



Office of Rail and Road

Overall Framework for Regulating Network Rail: A PR18 Consultation (July 2017)

Historic England Response (DATE)

Historic England is the Government's statutory adviser on all matters relating to the historic environment in England. We are a non-departmental public body established under the National Heritage Act 1983 and sponsored by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. We champion and protect England's historic places, providing expert advice to local planning authorities, developers, owners and communities, to help ensure our historic environment is properly understood, enjoyed and cared for.

In our previous response to the Office of Rail and Roads *Periodic Review 2018 (PR18) Initial Consultation* (August 2017), we noted that to the best of our knowledge, Network Rail does not hold accurate information on the heritage assets in its ownership which could create potential difficulties when planning and implementing future projects.

Furthermore, having been reclassified as a public sector organisation in 2014, Network Rail (and the franchise operators) should adhere to the *Protocol for the care of the Government Historic Estate*, which has been developed by Historic England and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/protocol-for-the-care-of-the-government-historic-estate/>).

This sets out best practice for the management of heritage assets in public ownership and includes, amongst other things: nomination of a heritage officer, to ensure the significance of any heritage asset is taken into account when planning change, commission regular condition surveys, implement a planned programme of repairs and maintenance, ensure the design quality of any new work enhances the historic environment and the preparation of biennial conservation reports.

Having reviewed the consultation, together with the proposed score cards for both the routes and system operator, they appear to contain no information on the environmental performance or environmental obligations of Network Rail. Of course, we understand there will be other, more qualitative, requirements that need to be placed on Network Rail, which are not conducive to being reflected on scorecards, and this may be more appropriate for those relating to the environment, including the historic environment. Historic England would be willing to discuss such performance measures with the Office of Rail and Road, which could then be reflected in Network Rail's Business or Delivery Plans plan, thereby helping it in meeting the requirements of the *Protocol for the care of the Government Historic Estate*.

Given the current lack of information on environmental performance and obligations, the Office of Rail and Road may also wish to consider convening a meeting to discuss how this can be best addressed, involving the relevant Government Departments (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Department for Digital, Culture, Media Sport) and statutory environmental bodies (Historic England, Natural England, Environment Agency and Forestry Commission).



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