East Coast Main Line - Track Access Application

As you are aware, we are currently assessing three potentially competing applications for track access rights on the East Coast Main Line. To inform this assessment, we commissioned consultants, ARUP, to undertake a cost benefit appraisal of the three applications. Concurrently, Network Rail has been assessing the availability of capacity for the rights sought by each of the applicants, both singularly and in combination. I enclose copies of Network Rail's Draft Final Report and ARUP's Draft Final Report.

As the studies were undertaken in parallel, ARUP’s Draft Final Report is based on the services the applicants were seeking rather than those that Network Rail has subsequently identified as feasible. ARUP’s Final Report, which we aim to publish at the same time as our decision on the three applications towards the end of January, will include an appraisal of the feasible options identified by Network Rail. The scale and relative economic merit of the applications may change when only the feasible options are considered.

Can I stress that we are sending you a near complete version of the ARUP report with only information taken directly from Grand Central's business case redacted. It still contains commercially sensitive information and we are sending it to you on the basis that this is kept strictly confidential to your Department. Should you wish to share it with any consultants working on your behalf, you may do so, but only if that is also on a strictly confidential basis, and only for the purpose of responding to us.

We would welcome any comments you may have on the reports and should be grateful if you would send them to xxxxx at this office by Tuesday 10 January. Given the sensitivity of this case, I would also ask you to keep your comments confidential at this stage.

We may subsequently wish to put all or part of your response on the ORR website and may quote from it. If you wish all or part of your response to remain confidential to ORR,
would you please set out clearly why this is the case. Where you make a response in confidence, would you please also send us a statement summarising the submission but excluding the confidential information, so that we can publish that instead.

Copies of this letter and the attachments are being sent by e-mail to xxxxx and xxxxx in your Department.

xxxxx