

XC Trains 48th SA - industry consultation responses

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From: @chilternrailways.co.uk

Sent: 26 August 2026 08:22

To: @crosscountrytrains.co.uk

Subject: RE: UPDATE - Industry Consultation - XC Trains Limited, 48th Supplemental S22A, Dec'26 - Unsupported Application

Hi,

Thanks for this. I have no further objections as I recognise that the 2tph pattern is held in industry forecasts for the Snow Hill/DCL routes and that regulation statements are in place at Tyseley to protect 1Hxx/1Vxx services.

Kind regards,

Network Development Manager, Chiltern Railways

Banbury Integrated Control Centre, Higham Way (off Merton Street), Banbury, Oxon, OX16 4RN

www.chilternrailways.co.uk



From: @crosscountrytrains.co.uk

Sent: 19 August 2026 15:57

To: @chilternrailways.co.uk, @networkrail.co.uk

Subject: RE: UPDATE - Industry Consultation - XC Trains Limited, 48th Supplemental S22A, Dec'26 - Unsupported Application

Hi

Hope you are well

Thanks for your feedback.

The two new services as part of our Newcastle-Reading service group in Dec 26 (1V88/1E60) are direct reinstatements from our pre-covid standard 2 TPH between Birmingham New Street and Reading (1TPH via Solihull & Banbury and 1TPH via Coventry & Banbury) as we look to rebuild our services on our XC2 service group.

We have not directly modelled these two additional services (one in each direction) however our performance teams continue to work jointly with NR and the industry as well as monitoring services on our XC2 and XC3 services groups between Birmingham New Street and Reading. The latest performance data on our XC2

services from the May 26 TT shows a good level of performance Northbound weekdays with a consistent T-15 above 90% between Anho Jn and Leamington Spa, dropping slightly below 90% through to Tyseley and Small Heath South junction. On Saturdays we are consistently hitting 96% (T-15) at Aynho junction. Southbound we are hitting 89% average T-15 at Birmingham New Street on weekdays whilst on Saturdays 90-95% between New Street and Aynho Junction. I am happy to expand and discuss our figures across this route and this service group as required.

As addressed in our form P we have a number of performance initiatives and collaborate closely across the industry to investigate where performance levels are not where we would like and look at root cause with a view to facilitating actions to address issues. We have a number of initiatives off this patch that will look to enhance performance of our XC 2 services and facilitate right time reporting at Birmingham New Street including on the ECML, around Sheffield and on the Wessex region.

Planning Manager, Train Planning, CrossCountry

Address: 5th Floor, Multistorey, 18 The Priory Queensway, Birmingham, B4 6BS

From: @chilternrailways.co.uk

Sent: 14 August 2026 15:46

To: @networkrail.co.uk, @crosscountrytrains.co.uk

Subject: RE: UPDATE - Industry Consultation - XC Trains Limited, 48th Supplemental S22A, Dec'26 - Unsupported Application

Afternoon all,

Sincere apologies for the 11th hour response on this – please can XC confirm that performance modelling has/is being undertaken for the two new services over the Snow Hill / DCL lines (1V88/1E60) please? I imagine these trains are no deviation from the Dec 19 2tph model, so hopefully something that can be confirmed easily.

Thanks,

Kind regards,

Network Development Manager, Chiltern Railways

Banbury Integrated Control Centre, Higham Way (off Merton Street), Banbury, Oxon, OX16 4RN

www.chilternrailways.co.uk

The logo for Chilternrailways, featuring the word "Chilternrailways" in a blue sans-serif font. The "C" is stylized with a circular element.

From: SMB - Track AccessConsultations

<TrackAccessConsultations@northernrailway.co.uk>

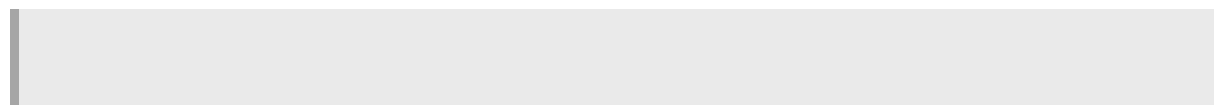
Sent: 14 August 2026 14:13

To: National Operators <NationalOperators@networkrail.co.uk>

Cc: SMB - Track AccessConsultations

<TrackAccessConsultations@northernrailway.co.uk>

**Subject: RE: Industry Consultation - XC Trains Limited, 48th Supplemental S22A,
Dec'26 - Unsupported Application**



Hi,

Northern have no comments to make regarding this application.

Thanks,

From: @crosscountrytrains.co.uk

Sent: 03 September 2026 10:24

To: @wmtrains.co.uk

Cc: @networkrail.co.uk

Subject: RE: UPDATE - Industry Consultation - XC Trains Limited, 48th Supplemental S22A, Dec'26 - Unsupported Application

Hi

Hope you are well

I have attached a small selection of information that is relevant and the opportunities for performance improvement at either end of the Coventry to Wolverhampton corridor.

As you will appreciate, the key to unlocking sustainable performance improvements lies in what happens before trains reach these locations. As a result, our tactical focus is on specific route sections, punctuality near misses, and train regulation issues or conflicts with other operators.

It is important to emphasise that this work is not being undertaken in isolation. These are joint initiatives with Network Rail, which are being discussed, developed and progressed through a number of multi-disciplinary forums.

I hope this information provides the information you are looking for to show our approach to managing performance on the Coventry and Wolverhampton corridor

Planning Manager, Train Planning, CrossCountry

Address: 5th Floor, Multistorey, 18 The Priory Queensway, Birmingham, B4 6BS

From: @wmtrains.co.uk

Sent: 01 September 2026 09:39

To: @crosscountrytrains.co.uk

Cc: @networkrail.co.uk

Subject: RE: UPDATE - Industry Consultation - XC Trains Limited, 48th Supplemental S22A, Dec'26 - Unsupported Application

Good morning,

Upon internal review WM Trains are content with supporting this proposal. I appreciate your honesty and openness to close our concerns out.

I understand we also have attendees on the core workshop you mentioned so I will leave any further conversations to happen during that.

The only last point I would like to ask is do you have any key outputs/ findings on the joint tactical review of the Bournemouth – Manchester (notable the Wolverhampton and Coventry) as this is where our T-3 is often hit the most. This will just allow us to review and have confidence.

Thanks again, much appreciated.

London Northwestern & West Midlands Railways (LNWMR)

Track Access Contract Manager



From: @crosscountrytrains.co.uk

Sent: 26 August 2026 15:58

To: @wmtrains.co.uk

Cc: @networkrail.co.uk

Subject: RE: UPDATE - Industry Consultation - XC Trains Limited, 48th Supplemental S22A, Dec'26 - Unsupported Application

Hi

Thanks for your e-mail

I think its worth reiterating that we are not proposing any additional Birmingham to Manchester services for Dec 26. There is 1 northbound service departing at 22.30 from BHM on weekdays that is a contingent right today that expires at the end of SCD26 and we are looking to roll forward to Dec 26 which is included in this application however there the train runs currently and there is no net increase in services. There are no changes to our southbound Manchester – Wolverhampton - Birmingham services.

That said, we understand your concerns on the Birmingham to Wolverhampton and Birmingham to Coventry corridors. Network Rail has recently commenced a series of joint Discovery Insights workshops involving all operators across the route, including CrossCountry. The purpose of this work is to develop a deeper

understanding of the causes of performance variation and identify collaborative interventions that can deliver sustainable improvements. The programme is still in its early stages but has already identified a number of priority workstreams focused on:

- Late presentation of trains and reactionary delay impacts.
- Timetable resilience and the ability of the current plan to recover from perturbation.
- Infrastructure constraints, asset reliability, and incident response arrangements.
- Train regulation and operational decision-making to minimise conflicts and reduce delay propagation.

The workshops provide a structured forum for operators and Network Rail to jointly analyse performance data, challenge existing assumptions, and develop targeted improvement initiatives. As these workstreams mature, they are expected to generate a number of actionable recommendations aimed at improving performance across key corridors, including Coventry and the wider Birmingham area.

Alongside this strategic work, the Regional Performance Managers continue to engage through local tactical performance forums, working closely with Network Rail and other operators to address corridor-specific performance challenges. Particular attention is currently being given to the effectiveness of existing regulation arrangements, including the regulation statement in place with Avanti West Coast, to ensure that operational decision-making supports the best possible outcomes for passengers and overall network performance. More recently, a joint tactical review of the Bournemouth to Manchester corridor has been completed. This work brought together performance, operations, and Network Rail colleagues to better understand the recurring causes of delay and performance variation across the route. A key area of focus was improving punctuality and right-time presentation at Wolverhampton and Coventry, both of which play a significant role in determining the onward performance of services operating through the West Midlands.

Looking further ahead, we will be commencing a review to assess the Bournemouth to Manchester (BMH-MAN) and Reading to Newcastle/York (RDG-NCL/YRK) service groups and explore whether there are opportunities to amend current routing arrangements. One option that will be considered is the feasibility of routing Bournemouth to Manchester services via Solihull. Given the complexity of

timetable planning, route capacity considerations, and stakeholder engagement requirements, this is expected to be a longer-term programme of work.

Within Birmingham, there is ongoing collaboration with the station management team and signalling colleagues to address instances where CrossCountry services are held outside Birmingham New Street and are not routed into available platforms at the earliest opportunity. Delays in platforming can affect T-3 arrivals and create consequential impacts on departing services, reducing overall network performance. Work is therefore underway to better understand decision-making processes, improve platform management and minimise avoidable delays. Additional initiatives are also being progressed to improve Passenger Assist processes and dispatch arrangements, supporting both operational performance and the overall customer experience.

In parallel, a recent 1FXX/1MXX (WMT/XC) regulation trial was undertaken to better understand the factors affecting the performance of the 1FXX service group. The findings indicated that performance challenges were not primarily attributable to CrossCountry operations. Instead, the main contributors were identified as conflicts with Transport for Wales services, operational constraints at Bordesley Junction, freight interactions, and the increasing complexity of service regulation during periods of disruption. As a result, further work is continuing with Network Rail Control and the Right Time Railway groups to identify opportunities to improve regulation strategies, reduce conflicting movements and enhance overall service reliability.

Collectively, these activities form a balanced programme of strategic, tactical and operational interventions aimed at improving punctuality, reducing delay risk and strengthening performance resilience across the Coventry corridor and wider West Midlands network.

Planning Manager, Train Planning, CrossCountry

Address: 5th Floor, Multistory, 18 The Priory Queensway, Birmingham, B4 6BS

From: @wmtrains.co.uk

Sent: 26 August 2026 08:54

To: @crosscountrytrains.co.uk

Cc: @networkrail.co.uk

Subject: RE: UPDATE - Industry Consultation - XC Trains Limited, 48th Supplemental S22A, Dec'26 - Unsupported Application

Good morning,

Thanks for this, I have liaised with our timetable team and have the below queries as a follow up to our performance concerns based on the T-3 figures you sent.

One of the targets we have from DfTO is to improve our T3. The first concern we have is that the northbound Manchester services are primarily timed to arrive into Wolverhampton at xx:17/xx:47 and if they are delayed, our local Wolverhampton - Walsall services cannot depart P5 towards Birmingham at xx:18/xx:48.

Furthermore, southbound Manchester services are broadly timed at xx:15/xx:39. These tend to have very little recovery time in their schedules and frequently present late at Wolverhampton. When this happens in the xx:15, this often prevents us departing right time behind at xx:18; when this happens in the xx:39, it delays multiple subsequent services – our xx:42 Shrewsbury – Birmingham, Avanti's xx:45 Edinburgh/Glasgow – London and our xx:48 Wolverhampton to Walsall service, which is followed by our Liverpool to Birmingham service.

Therefore, if XC intend to increase the number of Manchester services, can they provide some assurance about steps they are taking to improve right-time presentation at Wolverhampton in southbound trains and right-time departures from Coventry/Birmingham New Street?

I do fully appreciate the data element especially for weekend services as we have faced the same challenges when submitting evidence on performance based on the May-26 timetable, but if you could provide some assurance about steps that are being taken to improve right-time presentation at Wolverhampton in southbound trains and right-time departures from Coventry/Birmingham New Street that would be appreciated.

London Northwestern & West Midlands Railways (LNWMR)

Track Access Contract Manager



From: @crosscountrytrains.co.uk

Sent: 24 August 2026 11:53

To: @wmtrains.co.uk; @networkrail.co.uk

Subject: RE: UPDATE - Industry Consultation - XC Trains Limited, 48th Supplemental S22A, Dec'26 - Unsupported Application

Hi

No problem, I have attached below the full T-0, T-3 and T-15 tables below for May 26 TT

Table 1 – SX 1M88 20.42 Reading to Manchester Piccadilly via Stoke and Alsager performance (1.15b)

Seq.	Location	OT % (All locations)	T-3 %	T-15 % (All locations)
382	Birmingham New St.	36.42857143	51.42857	90
381	Soho South Jn	45.07042254	64.78873	87.32394
380	Galton Jn	56.33802817	67.60563	85.91549
379	Dudley Port	46.47887324	61.97183	84.50704
370	Wolverhampton	25.35211268	41.5493	79.57746
369	Wolverhampton N. Jn	30.98591549	39.43662	80.28169
368	Bushbury Jn	38.02816901	49.29577	81.69014
367	Penkridge	38.02816901	43.66197	81.69014
366	Stafford Trent Valley Jn	28.16901408	43.66197	80.28169
365	Stafford	25.69444444	37.5	77.77778
363	Searchlight Lane Jn	22.53521127	33.80282	77.46479
361	Yarnfield Jn	22.53521127	33.80282	77.46479
360	Stone	20.54794521	32.87671	75.34247
359	Stoke Jn	19.71830986	32.39437	77.46479

358	Stoke-On-Trent	18.05555556	31.94444	76.38889
357	Kidsgrove	19.71830986	38.02817	76.05634
350	Crewe	11.29032258	19.35484	66.12903

Table 2 - Sunday headcodes 1V81, 1V83, 1V85, 1V87, 1E48, 1E52, 1E56, 1M68, 1E60 performance (1.44b and 1.13a) in the Coventry corridor , noting engineering work often removes these services so the data although positive for the services that have run needs more time to get a good feel for these services longer term performance.

Location	Train	CP6: On Time %	CP6: Within 3 mins %	CP6: Within 15 mins %
BHAMNEWST	1V81	100	100	100
BHAM INTL	1V81	100	100	100
COVENTRY	1V81	100	100	100
BHAMNEWST	1V83	0	0	100
BHAM INTL	1V83	0	0	100
COVENTRY	1V83	0	0	100
BHAMNEWST	1V85	0	50	100
BHAM INTL	1V85	0	50	100
COVENTRY	1V85	0	50	100
BHAMNEWST	1V87	0	50	100
COVENTRY	1E48	50	75	100
BHAM INTL	1E48	0	50	100
BHAMNEWST	1E48	20	40	100
COVENTRY	1E52	0	0	100
BHAM INTL	1E52	0	0	100
BHAMNEWST	1E52	60	60	100

COVENTRY	1M68	0	0	100
BHAM INTL	1M68	0	0	100
BHAMNEWST	1M68	0	0	100
COVENTRY	1E60	0	0	100
BHAM INTL	1E60	0	0	100
BHAMNEWST	1E60	33.33	33.33	100

Planning Manager, Train Planning, CrossCountry

Address: 5th Floor, Multistory, 18 The Priory Queensway, Birmingham, B4 6BS

From: @wmtrains.co.uk

Sent: 24 August 2026 08:18

To: @crosscountrytrains.co.uk; @networkrail.co.uk

Subject: RE: UPDATE - Industry Consultation - XC Trains Limited, 48th Supplemental S22A, Dec'26 - Unsupported Application

Good morning,

Thanks ever so much for this. Some useful feedback. Upon speaking to our timetable team, would it be possible to get the performance data measured to T-3 vice T-15 as that is what we are measured on and will allow us to better understand any potential impact. We are keen to work with Cross Country so if we could get this more granular detail that would be great.

London Northwestern & West Midlands Railways (LNWMR)

Track Access Contract Manager



From: @crosscountrytrains.co.uk

Sent: 19 August 2026 16:13

To: @networkrail.co.uk; @wmtrains.co.uk

Subject: RE: UPDATE - Industry Consultation - XC Trains Limited, 48th Supplemental S22A, Dec'26 - Unsupported Application

Hi

Hope you are well

Thanks for your feedback

In regards to 1.15b this relates to our SX 1M88 20.42 Reading to Manchester Piccadilly via Stoke and Alsager, In terms of performance during May 26 this service averages 90% T-15 presentation at Birmingham New Street and in the high 80's% between Birmingham New Street and Wolverhampton. T-15 performance is more challenging between Wolverhampton and Crewe (via Stoke and Alsager) in the high 70's% T-15. As addressed in our form P we have a number of performance initiatives and collaborate closely across the industry to investigate where performance levels are not where we would like and look at root cause with a view to facilitating actions to address issues.

Note 1.13b /1.44a relate to our services via Solihull and there is no change in quantum of rights on weekdays or Saturdays via Coventry.

There are however on 1.44b 4 x SU and 1.13a 5 x SU via rights being rolled forward via Coventry – relating to Sunday headcodes 1V81, 1V83, 1V85, 1V87, 1E48, 1E52, 1E56, 1M68, 1E60, In terms of performance during May 26 we don't have a huge amount of data as engineering work on weekends has seen these services removed from the timetable, that said of the small sample we have we are seeing 100% T-15 on average through the Birmingham International and Coventry corridor. We have a number of initiatives off this patch that will look to enhance performance of our XC 2 services and facilitate right time reporting at Birmingham New Street including on the ECML, around Sheffield and on the Wessex region.

I hope this provides sufficient information regarding performance of these services. Please give me a shout with any further questions.

Planning Manager, Train Planning, CrossCountry

Address: 5th Floor, Multistory, 18 The Priory Queensway, Birmingham, B4 6BS

From: @wmtrains.co.uk

Sent: 14 August 2026 08:33

To: @networkrail.co.uk

Subject: RE: UPDATE - Industry Consultation - XC Trains Limited, 48th Supplemental S22A, Dec'26 - Unsupported Application

Good morning,

Please find below our initial queries in regards to XC 48th SA.

- In regards to Section 3, and the additional right 1.15b - Birmingham to Manchester – Can any data be supplied in regards to the right time presentation between Kidsgrove and Birmingham New Street, particularly on the Stour Valley corridor? Our Liverpool and local services are timed closely with XC services so we would require assurance that any amendments will not have any detrimental affect on performance before being able to fully support this right. These services often don't contain a lot of recovery time so if they are delayed it is difficult to recover any lost time.
- In regards to Section 3, and the additional right 1.13b /1.44a - Birmingham <> Reading – Can any data be supplied in regards to the right time presentation between Coventry and Birmingham New Street, which impacts us particularly in the southbound direction. This corridor is of particular interest to WM Trains as any delays has a secondary impact on the operation of the West Coast Mainline where there is already very little scope to recover lost time and late running into London Euston produces further risk on other operators.

WM Trains appreciate the docus on performance noted in section 4.3 but have highlighted the above concerns as they appear to be omissions from the performance commentary given in this application. WM Trains would appreciate more data on the above areas to ensure T3 output can still be achieved.

London Northwestern & West Midlands Railways (LNWMR)

Track Access Contract Manager



From: @westyorks-ca.gov.uk

Sent: 21 July 2026 12:56

To: @crosscountrytrains.co.uk; @networkrail.co.uk

Subject: RE: Industry Consultation - XC Trains Limited, 48th Supplemental S22A, Dec'26 - Unsupported Application

Hi

First of all, sincere thanks for taking the time to provide such an exceptionally helpful detailed response: I really appreciate this.

On the basis of that further information, I'd be happy to confirm that certainly we would not be seeking to object to this application by XC.

Best regards

Rail Policy Manager

West Yorkshire Combined Authority

From: @crosscountrytrains.co.uk

Sent: 20 July 2026 14:02

To: @westyorks-ca.gov.uk; @networkrail.co.uk

Subject: RE: Industry Consultation - XC Trains Limited, 48th Supplemental S22A, Dec'26 - Unsupported Application

Hi

Thanks for your e-mail and broad support for our 48th SA

I can confirm that the rights requested in our application do not change our service pattern through West Yorkshire, equally for Dec 26 TT our hourly Anglo-Scots service will continue through Wakefield Westgate and Leeds as it does today and complemented by our Newcastle/York – Reading service that operates via Doncaster. Although not serving West Yorkshire our Newcastle-Reading service group does spread loading from our Anglo-Scots so contributes positively in this area. This application includes rights for three new services in that service group that will start in February 2027:

- 1E30EX [EWD] 09:28 Birmingham New Street to York
- 1E60GS [EWD] 16:45 Reading to Derby
- 1V88DA [EWD] 12:35 York to Reading

The remainder of this rights application is concerned with securing rights that are contingent time based rights that expire at the end of the current May 26 TT that we need to roll forward rather than any new services.

The surrendered right on 1.16 and 1.23 between Birmingham New Street and Newcastle via Leeds on Saturday relates to 1E52 (14.45 Reading to Newcastle) which until the end of May 25 TT ran off pattern via Wakefield and Leeds in the evening peak however from Dec 25 TT this reverted to run via Doncaster in our normal pattern, the reasoning behind this was the introduction of Northern's new hourly Yorkshire flyer Sheffield to Wakefield to Leeds service which utilises that path. This change in right was not picked up in a timely manner on our most recent SA's and is therefore corrected here but there is no change to the TT or frequency of services through West Yorkshire for Dec 26.

We understand your concerns on crew and fleet resource availability. I will start with fleet resource where I can confirm work progresses at pace on securing four additional Voyagers in early 2027 which would allow the introduction of an enhanced Glasgow service and strengthening of Anglo-Scots services which includes key peak services through Wakefield and Leeds. Our resource position excluding Sundays is in a healthier position with a number of internal workstreams focusing on long term establishment levels, diagram modelling, managing attrition and forward planning of traincrew training cohorts to be more agile to TT related changes in traincrew requirements. More short term workstreams focusing on the availability and utilisation of traincrew is also starting to take shape. Sundays remain a challenge for us due to historic agreements and traincrew T&Cs around this day. A number of pieces of work continue around Sundays looking both at longer term solutions which as you will appreciate are complex and take time to bring to fruition although this accompanied by short term measures around TT interventions to ease Sunday disruption in the immediate term. We have deliberately not looked to increase our Sunday TT offering in Dec 26 whilst we focus on delivering our current core TT.

We share your views on certainty in access rights and we are disappointed that this application sadly has to go through as an unsupported application given as you rightly mention a number of the rights through Yorkshire are for services we ran before Covid and are much needed for passenger handling, reduction in crowding, connectivity and wider benefits outside of the industry. We continue to work with the industry, our colleagues in NR and the ORR to realise the potential from a continuing long term view of access rights. We greatly appreciated the support of WYCA in their similar view on the access rights horizon.

I hope I have answered your questions but please do not hesitate to reach out for any further clarity

Planning Manager, Train Planning, CrossCountry

Address: 5th Floor, Multistory, 18 The Priory Queensway, Birmingham, B4 6BS

From: @westyorks-ca.gov.uk

Sent: 17 July 2026 13:06

To: @networkrail.co.uk; @crosscountrytrains.co.uk

Subject: RE: Industry Consultation - XC Trains Limited, 48th Supplemental S22A, Dec'26 - Unsupported Application

Good afternoon, and thank you as ever for including WYCA in this consultation.

While I note that the majority of the rights in question do not directly touch West Yorkshire, some do so; others affect the wider Yorkshire area; and many could have indirect impacts on us. It's worth adding however that, as is often the case with these applications, as a result of the format they mandate, it is not easy to see how the rights in question would actually translate into specific train services added, removed or altered. Are there any summaries that XC colleagues could readily provide? The remainder of this response is therefore based on our best understanding of the proposals, but would be subject to change if we have misunderstood or omitted anything that later is realised to be relevant.

We would note that clearly XC has a legitimate need for certainty in its access rights, and that (as we understand it) several of the rights sought for additional services (such as on the Newcastle – Doncaster – Reading route) would reintroduce services cut during Covid and so far never restored; clearly

reinstating this is a sound priority which in principle should be supported. We would consider that such core services should, all other things being equal, take precedence over open-access aspirations, given that XC's services will form part of the national (and publicly owned and funded) GBR network from next year.

That said, while in principle we are therefore very much in support of XC restoring and expanding its NE-SW network, there are two caveats in relation to XC's ability to resource their proposals effectively:

- (i) Crew resources: XC continue to struggle to resource their services, above all on Sundays, with unacceptable cancellation rates persisting; there needs to be a clear and time-bound plan to recover reliability rates on these existing services before attention is given to additional trains.

- (ii) **Fleet:** while XC has indeed taken on some additional 22X units from the former WCML fleet, there are still (as far as we are aware) sets available off-lease – and there are still trains on the core Scotland – Newcastle – Leeds – Birmingham – SW route that are formed of single units, in many cases leading to serious crowding, especially in Yorkshire. We would be keen to understand XC's plans to address this, and to have assurance that any additional services that XC operates as per this application would not adversely affect its doing so.

Some rights relevant to West Yorkshire appear to be being surrendered, and we are not clear whether these are balanced by new rights serving the same geography – we'd appreciate clarification as to what services, if any, would actually be withdrawn, and how this fits with the wider picture.

As such, we'd be very grateful for any clarification that XC colleagues could offer on the above points before we confirm our position on the application.

With thanks in anticipation, and looking forward to hearing from you soon

**Rail Policy Manager
West Yorkshire Combined Authority**

From: @crosscountrytrains.co.uk

Sent: 04 August 2026 17:43

To: @arriva.co.uk; @networkrail.co.uk; @grandcentralrail.com

Subject: FW: Industry Consultation - XC Trains Limited, 48th Supplemental S22A, Dec'26 - Unsupported Application

Hi

Thank you for your e-mail below regarding XC's 48th SA.

Our response is without prejudice to your ongoing discussions with NR around the context of general principles.

On reflection and following your feedback below, XC will reissue our form P. This will include amended wording to ensure the information being presented around our access rights requested, is clear and unambiguous. This will include revised wording that shows these are currently contingent rights held being requested as firm rights upon their expiry at PCD2026. We will also amend our wording on the form P around competing capacity and instead focus on highlighting where there is interacting rights within applications between different operators.

After careful consideration and internal discussion, we will not however retract our application. We are satisfied we have acted within the framework of the ORRs Industry code of practice for track access application consultations (published March 2024) namely around paragraphs 41-59 focusing on a S22a application.

With regards to your point A below – we acknowledge your comments and concern around being able to respond to our 48th SA within the context of the 46th SA. It was our intention that both of these SA's – the supported 46th SA and this unsupported 48th SA were both out for consultation simultaneously. Unfortunately, due to complexities at SOAR panel which delayed the 46th SA this was not possible. We are confident that the consultation for the 46th SA will follow imminently. I have also included as an appendix below to this e-mail a summary of our 46th SA for your information ahead of this being formally shared for industry consultation. As you note yourself in your response below the rights in our 46th SA are not dependent on any of the rights requested in our 48th SA.

Section 3.1 on our form P is very detailed line by line showing the right description in question and a summary of whether the rights are new rights or rolled over rights and where this is the case, a summary of whether these are from our 38th or 45th SA as well as a detailed summary of the new services introduced. The revised form P wording now builds on this highlighting clearly we are requesting firm rights.

We also remain committed to answering specific questions raised through this consultation and remain at your disposal should you have any further questions.

Appendix 1 – summary of 46th SA

- **Application for new firm rights on the following routes in Scotland:**
 - **Extension of Anglo-Scots to/from Glasgow Central vice Edinburgh:**
 - **Edinburgh to Glasgow Central 4 weekdays, 5 Saturday and 3 Sundays (all via Motherwell except 1 Sunday is via Shotts)**
 - ***Edinburgh to Glasgow Central via Shotts - 1 weekday contingent right expires start of SCD2027***
 - **Glasgow Central to Edinburgh 5 weekdays, 5 Saturday and 3 Sundays (all via Motherwell)**
 - **1 x additional Edinburgh to Aberdeen weekday and Saturday right replacing 1 x weekday and Saturday Dundee to Aberdeen right (conversion of an ECS from Edinburgh to a passenger service throughout)**
- **Tidy up of calling pattern (table 4.1) and rights to combine services (table 2.3)**

Planning Manager, Train Planning, CrossCountry

Address: 5th Floor, Multistory, 18 The Priory Queensway, Birmingham, B4 6BS

From: @arriva.co.uk

Sent: 27 July 2026 19:08

To: @networkrail.co.uk; @crosscountrytrains.co.uk; @grandcentralrail.com

Subject: FW: Industry Consultation - XC Trains Limited, 48th Supplemental S22A, Dec'26 - Unsupported Application

Hi

As mentioned on a call with [name] today I am writing in relation to this application and subsequent industry consultation by CrossCountry (XC). On 9 July 2026, Will Etherington of Grand Central (“GC”) wrote to you requesting either (1) XC’s 48SA be retracted or (2) network rail issue communication stating that the consultation period does not start until all information is provided. Our reason for doing so was:

- 1. In the decision letter for CrossCountry (XC’s) 45SA, ORR stated on 15 May 2026 in clause 27 “*For the avoidance of doubt, we have noted Network Rail’s position on the continuation of the additional contingent rights beyond PCD 2026. In light of this and the issues raised around potentially competing applications, our***

usual policy of a strong presumption of the continuation of existing rights will not apply for the extension of the contingent rights beyond PCD 2026.”

Therefore, this application cannot be taken as a follow-on from XC’s 45th supplemental agreement (“45SA”).

2. The application refers to XC’s 46th Supplemental Agreement (“46SA”), but in an email to [name] of Arriva on 22 June 2026, [name] of Network Rail confirmed that: *“The XC 46th SA for Dec’26 is still being worked on internally and has not been sent for industry consultation yet. I will ensure that you and [name] are on the distribution list, if and when consultation takes place.”* We have yet to see this application, so therefore cannot assess the 48SA, as the application states both are to be taken together.

These issues mean that industry cannot properly consult on XC’s 48SA. Network Rail retracted on 10 July 2026 and re-issued on 15 July 2026 addressing point 2, however point 1 has still not been addressed. Therefore, industry still cannot consult. For the reasons I will set out below, Network Rail, as the independent infrastructure manager, must ensure that there is sufficient information (and that information is correct) for an effective consultation. Our view is that this can only happen if Network Rail again retract XC’s 48SA and instruct XC to rework removing the material defects and clarify their application. If XC and Network Rail then deem it appropriate, it can be reissued to allow industry consultation to commence.

To further clarify why industry cannot consult on XC’s 48SA, I have set out the issues with XC’s 48SA as it is currently documented in their Form P.

XC state in section 1.5 of their form P *“The rights requested as part of this supplemental agreement follow on from our 38th and 44th SA for Dec’25 TT. A number of rights proposed were included in our 45th SA for May 26 TT.*

CrossCountry have a further application currently with NR for review, the 46th SA. The proposed 46th SA includes firm and contingent rights for Dec’26 TT for our Glasgow extensions. The rights in the 46th are not dependent on the rights within the 48th.” This poses the following challenges for industry when seeking to consult:

- A. Industry has not been given sight of XC’s 46SA, so cannot form a full opinion on XC 48SA given XC state in their 48SA that *“The proposed 46th SA includes firm and contingent rights for Dec’26 TT for our Glasgow extensions.”* This means that without sight of XC’s 46SA industry cannot understand the baseline of rights that XC are seeking to add to with their 48SA. We also note that in their decision letter of 15 July 2026 ORR granted XC 3 firm rights for extensions to Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee. We assume these are the same rights XC is referring to in the 48SA, but without full visibility of the 46SA we cannot confirm this, and therefore cannot confirm the working timetable, and any impact there

may be on GC's services existing or proposed. Owing to the scale of changed proposed, see point E below, XC owe it to industry to provide clarity to allow a proper consultation process to be held.

- B. The Form P repeatedly relies on the fact that the services were bid, and paths were included or developed for the December 2026 timetable. We must make it clear to all parties that timetable inclusion does not grant access rights, the timetable paths remain subject to the statutory access-rights outcome until then they should have been suppressed in the timetable, as is the precedent and timetable inclusion creates no regulatory priority or presumption of continuation. This creates an inconsistent, inaccurate and misleading position within XC's form P and therefore prohibits a proper industry consultation from taking place
- C. We would also remind Network Rail that in their decision letter on XC 45SA of 15 July 2026, ORR stated very clearly in paragraph 27 that *"For the avoidance of doubt, we have noted Network Rail's position on the continuation of the additional contingent rights beyond PCD 2026. In light of this and the issues raised around potentially competing applications, our usual policy of a strong presumption of the continuation of existing rights will not apply for the extension of the contingent rights beyond PCD 2026."* this means that any rights in XC 45SA fall away in December of this year, regardless of any paths Network Rail allocated to XC in the timetable, so XC must reapply for all of these paths. We therefore expect to be able to see these paths clearly in the combination of XC's 46SA and 48SA, which we are not able to do yet.
- D. To further clarify why we do not believe XC's 48SA is clear enough to permit proper industry consultation, the 45SA rights tables can be used as a comparison document, but they cannot properly be described as the access-rights baseline for the period beginning at PCD 2026 because they contain rights that expire at that point. The correct baseline must separately identify:
- firm rights that continue beyond PCD 2026;
 - contingent rights that cease at PCD 2026;
 - rights being surrendered;
 - genuinely additional rights; and
 - all rights for which firm status is now sought.

The current Form P merges these categories and risks implying that the 82 contingent rights already exist for the December 2026 period which they clearly don't owing to the ORR statement of the 45SA decision letter referred to in point C

above. Therefore XC has issued a misleading and inaccurate form P, which Network Rail should not have passed to industry for consultation upon.

E. The scale of XC's application is understated. XC's proposal is not an increase of ten rights as written in the form P, as using XC's own figures, it seeks:

- 48 firm rights replacing expiring contingent rights from the 38th SA;
- 34 firm rights replacing expiring contingent rights from the 45th SA;
- ten additional rights; and
- surrender of two rights.

The conversion of 82 contingent rights into firm rights is itself a major substantive change and one that we do not believe is accurately reflected in the form P, creating an issue of transparency for busy operators seeking to analyse and respond to an important consultation, in a short-time period. The burden of responsibility is on XC to provide appropriate information to Network Rail in order to facilitate a robust consultation, although Network Rail, as infrastructure manager must satisfy itself that the form P is correct and accurate before issuing it to industry.

F. GC is referred to intermittently as a "known aspiration", an "unsupported application"; and "a section 17 application in direct competition with XC". It is not for XC to determine whether GC and XC are directly competing, that is a decision for the ORR, in any event, XC do not state where they believe there is overlap on a path-by-path comparison explaining why XC can be accommodated while Grand Central cannot, as would be expected to be the case if such statements are being made. And to be clear, GC is not a "known aspirant", GC made a formal section 17 application in December 2025, 8 months prior to this application from XC, back with an appropriate business case, Arriva governance approval, and supporting independent third party supporting information where appropriate. GC's application is at the final stage of the ORR approval process, awaiting ORR determination. XC, and Network Rail by allowing the form P to progress to industry consultation is misleading industry and mischaracterising a formal application made by GC, as noted in point B above. As a result, we believe the characterisation of GC's application is misleading to industry.

We expect this form P to be retracted by Network Rail on behalf of XC in order for it to be properly updated due to the material defects contained within it, as noted above, as we would expect to be the case of a competent infrastructure manager. Please confirm receipt of my mail, and the action Network Rail intend to take.

GC reserves its position in relation to this application, the material errors contained within it, and may take further action in due course as appropriate.

For and on behalf of Grand Central.

Regards

Business Development Director – UK Trains

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(See PDF letter in separate attachment)

From: @crosscountrytrains.co.uk

Sent: 24 August 2026 11:59

To: @arriva.co.uk; @networkrail.co.uk; @grandcentralrail.com

Subject: FW: Industry Consultation - XC Trains Limited, 48th Supplemental S22A, Dec'26 - Unsupported Application

Hi

Thanks for your second letter of feedback regarding our 48th SA.

In response to your letter of 14th August 2026 regarding XC's 48th SA S22A unsupported Dec 26 Application. I also include attached my original response (4th August) to your e-mail of 27th July as a number of your points in this latest letter I addressed in this previous response and these still stand:

1. We acknowledge that GC strongly object to our 48th SA.
2. We acknowledge the interacting nature of your current live applications and our 48th application. XC currently has plans in place and expects to have the necessary traincrew and fleet resources to operate these services during the December 2026 timetable. Our understanding from recent industry discussions is that the proposed Grand Central Newcastle to Brighton services are not currently planned for introduction in the December 2026 timetable. However, we recognise that Grand Central's application remains under consideration by ORR and nothing in this response should be taken as commenting on the merits or potential outcome of that application. We also understand that there remain outstanding TPRs relevant to operation of those services.

3. As we noted in our response of 4th August we are satisfied we have acted within the framework of the ORRs Industry code of practice for track access application consultations (published March 2024) namely around paragraphs 41-59 focusing on a S22a application. For the avoidance of doubt, XC recognises that the 48th Supplemental Agreement application falls to be determined by ORR on its own merits and that ORR will assess the application in accordance with the relevant statutory and contractual framework, taking account of all consultation responses received.
4. The majority of the rights requested on our 48th SA are to roll forward rights we currently hold as contingents and expire at the end of SCD26 (along with three new services on our XC2 Service group (Newcastle-Reading services) which we address below). XC currently operates these services and continues to monitor traincrew, fleet and service performance through established industry processes. XC acknowledge that there have been challenges within parts of its traincrew resourcing base particularly on Sundays, and has addressed these matters, together with fleet and performance initiatives, within the relevant sections of the Form P.
5. On page 2 of your letter, you reference our 38th and 45th and note there is no reference to the services the rights relate to. I should point out that it is standard that a Track Access contract would not specify a specific train path in detail so as to allow the IM make the best use of railway infrastructure and applications are focused on quantum of rights on a given route (as addressed in 2.11 of the aforementioned framework). That said our full TT for May 26 and Dec 26 are published and equally I am happy to provide in TT format our TT on any given route to indicate our TT against our quantum of access rights. I have also attached our excel version of the marked up table 2.1 and 2.2 which shows the full breakdown of rights with those on the 48th in red with notes as to where they originate from (noting this information has also been provided in list form on the form P). Furthermore I have provided a summary of headcodes in relation to TT development alongside our recent SA's which hopefully provides the information you are looking to obtain.
6. 1V81 and 1V84 noted on page 2 of your letter we have operated since the start of the May 26 TT (these also ran pre-covid and are part of our well known and ongoing project and aspirations to build up our services in a post covid environment to match passenger demand and balance enhancements in our rolling stock and traincrew availability) and as you correctly point out these are currently contingent rights that expire at the end of SCD26 which we have requested to roll forward and to do so as firm rights. Separately, timetable development work has identified timetable solutions that

accommodate these services within the December 2026 timetable. XC recognises that such timetable development work does not determine whether access rights should ultimately be granted by ORR.

7. Our new services 1E30/1E60/1V88 that you reference on pages 2 and 3 of your letter also ran pre-covid and are part of our well known and ongoing project and aspirations to build up our services in a post covid environment to match passenger demand and balance enhancements in our rolling stock and traincrew availability. XC currently expects to have the necessary resources in place to operate these services within the December 2026 timetable. Separately, timetable development work has identified timetable solutions that accommodate these services. XC recognises that timetable development does not determine whether the relevant access rights should be granted.
8. A number of points raised on pages 4 -7 relate principally to decisions and processes undertaken by Network Rail. We consider that Network Rail is best placed to address those issues directly.. I have discussed this with colleagues at NR to facilitate you having these discussions. We should note as an unsupported S22A application that XC are handling the application and will be submitting to the ORR.
9. With regards to our 46th SA, you will note in my response on 4th August I provided a summary of the contents of that application, I remain available to answer any further questions you may have regarding this. It remains unfortunate the delay to the industry consultation on this one and we have worked closely with the NR customer team. The industry consultation for the 46th SA has now commenced.
10. We understand it will be for the ORR to consider these interacting applications alongside our own 48th SA. Given timescales across the industry around Track Access applications it has been necessary to work with NR Capacity Planning on our Dec 26 TT development whilst a simultaneous piece of work is ongoing around our access rights in our 46th and 48th SA. We work with our commercial teams around reservations and sales and have internal governance to manage the introduction of each TT taking into account all workstreams including outstanding Track Access rights. This does not equate to any presumption that the relevant access rights will be granted or continue beyond their existing expiry dates. Rather, it reflects the practical necessity for timetable development, industry planning, reservations and sales workstreams to progress in parallel whilst ORR's determination remains outstanding. The inclusion of services within timetable development or associated planning processes should not be

interpreted as predetermining any future ORR decision regarding access rights.

Should you have any further questions regarding the application or supporting information, please let me know

Planning Manager, Train Planning, CrossCountry

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