

THIRD MEETING OF THE RAIL ENGAGEMENT GROUP (REG)
DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT (DfT), GREAT MINSTER HOUSE, LONDON
16TH FEBRUARY 2026

LIST OF ATTENDEES

Richard George	Chair
Alex Hynes	CEO, DFTO
Richard Goodman	Director General Rail Reform and Strategy Group, DfT
Eddie Dempsey	General Secretary, RMT
Dave Calfe	General Secretary, ASLEF
Maria Fawcett	Assistant General Secretary, TSSA
John McGookin	Acting National Officer, Unite
Jeremy Westlake	CEO, Network Rail
Jacqueline Starr	Executive Chair and CEO, Rail Delivery Group
Deputy Director Rolling Stock Infrastructure Whole System Strategy, DfT	
REG Secretariat	

APOLOGIES

Laura Shoaf	Chair, Shadow Great British Railways
Sian Elliott	Director of Organising, TUC

Welcome

The Chair opened the meeting.

The notes of the previous two REG meetings were approved.

Members queried why the draft REG Terms of Reference (ToR) was not on the agenda and sought clarification about matters within the remit of REG to discuss. The Chair provided this clarification and advised that a further draft of the REG ToR would be shared before the next meeting.

Working Groups

The Chair noted that the idea of forming working groups had been discussed previously and advised that work was underway to define the purpose and membership of groups. To inform this work, the Chair invited REG members to share

their aspirations for the working groups. The Chair advised that progress on establishing working groups would be discussed at the next REG meeting.

Railway Bill/Other updates

DG Rail Reform and Strategy Group (RRSG) updated REG on progress with the Railways Bill and work to establish Great British Railways (GBR). This included, but not limited to, an update on the latest consideration given to rail worker pensions and staff travel facilities under GBR, and discussion about the future corporate structure of GBR. The Chair confirmed that further updates on these matters will be provided at the next REG meeting.

Workforce Strategy

DG RRSG gave a presentation on workforce demographic challenges in the UK rail industry, focussing on age, gender and ethnicity trends, using data from the National Skills Academy for Rail 2025 Annual Workforce Survey. Key messages included the need to make rail an attractive long-term career, close diversity gaps, and improve flexibility and adaptability to support long term employee retention. REG discussed skills development and creating clear career pathways within rail. Members raised the importance of insourcing, and it was proposed that insourcing be a topic for more detailed discussion by REG working groups.

Performance Update

CEO DFTO provided REG an update on steps to improve rail performance. It was noted that while performance is improving, traincrew shortages continue to cause cancellations. CEO DFTO took REG through the plan to address this, which included, but not limited to, the need to focus on realistic staffing levels, improving training, and reducing the causes of unavailability.

Rolling Stock

Deputy Director Rolling Stock Infrastructure Whole System Strategy gave a short presentation on the draft Strategy. Discussion points included, but not limited to, the plan to phase out diesel trains, core train types for a future fleet, power options for future rolling stock and when the Strategy is expected to be published.

AOB/Next Meeting

TSSA raised concerns about TU recognition at a Train Operating Company and more generally under GBR.

Next meeting – May 2026 (Date TBC)

Actions

Action 3a: Secretariat to share with REG the draft meeting notes and presentation slides.

Action 3b: Draft REG ToR to be circulated before next meeting.

Action 3c: Secretariat to provide a collated paper on topics for next meeting.

Action 3d: Progress on formation of working groups by next REG meeting