

FIRST MEETING OF THE RAIL ENGAGEMENT GROUP (REG)
DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT (DfT), GREAT MINSTER HOUSE, LONDON
29 OCTOBER 2025

LIST OF ATTENDEES

Richard George	Chair
Rt Hon Heidi Alexander	Secretary of State for Transport
Lord Peter Hendy	Rail Minister
Alex Hynes	DG Rail Services Group, DfT
Richard Goodman	DG Rail Reform and Strategy Group, DfT
Eddie Dempsey	General Secretary, RMT
Gary Kelly	Organiser, TSSA
John McGookin	Acting National Officer, Unite
Jeremy Westlake	CEO, Network Rail
Jacqueline Starr	Executive Chair and CEO, Rail Delivery Group
REG Secretariat	DfT

APOLOGIES

Robin Gisby	CEO, DfT Operator Ltd
Laura Shoaf	Chair, Shadow Great British Railways
Sian Elliott	Director of Organising, TUC
Mick Whelan	General Secretary, ASLEF

Welcome

The Chair opened the inaugural REG meeting, emphasizing its role in resetting industrial relations. The Secretary of State (SoS) outlined her vision for REG as a strategic forum for senior rail leaders to engage in open dialogue, supporting the transition to Great British Railways (GBR).

Ways of Working & Terms of Reference

The REG agreed that the group will not serve as a negotiation forum or decision-making body. Instead, it will align with the Government's manifesto by providing a platform to discuss integrated industrial relations and workforce strategy. The group agreed that they would provide comments on the draft Terms of Reference (ToR) before the next meeting.

Aspirations & Discussion

Group members expressed a shared commitment to transparent and constructive engagement. Key themes future meetings should discuss included:

- Long term Workforce Planning
- Travel Facilities
- Collective Bargaining Agreements
- Pensions
- Railway Accessibility
- Transition to GBR
- Financial Viability and Value for Money
- Rolling Stock, Technology and Future Planning

It was proposed that REG discussions could lead to the formation of working groups for more specific discussions about issues. The formation of working groups to be determined by DfT/Chair. Chair to write to members once position is determined.

The Secretary of State expressed her hope in REG becoming a forum for productive conversations encouraging wider participation in future.

Rail Reform & Performance Update

Updates were provided on Rail Reform and the progress on the Railways Bill. Rail performance across operational, financial, safety, and workforce dimensions was discussed incorporating member feedback. RMT General Secretary agreed to share with members RMT data on diversity in the rail workforce and Rail Delivery Group (RDG) CEO agreed to share the RDG report on 'Value in Rail'..

Date of next meeting

- Next REG meeting scheduled for 27 January 2026 (Provisional)

Actions

- Members to review and submit comments on the draft Terms of Reference and draft meeting note to the Secretariat by 12 December.
- Secretariat to provide a collated paper on topics for next meeting.
- Chair/DfT to consider whether separate working groups can be established to aid discussions. Chair to write to REG members once the position on this has been determined.