

Les Waters
Head of Licensing



Kevin McGinley
Development Director
Network Rail Group Property
Waterloo General Office
London
SE1 8SW

7 November 2024

Dear Kevin,

**ORR audit of land disposals under the general consent mechanism of
Condition 17: transactions 1 June 2023 to 31 May 2024**

1. I am writing to conclude our findings of this year's audit for the period given above. We reviewed a selected sample of 21 transactions, checking that the decision to use the general consent facility was appropriate and that a consistent process was followed for each disposal case.
2. We had some mixed findings. Some sign-offs followed a 'best-practice' submission by the sponsor, where it was made clear that a strategic planning group had been consulted by providing a meeting date and reference number. Others, however, did not refer to any strategic planning consideration. We suggest that the best practice approach is made standard.
3. It was not obvious to us initially how the case at Leeman Road, York, was assessed as a general consent transaction, since the land was used in connection with services related to railway by two train operators. We therefore sought to understand how the Stopping Up Order affected Network Rail's land and how the issue was being handled, given the train operators' objections. Our understanding is that this transfer has not concluded and that re-presented details will be available for audit next year.
4. Overall, we are content with the quality of the cases we reviewed. We did ask for more information to see that potential secondary issues had been considered — such as retained access to land, the mitigation of noise complaints and drainage issues. We were satisfied with Network Rail's responses on all points.
5. In closing, we have observed over the last year an inconsistency in information quality provided to us in support of requests for specific consent. We have needed to revert to your teams on a number of occasions, to obtain missing or incomplete information, and better quality maps, plans and reports in order to reach publication standards for our website. If you are able to address such quality issues prior to submission, that would help expedite our casework handling and decision-making processes.



6. I am copying this letter to Michael Chu and also to Sandra Palmer, with thanks for their assistance.
7. A copy of this letter will be published on our website.

Yours sincerely,

Les Waters