

Property Disposal – Specific Consent

Application by Network Rail Infrastructure Limited to dispose of land in accordance with the Land Disposal Condition of the Network Licence.

1. Disposal	
Type of disposal	Sale (March 26 consultation document)
Rationale for disposal	Goxhill branch. This rail corridor has been unused since the 1960s. The rail corridor lies between development land and highway connections to the south and a significant riverside industrial site for port related development to the north. Sale will enable construction of an access to bring the land to the north into use and enable the corridor of land to be absorbed into adjoining ownerships and used as part of a nationally significant development in the region known as Able Energy Park (AEP) with linkages from this site through to Able UK's Able Humber Port (AHP). Both sites will retain the ability for an eastward facing connection to permit future rail traffic use if deemed to be viable. A previous consultation was undertaken to sell the disused rail corridor in 2023 which resulted in one objection from ABP due to their view on the strategic nature of the corridor. A further consultation in August 2025 also resulted in an objection from ABP who wish to preserve the trackbed for re-opening a rail line to Goxhill to protect options for growing rail freight traffic from the Port. This August 25 document and consultation report are attached as an Appendix for information. Network Rail's view is that this ABP use is unlikely as there is no evidence of a clear, feasible and funded plan for the site for future development of the railway network or for purposes ancillary to the future development of the railway network (despite requests for this to be provided). In addition, previous consultation has confirmed Network Rail's assessment and neither DfT or the local authority has said that the site is needed for future development of the railway network. Therefore, having already carried out two full consultations we are carrying out a targeted re-consultation with the Railfreight industry, strategic bodies and the local authority to seek views on two options for the land being either: (1) disposal of the disused track-bed to support Able Group's current economic regeneration objectives through development of their Able Humber Port (AHP) and Able Energy Park (AEP) or (2) retention of the disused trackbed for a possible future private rail infrastructure. Network Rail's preference is to support the Able UK proposal for the reasons outlined in this document.

2. Clearance	Type	Reference	Date
Clearance Details	Business	CR/54903 CR/65194	28/03/2025 30/07/2025
	Technical	CR/54903 CR/65194	11/04/2025 11/09/2025
3. Site			
Description of property for disposal	<u>Killingholme, NE Lincolnshire: part of former Goxhill branch-line.</u> The land is a linear strip of land running through fields. The fields are allocated for future industrial development. The site is shown by blue colour on the 4 plans copied onto the attached Plan 1 document. The rail corridor includes one road over rail overbridge and a rail over river bridge. An OS extract map (Plan 2) is included to show the location. It is an unused former rail trackbed. No rail infrastructure is located on the land. It runs west to the west bank of Halton Gill. It lies to the west of the remaining operational line known as the Killingholme Branch (KIL2) that runs west of out of the Port of Immingham to the River Humber Killingholme Terminal that is run by CIDN. The adjoining operational line is separated from the proposed disposal site by a fence. The adjoining operational line is still part of the Network under KIL2 although it has been unused by rail traffic for many years and is subject to a Short-Term Network Change. Plan 3 shows the site in the context of the adjoining area and land uses. The rail corridor to the west is part of the same Goxhill branch unused track-bed that meets up with the Network with a northward facing connection at Goxhill on the Barton-upon-Humber branch c2km west.		
Attached plans and photographs: (all site plans should be in JPEG format, numbered and should clearly show the sites location approximate to the railway)	Plan 1 attached to show proposed disposal site by blue colour. Plan 2 attached showing OS extract to give detail on site location. This shows the proposed disposal site by blue line, the reminder of the Goxhill branch by yellow colour and the currently unused Killingholme branch by red colour. Plan 3 attached to show site in context of surrounding uses referred to in report. Plan "Option 1b Kill Port Access" attached showing an alternative rail connection west of the Port of Immingham.		

Ordnance survey coordinates	West boundary - E – 512304, N – 420628 East boundary – E – 515441, N - 420304
4. Proposal	
Proposed party taking disposal	Adjoining land owner – Able UK.
Proposed use / scheme	Inclusion in adjoining industrial land redevelopment proposals and road access. The land is required immediately to support the delivery programme now underway for Able's AHP and AEP sites. Specifically, it will provide: • A safeguarded abnormal-load route between AHP and AEP, including for long offshore wind turbine blades and other oversized components. • A strategic internal logistics and movement corridor for manufacturing, assembly and export. • Routing capacity that avoids the public highway network. • Without this land, the integrated development of AEP/AHP cannot proceed at full scale, limiting job creation and investment.
Access arrangements to / from the disposal land	Direct from proposed purchaser's adjoining land
Replacement rail facilities (if appropriate)	No rail facilities affected. Sale is of a former track-bed that has been unused for over 60 years.
Anticipated rail benefits	No direct benefits but development of the land for industrial purposes will include the opportunity to provide an eastward facing rail connection so the industrial land has scope for future rail service. Disposal will also remove liabilities from rail industry inspection and maintenance regimes thereby reducing rail industry Opex. In addition, if this application to sell the land is successful a further application will be submitted for the rail corridor coloured red on Plan 2 – provided Network Change is obtained for this land to amend an existing Short Term Network Change to a permanent Network Change. This will remove further liabilities and Opex from the rail industry for unused infrastructure.

Anticipated non-rail benefits	Support to a nationally significant project ready to deliver up to 8,000 jobs and investment to the region. The proposed disposal supports the development of the AEP which is a consented scheme of up to 1.7 million sq.m of B1, B2 and B8 port related activity on a 300 ha site in NE Lincolnshire and the Humber Estuary. It also supports the integrated development of AEP and AHP and is supported by the local authority.
5. Timescales	
Comments on timescales	The proposed disposal is likely to complete in mid 2026 provided disposal consent is granted.
6. Railway Related Issues	
History of railway related use	The Goxhill branch used to run from Killingholme through to Goxhill and was closed in the 1960s. The land has been unused since the 1960s.
When last used for railway related purposes	The land was last used in the 1960s.
Any railway proposals affecting the site since that last relative use	A proposal was put forward in c2008 to re-open the line out to Goxhill to provide a western exit point for rail traffic coming out of the Port of Immingham. This project was known as the Goxhill Loop and did not proceed.
Impact on current railway related proposals	No current railway proposals affected by the proposed sale. Disposal has no effect on the retention of the adjoining stretch of the Killingholme branch which runs east from the proposed disposal site and on to the Port of Immingham. The CLdN Humber Port facility immediately to the east of the proposed disposal site has a Connection Agreement to use this branch but does not run traffic. However, the proposed disposal does not affect CLdN's ability to run trains in the future as the Killingholme branch is available for this. The CLdN facility and the Killingholme branch are shown on Plan 3.
Potential for future railway related use	ABP have expressed a requirement following the August 2025 consultation to buy the property in order to preserve the ability to open a line out to Goxhill. This would prejudice development of the Able UK AEP/AHP proposals. However, the figures discussed are not acceptable in terms of value for the formation compared to other offers and valuations. Therefore, the theory exists for this to be a foreseeable rail use but Network Rail has not seen evidence of a clear, feasible and funded plan. Also, previous consultation has confirmed Network Rail's assessment and neither DfT or the local authority has said that the site is needed for future development of the railway network. Therefore, Network Rail's intention is to support the planned

	disposal to Able UK as referred to in this document due to: 1. A Licence Condition 17 consultation was carried out in April 2023 for disposal of part of the same corridor included in this application. One objection from ABP was received. ABP's objection was explored in detail with DfT who concluded that the route was not strategically important and hence there were no objections to disposal from both DfT Rail and Maritime. 2. However, the response was that they would look again at circumstances if ABP could elaborate on the potential 'unforeseen circumstances' they alluded to in their objection letter and to expand on why they believe the resilience of the Ulceby route to be in question and/or the diversionary route via the Grimsby light railway to be an insufficient alternative. This information was not forthcoming but, again, delayed disposal plans for the property. 3. ABP have been asked for a Business Plan (27/11/25) showing the viability of construction of such a route but this has not been forthcoming to date. 4. The Network Rail view is that there are already two rail routes to the Port of Immingham and that further resilience to these rail connections to the Port have been established by: a. Improvement work by Network Rail to the Grimsby Light railway to provide an alternative route east out of the Port if needed in times of perturbation. b. £100m upgrade works by Network Rail in December 2015 in Ulceby as part of an improvement scheme to offer more resilience to the rail route to the Port. c. Recent consultation with Network Rail's local Operations Manager has include the statement that the current infrastructure is reliable with plenty of capacity for future growth. The light railway is now operating well, all the cable faults and issues have been resolved, this provides real resilience to access the port. 5. The former alignment at the junction with the Network at Goxhill faced northwards (see yellow line on Plan 2). Therefore, to be effective as another route into the Port a new section of track would have to be built to create a south facing connection to link to the Network running through Lincolnshire and onwards to the East Coast main Line and routes to the Midlands and the West. This third route then relies on the same existing rail infrastructure and the same junctions around Ulceby as used by the existing Port rail connection which limits the argument of it adding extra resilience for rail traffic to the Port. 6. Constructing the Goxhill Loop would require the re-opening of a minimum of 2 and probably 3 former level crossings over public roads. It would also require the acquisition of third party land to
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	create the south facing connection referred to. The route passes through a rural and residential area some of which is allocated in the North Lincolnshire 2011 Core Strategy as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation. 7. Studies carried out by Tata rail engineers in 2013 offered an alternative route option to create a third rail route out of the Port. This is shown in the attached plan and could be constructed without utilising the formation out to Goxhill and it would be a more readily constructible alternative to the Goxhill scheme and less controversial for the public. The new line does cross various ownerships so would require land acquisition as with the Goxhill Loop but the Tata study shows that a line is physically possible, less costly due to the shorter distance and has less environmental effect as it passes through an industrial area compared to an established residential location at Goxhill. It would avoid the requirement for re-opening level crossings over public roads. This comment is caveated by the fact that the Tata report was commissioned by Able UK to show an alternative west Port access could be built if required to enable release of the Goxhill Loop land.
Any closure or station change or network change related issues	No network change or station change issues. The rail corridor was not Network in 1994 as was deemed to be an unused rail corridor. The Network line running to the east of the proposed disposal site is subject to a Short Term Network Change as it has not been in use for rail traffic. However, in the event that this disposal consent is granted then a Network Change proposal will then be submitted to close and take out of the Network the Killingholme branch shown by red line on Plan 2.
Whether disposal affects any railway (including train operator) related access needs, and how these are to be addressed in future	No access needs are affected by the proposed disposal. Access to the site for railfreight operators will continue.

Position as regards safety / operational issues on severance of land from railway	The disposal does not include and requirement for new fencing of the railway boundary, as sufficient fencing already exists. The disposal is on a basis under which Network Rail has had due regard (where applicable) to impact of the disposal on lineside works, including railway troughing, signalling and their maintenance. The disposal is without prejudice to Network Rail's safety obligations, with which Network Rail will continue to comply. Network Rail's network licence requires compliance with Railway Group Standards. These set out requirements for – amongst other things – fencing, access and signal sighting. In addition, the Railways and Other Guided Transport Systems (Safety) Regulations 2006 require Network Rail to have a safety management system and safety authorisation in respect of its mainline railway system and its railway infrastructure. These, in turn, require Network Rail to comply with Railway Group Standards as well as its own internal standards; and also continually to monitor changes to the risks arising from its operations and to introduce new control measures as appropriate.
Safety issues identified	The disposal documentation shall include Network Rail's usual safety provisions appropriate to this disposal site and type of disposal. The Technical clearance referenced in Part 2 above did not specify any site specific conditions related to safety. (N.B. The safety conditions described above are a requirement of the Technical Clearance Certificate and are relevant at the disposal stage of the transaction. These requirements are subject to change e.g. by development of subsequent detailed designs that may necessitate amended safety requirements subject to consultation and agreement by the railway engineer)

7. Planning History and Land Contamination

Planning permissions / Local Plan allocation (if applicable)	The industrial scheme that surrounds the disposal site was granted planning permission in 2013 (Ref: PA/2009/0600) for A1, C1, B1, B2 and B8 land uses for port related storage and associated service facilities.
Contamination / Environmental Issues (if applicable)	The site is a former railway line and hence the usual level of railway land contamination is applicable

8. Internal Consultation

Internal consultation

Clearance has been obtained through the Network Rail internal consultation process. There are no site-specific safety issues other than standard generic conditions.

There is no requirement for the corridor to be retained in the Lincolnshire Strategic Advice.

The site is not mentioned in the 2017 Freight Network Study or the East Coast Main Line Route Study.

Strategic Planning confirmed by email on 13/02/26 that:

“Further to reviewing the documentation associated with the disposal I can confirm:

Eastern Region Strategic Planning have no issue with the planned disposals, as there is no strategic requirement for any extension of the national network from the area and out to Goxhill.

Sufficient capacity already exists with existing infrastructure within the area. Documents produced by the Strategic Planning team, such as the Lincolnshire Strategic Advice show no requirement for the corridor to be retained.

Note, nothing within our advice restricts third parties from developing, funding, and delivering private rail infrastructure on any route no longer under the ownership and control of Network Rail.

Regards ”

9. Local Authorities

Names & Email Addresses:

Local Transport Authorities:

Other Relevant Local Authorities:

North Lincolnshire Council

10. Internal approval to consult

Recommendation:

By proceeding to consult I am:

- recommending that Network Rail consults on the terms of disposal
- confirming that I have read and understood Network Rail's Code of Business Ethics and policy on Interests in Transactions
- confirming that I have secured internal written approval to consult in accordance with Network Rail's policy on Authorising Application Forms.

11. External Consultation

Summary of position as regards external consultations

The consultation referred to in this report has been reduced to a targeted number as this is purely a freight line so only railfreight operators and other strategic consultees have been approached. The full consultation list has been approached on two separate occasions and there have been no objections apart from ABP. The targeted consultation specifically addresses the issue of retaining the land for ABP's future use or selling the land to Able UK.

Of the 13 consultees, 13 responses were received. Of the 13 received responses, there were 12 no objections or recommendations.

ABP have expressed an interest to utilise the land (and adjoining sections of trackbed not in this consultation) at some point in the future for a third rail connection into ABP's Port of Immingham. Therefore, their response has been treated as an objection to the disposal on the terms set out in the consultation report.

North Lincolnshire Council fully support the proposed disposal and the economic regeneration it will support but want an agreement in place for the transfer of the rail overbridge to them as Highway Authority.

Analysis of any unresolved objections together with recommendation by Network Rail as regards a way forward

Network Rail's proposed approach to the unresolved ABP objection is twofold.

1. For the reasons outlined in this report we do not consider the use to be foreseeable and funded.
2. However, in order to accommodate the possibility of future use the sale will be progressed on the basis that the disposal will reserve a right for Network Rail or any other promotor to either use existing rail infrastructure on the land as a private siding or construct and use new private siding infrastructure. This enables a future rail opportunity if it ever occurs and does not hold up what is significant economic development by Able that will make use of the disposal site. In both cases the promotor will need to, at their cost, (1) carry out such works to level crossings as are necessary to deal with the new rail traffic and (2) build a bridge, if required, to carry the Able Logistics Park access road over the rail formation.

The proposed approach to the North Lincolnshire Council request is to only transfer the land affected by the bridge once a suitable Agreement is in place with the Council for the bridge to be transferred to them under s94 of the 1980 Highways Act.

12. Internal approval to dispose

Recommendation:	Based on the above, I recommend that Network Rail proceeds with the disposal.	
Declaration:	I have read and understood Network Rail's code of Business Ethics and Policy on Interests in Transactions	
Proposer's name:		Proposer's job title: Principal Development Manager (Eastern)
Signed.....		Date.....24/07/2026...
Authorised by (name):		Authoriser's job title: Property Services Manager Eastern (Anglia & Major Projects)
		Date.....