[redacted]
Executive, Access & Licensing
E-mail: [redacted]

06 November 2026

[redacted]
Customer Manager
Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd
Waterloo General Office
London
SE1 8SW

[redacted]
Senior Policy and Performance Manager
Colas Rail Limited
25 Victoria Street, Floor 3
London
SW1H 0EX

Dear [redacted]

Approval of the 18th supplemental agreement to the track access contract between Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (Network Rail) and Colas Rail Limited (Colas) dated 11 December 2016

1. Today we approved the 18th supplemental agreement. These rights support the reliable and timely flow of goods across the freight network. Transporting freight by rail plays a key role in the UK economy, delivering significant economic, environmental and social benefits across the country. This letter explains the reasons for our decision made under section 22 of the Railways Act 1993 (the Act).

Application Purpose

2. The application was submitted by Network Rail and Colas to ORR on 30 October 2026. The purpose of this agreement is to amend 4 firm rights and relinquish 16 rights, providing certainty to Colas and its customers and freeing up capacity on the rail network.

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.

Industry consultation

5. Network Rail undertook the normal industry consultation, which ran from 14 August 2026 to 11 September 2026. Responses were received with no comment or objection from West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Transport Focus, CrossCountry, Great Western Railway and Northern. No responses with objections were received.

ORR review process

6. 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

7. 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

8. 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

9. 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

[redacted]