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Dear Jayne and Rob

113th Supplemental Agreement (SA) 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

We have today issued directions under section 22A of the Railways Act 1993 (the Act) to Network Rail and GWR (jointly the parties) to enter into the above supplemental agreement. ORR's direction will allow GWR to introduce new daily train services between Bristol Brabazon and Bristol Temple Meads, improving connectivity between those areas and supporting economic growth. This letter explains the reasons for our decision.

Application

The purpose of this agreement is to grant GWR the firm rights necessary to operate services between the new Bristol Brabazon station (previously called North Filton) and Bristol Temple Meads station. The services will run all days of the week, not exceeding one train per hour in each direction.

The new station and additional services form part of the MetroWest Phase 2 scheme and are intended to improve connectivity between the Filton Enterprise Area, North Fringe,

Temple Quay Enterprise Zone and Bristol City Centre. The rights are to commence when the station becomes operational and run until the end of the contract.

The application was submitted on 22 October 2025 under section 22A of the Act, as Network Rail, at that stage, was unable to support it, as it had not finalised the May 2026 timetable and wished to reserve its view of interactions at Bristol Temple Meads between this application and the aspirations of other operators. Following the statutory consultation process detailed below, Network Rail has confirmed that it is now able to support the application in full.

Industry consultation

Network Rail undertook the usual industry consultation between 24 October and 21 November 2025. Transport Focus and Transport for Wales replied, offering support or no specific comments. Cross Country said that it did not support the application as it did not have sufficient information to demonstrate that the proposition was viable. It also expressed concerns about impacts at Bristol Temple Meads.

Network Rail initially failed to respond to Cross Country's concerns until we queried it during our review of the application. By that stage, Network Rail could offer further updates to Cross Country about Bristol Temple Meads and performance, timetabling and capacity issues. This resulted in Cross Country withdrawing its objection.

Statutory Consultation

As required under the Act, Network Rail provided what it described as its "initial representations" on 13 November 2025 and GWR provided its comments on those representations on 14 November 2025. Network Rail was not able to provide its final representations until 26 June 2026. GWR commented on those representations on 30 June 2026.

Network Rail's representations and GWR's comments

Network Rail noted in its initial representations that there was little alignment between the timetable GWR had bid for and the access rights application, meaning at this stage, the performance analysis was based on the timetable applied for, which had double the number of services. It also noted the requirement for the station to be designated as a monitoring point for the purposes of Schedule 8.

Network Rail said that it could not comment on capacity until it knew which timetable would operate, although it did mention a number of applications/aspirations to use Bristol Temple Meads. It said it wouldn't be able to provide its final representations until the timetable issues had been resolved and it could do its performance and capacity assessments. GWR made various general comments in response.

There was a delay while Network Rail and GWR attempted to resolve the timetabling issue and then progress performance and capacity assessments. In due course, Network Rail confirmed that it could now support the application in full (i.e. firm rights until the end of the contract). It also noted that performance modelling had highlighted improvements (compared to initial concerns about challenges around network performance and capacity). Timetable capacity analysis at Bristol Temple Meads had demonstrated that this application was compatible with, and did not conflict with, the Transport for Wales 52nd SA and the GWR 128th SA applications.

Network Rail said that it recognised the strategic importance of expanding passenger services as part of MetroWest Phase 2, which included Bristol Brabazon station, and recognised the significance of this, and other new stations, in enhancing regional connectivity and promoting economic growth. GWR commented that it was grateful for Network Rail's extensive analysis and research.

ORR review

We noted what Network Rail had said about there being no conflicts with the Transport for Wales 52nd SA and the GWR 128th SA applications and asked for Network Rail's view on potential interactions with the existing Lumo 3rd SA application for services between Paddington and Paignton and a potential application from Grand Central for services between Bristol Temple Meads and London Waterloo. Network Rail provided a detailed response which we were satisfied with. Regarding the Lumo 3rd SA, it said that the services in this application would, in the main, use a different approach to Bristol Temple Meads and, therefore, different platforms. This meant that there would be no conflicts with the GWR 113th SA.

Regarding the potential application from Grand Central, our track access guidance notes that aspirations for alternative uses of the capacity where no application has been received, will generally not be considered as part of our process.

We queried the lack of a response to Cross Country's industry consultation concerns and this was resolved, as explained above. We had some queries about the drafting of the SA and the way the access rights were expressed in it and these were resolved to our satisfaction. We suggested to the parties that any changes needed in Schedule 8 of the contract as a result of this decision could be progressed at a later date and they agreed.

Our duties under section 4 of the Act and our decision

We have considered this supplemental agreement and we have concluded that its approval is consistent with the discharge of our statutory duties under section 4 duties of the Act; in particular, those relating to promoting improvements in railway service performance (section 4(1)(b)), 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)).

We have carefully considered all of the evidence provided by the parties and consultees and we have concluded that the application should be directed.

Conformed copy of the track access contract

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 GWR. ORR's copy should be sent for my attention.

Public register and administration

Electronic copies of this letter, the directions notice and the agreement will be sent to Network Rail's Policy and Access Team. Copies of the directions notice and the agreement will be placed on ORR's public register and copies of this letter and the agreement will be placed on the ORR website.

Yours sincerely



Jonathan Rodgers