Many thanks for your invitation to submit evidence to the Committee on the above bill. I hope that the following will be of interest.

Network Rail’s responsibilities are to provide train operators with a robust and reliable network with sufficient paths to meet their reasonable requirements in accordance with our licence conditions and the needs of their customers.

From your letter of 14 March, I understand that the Committee are seeking views on the ‘general principles’ of the Bill and on the wisdom of the broad policy to establish a rail link between Glasgow Airport and the City Centre.

On this overall intention, we are happy to indicate our general support in terms of the direct integration such a link would provide between Glasgow Airport and the rail network.

The link should also offer more general integration with the wider public transport network, through the new interchange opportunities that will be presented. These benefits, we believe, are consistent with the overall objectives of economic growth, social inclusion and accessibility.

It will be known that Network Rail has lodged an objection to the Bill. We would wish it to be understood that this was necessary to protect against the risks presented to our existing business interests as operator of the national rail network.

These risks arise from the land acquisition and other powers that the Bill seeks to obtain, including acquisition powers over the current operational railway. We are presently negotiating an agreement with SPT which, when finalised, would allow our objection to the Bill to be withdrawn.

If the committee would like to discuss these matters in further detail, I will be happy to attend a committee hearing to discuss them further.