

**Ollie Cartwright**  
**Executive, Access & Licensing**  
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17 September 2026

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Head of Strategic Access Planning  
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5<sup>th</sup> Floor, 62-64 Cornhill  
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Dear [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

**Approval of the 48th supplemental agreement to the track access contract between Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (Network Rail) and GB Railfreight Limited (GBRf) dated 11 December 2016**

1. Today we approved the 48th supplemental agreement. The rights contained in this application enable the transport of significant economic commodities, including biomass and aggregates, in all regions. This letter explains the reasons for our decision made under section 22 of the Railways Act 1993 (the Act).

**Application**

2. The application was submitted by Network Rail and GBRf to ORR on 16 September 2026. The purpose of this agreement is to add 35 new firm rights and make 25 amendments to existing firm rights, providing certainty to GBRf and its customers. There are also 56 firm access rights to be removed from the contract.
3. Long term certainty is important for investment and commercial planning. Concluding access decisions in a timely manner also supports smooth transition to GBR. We recognise that this application is an example of Network Rail working with a freight operator to move from the 'rolling' uncertainty of contingent rights to agreeing longer term access rights and providing greater certainty for freight.
4. This is in line with our letter of [30 June 2026](#) where we set out that we expect Network Rail to submit supported applications wherever possible and to provide clear evidence where rights cannot currently be supported.

Head Office: 25 Cabot Square, London E14 4QZT: 020 7282 2000 [orr.gov.uk](http://orr.gov.uk)

## **Industry consultation**

5. Network Rail undertook the normal industry consultation, which ran from 02 July 2026 to 03 August 2026. Responses were received with no comment or objection from Cross Country, West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Transport Focus, and Northern.
6. Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) requested a detailed timetable of any trains that would affect GTR routes. They also asked for clarification over whether these would impact GTR services. GTR was assured that these trains were already in the timetable and that no impacts were foreseen by either GBRf or Network Rail. This request was closed out with no follow-up questions.

## **ORR review process**

7. Our review of the application did not raise any material operational, performance or economic concerns. The services contained in the application are already running in the current working timetable.

## **Our duties under section 4 of the Act and our decision**

8. In making this decision, we are satisfied that this decision reflects our duties under section 4 of the Act, in particular:
  - (i) to protect the interests of users of railway assets;
  - (ii) to promote the use of railway network in Great Britain for the carriage of passengers and goods and the development of that railway network, to the greatest extent that it considers economically practicable;
  - (iii) to promote efficiency and economy on the part of the persons providing railway services; and
  - (iv) to enable persons providing railway services to plan the future of their businesses with a reasonable degree of assurance.

## **Conformed copy of the track access agreement**

9. 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 Freight Operating Company. Please send the conformed copy to me at ORR.

## **Public register and administration**

10. 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

