form of a short report, providing evidence demonstrating how NR's approach to stakeholder management is appropriately governed and assured, and meets expectations for inclusivity, transparency and effectiveness.

### **Year 1 CP7 submission**

NR's first report, covering the first year of CP7 (April 2024 to March 2025) was submitted to ORR in August 2025. The report provides a narrative of activities undertaken during the year, with most of the described work occurring in the second half (September 2024 to March 2025).

The report provides examples of work that has begun on stakeholder engagement from the close of CP6 and into CP7. This includes the first collaborative workshop on

stakeholder engagement between the Business Units within NR, which indicates good progress on sharing best practice.

The scope of the analysis included only provided a limited view of NR's stakeholder engagement activity during this period. Many of the examples provided relate to activities carried out wholly in CP6 or activities which have not yet taken place. There are a number of areas where the report could have included further evidence, analysis of outputs and outcomes, interpretation of feedback and wider sharing of good practice.

However, following further engagement with you and your team, we are satisfied that NR is taking its stakeholder engagement duty seriously and has put in meaningful initiatives that will strengthen future reporting. While much of this work will feed into the year 2 assessment, it provides assurance of NR's commitment to continuous improvement. You have confirmed that your 2025/26 stakeholder engagement review has already commenced and will focus on how the regions have assessed the impact of engagement they hold. We also welcome the increased communication with the supply chain, including quarterly national supply chain events, the development of a rail industry pulse check, and closer collaboration with trade associations.

These steps demonstrate a proactive approach to engagement and governance, and we look forward to receiving your year 2 report as soon as possible after April 2026.

As you are aware, as we move closer to significant industry change in the form of the Rail Reform Bill, NR's role in achieving a smooth transition – through keeping a range of stakeholders informed in a structured way and taking on board feedback as appropriate – will be extremely important. We welcome your recent review of NR's Stakeholder Relations Code of Practice and note that you consider this fit for purpose for the period leading up to the commencement of Great British Railways. We also note that your Integrated Railway Agreements reflect the principles and importance of clear stakeholder engagement. We look forward to an update on NR's engagement, and how stakeholders are finding it, in your next report to us.

Yours sincerely

Stephanie Tobyn