

Jonathan Rodgers

Senior Executive

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10 September 2026

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Network Rail Infrastructure Limited
Western House
Swindon
SN1 1BD

Robert Holder
Network Access Manager
First Greater Western Limited
Milford House
Swindon
SN1 1HL

Dear Jayne and Robert

Approval of the 119th supplemental agreement to the track access contract between Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (Network Rail) and First Greater Western Limited (trading as Great Western Railway (GWR)) dated 4 March 2016.

Today, we approved the above supplemental agreement which makes minor changes to rights between Reading, Redhill and Gatwick Airport for GWR. This letter explains the reasons for our decision made under section 22 of the Railways Act 1993 (the Act).

Application

The purpose of this agreement is to make some minor changes to access rights relating to Gatwick Airport to Reading services. One existing firm right between Reading and Redhill will be amended so that it terminates/starts back at Gatwick Airport. This change will be effective from the Principal Change Date in December 2026 (PCD 2026) until the end of the contract. This is the only additional right in the application.

The agreement also extends the expiry date of three existing contingent rights between Reading and Gatwick Airport from PCD 2026 to PCD 2027. These rights are time limited to reflect changes under consideration to the engineering access strategy. ORR previously approved these rights on a contingent basis in May 2025 and the services are currently running.

ORR is currently considering an application from Grand Central for services between Newcastle and Brighton, which interacts geographically with this GWR application. Network Rail has provided ORR with representations stating that it does not support the Grand Central application.



Network Rail referred to this, when this GWR application went into consultation, saying that its support was conditional on ORR agreeing with Network Rail's position on the Grand Central application.

ORR set out in its [30 June 2026 letter](#) to Network Rail that that a "Section 22 submitted to us with caveats such as 'subject to' is not compliant with the Act". When Network Rail informally submitted this application, it explained that *"the condition previously articulated is no longer relevant or necessary. Accordingly, the conditional support wording is disappplied and should not be treated as qualifying Network Rail's support for this application"*.

Industry consultation

Network Rail undertook the usual industry consultation and there were three responses. Transport Focus and Cross Country said that they were content. Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) had some questions but, after receiving some further information from Network Rail, said that they had no further questions. No other operator responded.

ORR review

The agreement was submitted to us formally on 27 August 2026 and followed an earlier informal submission of a draft agreement for our consideration. Our review of the application raised no operational, performance or economic concerns. We considered the interactions with the Grand Central application referred to above. We noted that Network Rail had not set out any concerns about performance or capacity impacts relating to the interactions between both applications. We also noted that these changes are relatively minor and that, aside from the initial queries from GTR, which were subsequently resolved, no concerns by any other operator were raised in the industry consultation.

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

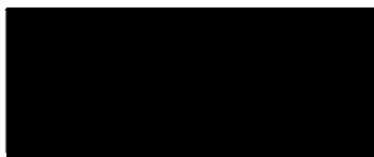
Under clause 18.2.4 of the track access contract, Network Rail is required to produce a conformed copy, within 28 days of any amendment being made, and send copies to ORR and the Train Operator. Please send the conformed copy to me at ORR.



Public register and administration

Electronic copies of this letter, the approval notice and the agreement will be sent to 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



Jonathan Rodgers