

APPLICATION TO THE OFFICE OF RAIL AND ROAD FOR A PASSENGER TRACK ACCESS CONTRACT, OR AN AMENDMENT TO AN EXISTING CONTRACT

Use this form to apply to the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) for a passenger track access contract, or an amendment to an existing contract by a supplemental agreement, under sections 17-22A or the Railways Act 1993.

It sets out ORR's standard information requirements for considering applications. Our [track access guidance](#) explains the process, timescales and the issues we will consider. Please read the guidance before completing the contract and this form.

If the facility owner and beneficiary have agreed terms, the facility owner should fill in the form. If not, the beneficiary should fill in the form.

A pre-application industry consultation is usually required before submitting an application. Please see the industry [code of practice for track access application consultations](#) for more information.

This form should be completed up to section 9 and sent to consultees along with a copy of the proposed contract or supplemental agreement. Sections 9 and 10 should be filled in after the consultation and before applying to ORR.

We are happy to talk to you informally before you apply. Please contact us [here](#). You can download a copy of this form, and of our model track access contract, from our [website](#). Please ensure that you are using the latest version of this form as published on our website. We may ask for applications which have not used the latest version to be resubmitted.

You may also use and adapt this form if necessary to apply to use railway facilities other than those of Network Rail. Do not use this form for HS1, for which a separate form is available on our [website](#).

1. Application Summary

1.1 Beneficiary company name:

Go-op Co-operative Limited

1.2 Facility owner details:

Network Rail:		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Region:	Southern <input type="checkbox"/>	Eastern <input type="checkbox"/>	North West & Central <input type="checkbox"/>	Wales & Western <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Scotland's Railway <input type="checkbox"/>
Other Facility Owner:		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Please state:	West Somerset Railway plc	

1.3 Application under the Railways Act 1993 section:

17	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	18	<input type="checkbox"/>	22	<input type="checkbox"/>	22A	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Supplemental Number:			
				Current contract date:			
				Current contract expiry date:			

1.4 Applicant status:

Public Service Operator	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public service contract start date:	
		Public service contract end date:	
Open Access	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Charter Operator	<input type="checkbox"/>		

1.5 Executive summary of the proposed contract or amendment:

Service Group GO01 will operate from 2023 to 2035 using class 153 rolling stock (with modifications for PRM compliance). All timing loads are therefore 15x. There will initially be two diagrams operated by three sets. The quanta of firm rights requested are as follows:

North/Eastbound Passenger Services

From	To	Via	TSC	Mon-Fri	Sat	Sun
TAU	WSM	N/A	26671200	2	2	2
TAU	WSB	Pass FRO and BRU	26671103	2	1	1
TAU	WSB	Via FRO	26671101	1	1	1
TAU	SWI	Via FRO and MLK	26671100	4	4	4
FRO	WSB	N/A	26671102	2	0	0

South/Westbound Passenger Services

WSB	FRO	N/A	26671102	2	0	0
SWI	TAU	Via FRO and MLK	26671100	4	4	4
WSM	TAU	N/A	26671200	2	2	2
WSB	TAU	Via FRO	26671101	1	1	1
WSB	TAU	Pass FRO and BRU	26671103	2	1	1

The routes affected:

GW105, GW107, GW108, GW500, GWE510, GW523, GW560, GW570

The firm rights sought have been evaluated by Network Rail for compliance with pre-pandemic timetables and current Train Planning Rules as part of the Westbury Area Advanced Timetable Study; they are consistent with the aspirations of other operators on the route.

We have not sought firm rights for all compliant paths as at the time of writing performance analysis is still underway.

The end date has been chosen on the basis on the ITPR: Industry Review Document – Final Draft V1.1.

Safe operation on the route will be managed in accordance with safety certificates held by GO-OP and the associated Safety Management System.

In addition, GO-OP is seeking contingent rights as follows:

North/Eastbound				Mon-Fri	Sat	Sun
From	To	Via	TSC			
TAU	WSM	N/A	26671200	2	2	2
WSM	PSN	N/A	26671201	4	4	4
TAU	WSB	Via FRO Via FRO	26671101	2	2	2
TAU NTNFTZN (to WSR)	SWI TAU	and MLK N/A	26671100 26671300	2 6	2 6	2 6
South/Westbound						
TAU	NTNFTZN (fr. WSR)	N/A Via FRO and MLK	26671300	6	6	6
SWI	TAU	N/A	26671100	2	2	2
WSM	TAU	N/A	26671200	2	2	2
WSB	TAU	Via FRO	26671101	2	2	2
PSN	WSM	N/A	26671103	4	4	4

Some of these additional rights would be exercised in order to deliver the timetable that has been developed in the Advanced Study; others would be introduced as future capacity improvements and timetable refinement permit.

The ancillary ECS movements are to enable daily refuelling and stabling at Platform 6 at Taunton (or, when unavailable, network sidings) and at Thingley Junction sidings.

We propose a phased introduction of the new services as follows:

- From 22/05/2023 – route familiarisation, all TSCs
- From 26/06/2023 – TSC 26671101 only
- From 25/09/2023 – All TSCs, one diagram only
- From 27/11/2023 – Full service

Proposed commencement date:	22/05/2023
End date:	04/06/2035
Date approval or directions wanted by:	16/12/2022

1.6 Industry consultation:

Who carried out the consultation?	NR		
Consultation start date:	27/05/2022	Consultation end date:	09/07/2022
Not carried out <input type="checkbox"/>			

1.7 Applicant details

<u>Facility Owner</u> Company: Network Rail Contact name: Gianmaria Cutrupi Job title: Customer Manager, Aspirant Open Access Address: One Eversholt Street London NW1 2DN	<u>Beneficiary</u> Company: Go-op Co-operative Limited Contact name: Alex Lawrie Job title: Business Development Director Address: c/o Somerset Co-op Hub 10 East Reach, Taunton TA1 3EW
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1.7 Date of application to ORR:

21/09/2022

2. Licence and railway safety certificate

2.1 Please state whether:

- you intend to operate the services yourself; or
- have them operated on your behalf.
 - if so, please name the proposed operating company:

2.2 Does the proposed operator of the services:

- (a) hold a valid train operating licence under section 8 of the Railways Act 1993 or an exemption under section 7, **and**
- (b) hold a valid safety certificate under the Railways and Other Guided Transport Systems (Safety) Regulations 2006.

If the answer to (a) **or** (b) is no, please state the point reached in obtaining a licence, exemption and/or safety certificate.

We do not presently hold a valid train operating licence. Our intention is to apply twelve weeks before the commencement date given above. We are well advanced in the process of adopting a valid safety certificate, and are confident of completing it before operations commence.

3. The proposed contract or amendment

3.1 Application overview: Please detail the proposed contract or amendment. This should cover the services, the commercial terms, and the reasons for making the application in the terms proposed. This information should be laid out clearly and concisely, and fully highlight the changes from the previous version of the contract (in the case of an amendment).

We do not propose to depart from the model track access contract.

3.2 Safety risks: Please explain any important safety risks that have been identified arising from the proposal and how these will be controlled (by reference to the facility owner's safety authorisation and the train operator's safety certificate).

In the course of developing the proposal, Network Rail modelled the risk profile of level crossings on the route. The increased quanta of services (including both firm and contingent rights) led to some significant changes in the risk profile of some crossings. Actions to mitigate these risks have been proposed by Network Rail and will be addressed in our investment strategy.

3.3 Contract duration: For new agreements or extensions to existing agreements, please provide justification for the proposed duration and, if more than 5 years, with reference to the [Railways \(Access, Management and Licensing\) Regulations 2016](#).

In order to recover the investment that we wish to make, and to enable us to fully establish ourselves as a new train operating company, we are seeking a contract with a duration no less than 12 years.

3.4 Terms not agreed with the facility owner (for applications under sections 17 or 22A only):

Please explain any areas of the application which have **not** been agreed, the reasons for the failure to agree and the reasons for seeking these provisions.

Although both Go-op and the facility owner have used their best endeavours to achieve a section 18 application, we find that a significant piece of timetable development that would have major implications for our service is only just now nearing completion, and the full results of performance analysis are not yet complete. In order to progress our application for a licence and contract adequately in advance of the priority timetable date, it is necessary to begin the process now. It is our expectation that the outcome of the capacity and performance study being carried out will be sufficient to enable the facility owner to support our application.

3.5 Departures from ORR's model access contracts

Does the proposed contract include any departures from ORR's model access contract:

Yes No

If yes, please set out and explain any:

- areas where the drafting of the application changes ORR's published template access contracts (as appropriate, cross-referencing to the answers below). Please also explain why these departures have been made.

- instances where the proposal departs from the charging and/or performance regimes established by ORR's latest periodic review (or subsequent interim reviews) as reflected in ORR's model access contracts, including the financial implications (e.g. establishment of an access charge supplement or rebate).

- new processes (e.g. a self-modification provision) which have been added. Please also demonstrate fully how this new process is robust and complete.

3.6 Consolidated contract

For amendments to existing contracts, is the version of the consolidated contract on our [website](#) fully up to date? If not, please explain why not.

4. The expression of access rights and the use of capacity

4.1 Benefits: please set out what specific benefits the proposal will achieve, including a justification for requiring the rights and their characteristics. Please provide full descriptions of any new rights required, as compared to the previous contract (in the case of an amendment). Please also describe any significant changes in the pattern of services, their benefits to passengers and any impact on other

operators, including freight operators. Please provide a fully marked-up version or document comparison of any tables in Schedule 5 which are being modified as a result of this application.

This is an initial application has two over-arching objectives:

- (a) to improve local rail services in the Taunton Travel-to-Work area;
- (b) to start services on a long-planned cross-country route designed to improve rail connectivity across the Wessex region, so as to establish Taunton – Westbury - Swindon as a consistent, strategic route with good opportunities for interchange to destinations including Southampton, London, Exeter, Bristol and South Wales.

We are mindful of the need to develop consistent timings for train services, in order to minimise the benefits to passengers (memorability) and Network Rail (network capacity maximisation). However, in order to facilitate their introduction, the paths sought here have merely been constructed around existing train services (both passenger and freight). Whilst we have already identified some paths which could become regular, we are looking to work over the coming years with the DfT, Network Rail and GWR to develop and standardise future service patterns, and link together existing services to reduce the need for unnecessary passenger interchange and to improve train operating efficiency.

The main benefits of the current application are:

- the creation of commuting opportunities into Taunton, Somerset's county town (popn. 70,000);
- direct services from Frome (popn. 25,000) to the regional centres of Swindon and Taunton, and an increased number of daily departures which, with interchange, further increases trips to those locations;
- improvements for journeys across Wessex, presently with a very poor rail offer (low frequency/ requirement to interchange);
- service frequency increases on the Westbury - Trowbridge – Melksham (popn. 20,000) – Swindon corridor, up from 7 departures a day to 11 or more;
- connections at Westbury allowing travel between Swindon and Southampton; Taunton, Yeovil and Frome to Southampton; and Yeovil and Swindon;
- more journey opportunities to travel to London via Westbury or Swindon for residents of Frome, Trowbridge, and Melksham;
- the provision of regional passing trains which would be more appropriate to serve the proposed re-opening of stations at Royal Wootton Bassett and Langport & Somerton than high-speed IEP trains to/from London;
- a potential future extension to Bishops Lydeard for local and onward travel to West Somerset and the North Devon coast; or to serve the new station planned for Wellington.

Whilst detailed path-by-path discussions have been held with Network Rail timetabling experts, a full simulation of the entire route has not yet been carried out because we have gone out of our way to avoid requesting at this stage any paths which conflict with other services. We have commissioned a qualitative performance analysis from Tracsis, and a previous dynamic performance analysis carried out on a similar timetable found no significant risk of cascading delays.

4.2 Adequacy: How have you satisfied yourself that there is enough network capacity for the services in the proposal? Are there any implications for overall network performance and the facility owner's maintenance and renewal activities?

In early 2020, we began timetable development work based on the December 2020 timetable with Network Rail's timetable planning team and The Railway Consultancy Ltd, which established the broad shape of the timetable. As the pandemic crisis began to limit Network Rail's capacity to offer further support, we asked Tracsis to undertake a detailed study of capacity and performance to check compliance and optimise performance. This led to our initial proposal to Network Rail in 2021, which

in turn was the basis for our inclusion in the Westbury Area Advanced Study. This proposal relies upon the draft timetable agreed in the course of that study.

We are confident that the timetable paths being sought satisfy all planning margins (where TPRs did not specifically address class 153 rolling stock, we relied upon generic 75 mph 15x or DMU timings).

In the course of the capacity analysis, we did identify infrastructure constraints which we propose to address through contributing in whole or in part to network investment:

- (a) Westbury 'platform 0'; the restoration of a fourth platform would provide more recovery time and ease platforming constraints.
- (b) Capacity limitations on the single track Melksham branch required us to terminate a fifth service in Chippenham, and prevented a sixth entirely. In light of this we have made two of our six compliant paths through Melksham contingent rather than firm, and we have begun detailed discussions with Wiltshire Council and others regarding measures to increase capacity on the branch.
- (c) A passing loop at Frome, with a second platform at the station, would support not only additional paths for this service but also the potential introduction of services on the East Somerset line to Shepton Mallett.
- (d) Castle Cary has no means for trains to reverse towards Taunton or Yeovil, which prevents shuttle services and direct services to Yeovil, both of which would have been active considerations for our route planning.

These options are to be included in our investment strategy; while they are in many cases beyond our capabilities to remedy we do intend to lead partnerships and commission research so as to make them possible.

Lastly we are aware that there is concern that – dependent on the long term franchise specification, and recovery in demand following the pandemic – there may be some congestion in the Swindon area. While the paths specified here are compliant, the potential for us in future to serve a re-opened Wantage and Grove station; make a direct connection between Swindon and Oxford; or offer services between Bristol and Oxford; or link East-West Rail to the South West; would require further capacity enhancements.

We are not seeking to run trains outside current line opening and operation times, so should not affect infrastructure maintenance requirements or impose undue burdens on signallers. However, we understand that a tunnel inspection scheduled for Thursday mornings takes advantage of a present gap in the timetable that we propose to fill. We will seek an alternative arrangement that ensures that such maintenance can be safely carried out.

4.3 Flexing rights: Please explain any limitations on the facility owner's flexing rights in the proposal and the rationale for such limitations.

We have taken the general view, when trying to timetable trains, that existing passenger and freight services should not be affected, and we have generally been very successful in doing. However, in a few cases, we have suggested moving recovery time between locations along the route, whilst maintaining identical journey times, which we do not believe to be a problem. The timetabling work presently underway involves most of the key operators in the area, and so most issues have already been resolved.

4.4 Specified equipment: Please explain any changes to specified equipment (rolling stock). Has the vehicle and route acceptance procedure in the Network Code (Part F) has been completed? Please explain whether you have, or will have, the rolling stock necessary to exercise the rights.

We propose to use class 153 rolling stock, modified to achieve PRM compliance following the model established by Transport for Wales. We have verified that sufficient sets are available from Porterbrook and are not at present required for any other purpose.

We expect to convert two units ourselves, while a third will be leased or subleased as the utilisation of existing compliant units by Transport for Wales declines due to the introduction of new rolling stock.

As passenger numbers increase, we do not anticipate congestion on board; however, in the event that later in the contract we do experience overcrowding it should be possible to lease one of the larger 15x units that is expected to cascade, or operate a larger number of 153s working in multiple.

We plan to carry out a full route compliance study in early 2023, but given the widespread use of Class 15x across the whole route we do not anticipate significant difficulties.

4.5 Contractual obligations: Are the proposed services necessary to fulfil obligations under a public service contract? For publicly contracted operators seeking additional access rights, we will expect to see evidence of funder support for the specific rights and of operators' intent and ability to operate the new services.

N/A

4.6 Public funding: Other than the DfT, Welsh Government or Transport Scotland, are the proposed services subject to financial support from central or local government including PTEs. If so, please give details.

N/A

4.7 Long Term Planning Process: Is the Long Term Planning Process relevant to this application? If so, please explain how the proposed rights are consistent or inconsistent with this.

We have not yet contributed to the Long Term Planning Process. However, we have previously taken account of Route Utilisation Strategies. The 2015 Western Route Study specifically notes poor connections and increasing demand between the Midlands / North and South West as an issue (p 63, p 79, p 87, p 158, p177) and our proposal addresses this directly.

5. Competing passenger services:

We would expect to apply the 'not primarily abstractive' test to:

- (i) a new open access service which would compete with franchised services and so impact on the public sector funder's budget;
- (ii) a new franchised service which would compete with an existing franchised service, where we would expect to focus the test on areas where the competing franchised services are operated on behalf of different funders or where for some other reason there are particular concerns over the impact on a funder's budget; and
- (iii) a new service, which might be open access or franchised, which would compete with an existing open access service and which, if it caused the existing open access operator to withdraw from the market, could reduce overall competition on the network.

5.1 Please state if your application is for a competing passenger service, and if so please describe the nature of the competition:

We are seeking wherever possible to operate an evenly spaced timetable such that departures from stations on our route that were previously every two hours become hourly; or in some cases, where an hourly service already exists, half hourly. In addition we seek to 'feed' passengers to connecting services provided by other operators. However, we accept that there will be some abstraction and we have modelled demand to check that we can comply with the NPA test. Our findings were that revenue was in excess of 40% generative. Since then, the DfT have run their own assessment and broadly confirmed our conclusions.

5.2 For competing services, please also confirm that you have attached as part of your submission to ORR the following:

- Business plan, including details of:
 - forecasts of passenger traffic and revenues, including forecast methodology;
 - pricing strategies;
 - ticketing arrangements;
 - rolling stock specifications (e.g. load factor, number of seats, wagon configuration);
 - marketing strategy;
 - estimated elasticities of the services (e.g. price elasticity, elasticity with respect to quality characteristics of the services).
- Demand forecasting (including associated spreadsheet models) demonstrating modelled generation : abstraction ratio.
- Indicative timetables, including associated .spg files

6. Incentives

6.1 Train operator performance: please describe any planned projects associated with the operation of the proposed services aimed at improving your performance.

GO-OP is happy to endorse the following package of measures recommended by our consultants Tracsis for the current timetable. It stresses collaboration with industry partners in pursuit of the objective of punctuality and reliability – in particular, through:

- iterative development of train paths to improve timetable robustness
- instilling On Time performance culture throughout the business, mitigating the risks associated with minimum dwell times
- compliance with Route contingency plans for reduced capacity
- implementing service recovery plans to manage own service perturbations

- collaborative performance review with NR and operators with a willingness to change strategy and adopt innovative solutions where required to deliver member benefit
- in our timetabling we have not opted for the fastest possible journey times but have instead allowed some slack to enable recovery time and improve the resilience of the timetable.
- Defective On Train Equipment (DOTE) plan will ensure that units do not enter service with high-risk faults, and define suitable locations for units to be taken out of service if a fault occurs en route.
- a contingency plan for assistance of a disabled unit in conjunction with other Operators and NR Route Control; and a technical support helpline for drivers.
- Driver competency training to include simple fault finding and repairs.
- GO-OP Control Manual to include a procedure for managing this scenario, including contractual arrangements with other Operators
- GO-OP Control Manual to include a procedure for dealing with ill passengers in line with other Operators' "ill passengers" procedures
- GO-OP to develop strong performance culture among drivers and guards alongside safety culture which underpins good performance. They should be made aware that "every second counts"
- GO-OP train crew establishment to include provision of spare turns with availability at critical times of day. Driver Incapacitation
- GO-OP to consider diversionary route knowledge strategy which could include: Frome Avoiding Line; Westbury Station: all platforms and sidings where units can be stabled; Fairwood Junction — Heywood Junction — Hawkeridge Junction; Bradford Junction - Thingley Junction via Bathampton Junction / Bath Spa; Taunton — Thingley Junction via Bristol Temple Meads including Uphill Junction — Worle Junction avoiding Weston-super-Mare; Swindon Station: all platforms and sidings where units can be stabled.
- Driver and guard establishment to include capacity for staff to carry out route refreshing when required.

6.2 Facility owner performance: please describe any planned projects associated with the operation of the proposed services aimed at improving the facility owner's own performance.

As noted above, we are keen to contribute to improvements already under consideration, including an additional platform at Westbury, reduced headways on the line around the proposed Somerton & Langport Station, and improvements to the signalling and access to the West Somerset Railway.

We are also discussing a joint project with Wiltshire Council and other partners to enhance the capacity of the Melksham branch by adding a passing loop suitable for freight and passenger services at Thingley Junction. It seems unlikely that this project will attract public funding in the near future, so we are drawing up plans to link it to developments on land owned by Wiltshire Council coupled with flying freeholds over the track near Melksham. We believe that this will enable us to attract sufficient private finance for the necessary trackwork, possessions and re-signalling.

Longer term, we note that interchange at Castle Cary is constrained by the lengthy single track section from Yeovil, the lack of step-free access to some platforms and the limited facilities and bus services. We are at the early stage of planning, and intend to bring forward plans that might be suitable for joint or private finance.

6.3 Monitoring of services: Will all proposed services be monitored for performance throughout their journey? If not, please explain.

Yes. Real time monitoring at our control centre in Taunton will allow for instant response to any incidents, with staff continuously on duty while trains are operational. Communications will use continuous radio backed up by mobile telephone / VOIP systems.

6.4 Performance regime changes (for applications under sections 17 or 22A only): where applicable, please provide justification for any changes to Schedule 8 of the track access contract in the proposal. If necessary, please provide any relevant information in support of the changes proposed.

N/A

7. Enhancement

7.1 Enhancement details: where the proposal provides for the delivery of any network enhancements, or the services in the proposal are subject to any planned network enhancements, please give full details of the relevant enhancement schemes, including a summary of outputs from the scheme, timescales and the extent to which the network change procedure in the Network Code (Part G) has been completed (where appropriate, by reference to submissions made under ORR's enhancement reporting framework).

We are grateful for the guidance we have received on risk around level crossings on our route, which will necessarily increase with the level of service.

The following improvements are proposed as part of our investment strategy:

Ansford - Install surface/handrails

Athelney – build local support for closure; divert footpath along the boundary to a grade separated crossing

Broughton Gifford 26 (public) - build local support for closure; divert footpath along the boundary to a grade separated crossing

Church Farm 1 - Replace surface / approaches as per your suggestion

Dilton Marsh 10 - build local support for closure; divert footpath along the boundary to a grade separated crossing

Hawkeridge - build local support for closure; divert footpath along the boundary to a grade separated crossing

Heywood 3 - build local support for closure; divert footpath along the boundary to a grade separated crossing

Huntspill Level - Retained decision points

Lacock 2 - Retained decision points

Masters (public only) - build local support for closure; divert footpath along the boundary to a grade separated crossing

Melksham 85 - Install surface / handrails

Melksham 92 - Replace crossing with footbridge

Parsonage Farm (Public) - build local support for closure; divert footpath along the boundary to a grade separated crossing

River Frome - build local support for closure; divert footpath along the boundary to a grade separated crossing

Somerton No 2 - build local support for closure; divert footpath along the boundary to a grade separated crossing

Stanmoor - build local support for closure; divert footpath along the boundary to a grade separated crossing

Wheathill - Install surface / handrails

White Horse - Closure

Other Network Enhancements identified above are at an early stage of development, and the present firm rights do not rely upon them. For this reason, we have not commenced the Network Change Procedure in those respects.

7.2 Enhancement charges: please confirm that the arrangements for the funding of any network enhancements are consistent with the [investment framework](#), and summarise the level and duration of payments, and the assumed rate of return.

We confirm that our intention is that any investment arrangements will be consistent with ORR policy.

8. Other

8.1 Associated applications to ORR: please state whether this application is being made in parallel with, or relates to, any other current or forthcoming application to ORR (e.g. in respect of track, station or light maintenance depot access contracts). Where the application is being made in parallel with any other application from the same operator, please ensure the applications are consistent with one another. Where the application relies on another operator relinquishing access rights, please provide evidence that this process has been completed.

This will be our first track access contract, and so alongside our track access application to the ORR we will also be seeking a Passenger Train Operating Licence. In the event that track access is approved but the licence delayed or refused, we will seek to deliver the operation in partnership with a suitably licenced operator.

We are seeking Station Access Contracts for all the stations on our route, and in all cases the Station Facility Owner is GWR. An application to the ORR is therefore being made in parallel.

We will not be seeking contracts for Depot Access. Daily maintenance (fuelling, interior cleaning and examinations) and overnight stabling will take place at the Thingley Junction sidings, and we are negotiating regular visits by qualified field service engineers to enable two weekly inspections and servicing. Periodic and heavy maintenance will take place at Cardiff Canton TMD, with visits expected to be annual from 2024.

We have negotiated an option to purchase the sidings at Thingley Junction and this may lead to a future application to establish a regulated TMD there.

8.2 Side letters and collateral agreements: please confirm here that the whole of the proposal between the parties has been submitted with this application and that there are no side letters or other documents which affect it.

Our Business Plan is now available, including our demand forecasting and timetable. Tracsis' evaluation of capacity and performance accompanies that. The following documents are being prepared and will be available later in spring 2023:

- Safety Management System
- Rolling stock maintenance schedule

There are no side letters or other documents which affect it.

8.3 Confidential redactions: please list any information that you have redacted from any documentation sent to consultees. If there has been no pre-application consultation, please list any information you want us to exclude from publication. Please provide full reasons for any redactions.

N/A

9. Pre-application consultation

9.1 The consultation:

If consultation has not been carried out, explain why not. If it has, please list the consultees.

GWR, Cross Country, South West Railway, freight operators, Somerset County Council, Wiltshire Council, Passenger Focus, the Department for Transport, West Somerset Railway plc, TransWilts, Transition Langport, and various district, borough, parish and town councils on the route.

Who conducted the consultation?

Network Rail (except the consultations with local authorities and community bodies, which Go-op conducted directly).

List all consultees who responded and include their responses and any associated documentation or correspondence between the parties.

Formal responses were received from:

- Wiltshire Council (full response included)
- Somerset County Council (full response included)
- GWR (full response included)
- The Department for Transport (full response included)
- Cross Country (queries via email; not included)

9.2 Resolved issues: please explain any issues raised by consultees which have been resolved.

Somerset County Council raised a concern in 2017 regarding the possible impact of our proposals on their aspiration for an hourly service on the Heart of Wessex line. We responded with an analysis of the possible pinch points, and an explanation of why we saw our service as compatible with this goal. In the light of that, SCC provided a further letter confirming their in-principle support.

TransWilts CIC have expressed concern that the proposal should not lead to a reduction in the service levels in Melksham, and should be consistent with the aspiration to improve those service levels. We have corresponded further to build clarity on the future of the Melksham shuttle, and the potential for increased capacity on the branch. The more recent Westbury area timetable study has since confirmed our belief that further services could be supported.

GBRF asked for more information about our justification for the length of the contract, which we were happy to provide, They also asked about the process of timetable development, and we referred them to Network Rail's advanced timetable development team.

GWR expressed concern about potential abstraction; asked what further work was planned on capacity testing and performance; asked what investment we planned to make, and whether we intended to train new drivers; and asked when we expected to sign lease and maintenance contracts. We provided assurances on all these matters.

Cross Country asked how we would resolve platform conflicts at Taunton. We were able to share with them some of the shunt moves proposed in the timetable study. They have now confirmed that they support the proposal.

The Department for Transport said they had found the service to be generative, and supported it on that basis, but said that they would need more detail of our investment strategy in order to be able to support our application. We responded with more information about our priorities for investment.

Transport Focus said "we're happy to support this application in the general sense that additional choice from open access operators is good for passengers"

9.3 Unresolved issues: Please explain any issues raised by consultees which have **not** been satisfactorily resolved and why you think these issues should not stop ORR approving the application.

Transport for Wales have noted that capacity at Cardiff Canton is at a premium; but that they are willing to discuss further with Go-op what services they can offer. These conversations are ongoing.

Several respondents sought assurances regarding performance impacts. These await the findings of the ongoing Network Rail study.

GBRF expressed doubt that class 153s would still be operating in 2035. We accept that this is beyond their current design life, but also noted (a) that operating life regularly exceeds design life, and (b) that other 15x units would almost certainly have cascaded well before then. However, it is also true that Go-op is urgently seeking full decarbonisation and better energy efficiency than 15x can offer by that date; so we have to concede that use of different units that we are unable to specify at this time would be highly desirable.

9.4 Have any changes been made to the proposal following consultation?

The number of additional, contingent paths sought has been somewhat reduced, but the number of firm paths Taunton – Swindon increased in the light of the encouraging capacity study. The proposal to use sidings at Norton Fitzwarren has been withdrawn in favour of Thingley Junction.

We did not provide details of the phased introduction of services, which we are now doing.

10. Certification

Warning: Under section 146 of the Railways Act 1993, any person who, in giving any information or making any application under or for the purposes of any provision of the Railways Act 1993, makes any statement which he knows to be false in a material particular, or recklessly makes any statement which is false in a material particular, is guilty of an offence and so liable to criminal prosecution.

For agreed applications under section 18 or 22, Network Rail should complete the information below. For disputed applications under section 17 or 22A, the beneficiary should complete it.

I certify that the information provided in this form is true and complete to the best of my knowledge

Signed  Date21st September 2022.....

Name (in caps) ALEX LAWRIE

Job title Operations Director

For (company) Go-op Co-operative Limited

11. Submission

11.1 What to send: please supply the application form, the proposed contract or amendment and, where possible, any other supporting information, in electronic form by e-mail, **in plain Microsoft Word or Open Document Text format** (i.e. excluding any macros, auto-para or page numbering, or other auto-formatting).

11.2 Where to send it:

Email: track.access@orr.gov.uk

Annex: Checklist of documents attached to the application form:

- Proposed new contract or supplemental agreement
- Marked up Schedule 5 (where applicable)
- Marked up comparison to model contract (where applicable)
- Consultation responses
- Replies to consultation responses
- Supporting documentation required for competing services (see section 5.2)
- Other supporting documents, side letters or collateral agreements (please list):
