



Department
for Transport

Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill
Minister of State for Rail

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Ruth Cadbury MP
House of Commons
London
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4 June 2026

Dear Ruth,

Setting up Great British Railways for success

With the Railways Bill due to return to Parliament soon, I am writing to update you on critical progress we have made on how Great British Railways (GBR) will be structured when it gains its accountabilities set out in the Bill. Its initial structure will be key to creating the simple, accountable and effective railway that we all want as soon as possible.

As you know, the Railways Bill provides the legislative framework for GBR to bring most of the railway together into a single organisation for the first time since privatisation. We want it to focus relentlessly on improving services for passengers and freight customers, bring decision-making closer to communities, and address our key shared objectives around the cost of living, the economy and housing growth. To help achieve this, GBR's structure will be divided into three distinct components, each with a specific purpose.

Local, customer-facing **Business Units** will form the core of GBR, which will run the railway day-to-day in each area under a locally accountable leader responsible for safety, performance and customer experience. Business Units will bring together existing Network Rail routes and train operators, ensuring delivery is closer to those who use the railway and that accountability sits at the local level. Integrated railways in the Southeastern, South Western and Anglia regions are being setup now which provide the blueprint for GBR's Business Units and are already driving benefits for passengers. Business Units will engage with all tiers of local government, including working closely with Mayoral Strategic Authorities in England to deliver more integrated local transport.

Business Units will be supported by **Divisions**, which will provide specialist expertise and services across operations, engineering and safety. This includes enabling Business Units to deliver customer outcomes, ensuring that they work together to deliver for customers collectively. GBR's initial geographic structure will broadly align to [Network Rail's existing Routes and Regions](#) to minimise disruption to the live railway and ensure we can deliver benefits quickly, but this will not be the organisation's end state and GBR will continue to evolve under the leadership of its new Chair and CEO.

The GBR structure will differ in Scotland and Wales to reflect the devolved nature of their rail networks and our commitment to work with Scottish and Welsh Ministers to ensure that rail reform delivers benefits for customers right across Great Britain. The principles for collaboration were set out in the published Memorandum of Understanding between the UK and Welsh Ministers and the Framework for a Memorandum of Understanding between the UK and Scottish Ministers.

Nationally, a central GBR **Network** function will act as the system leader. In line with Ministers' objectives, it will set overall railway strategy, standards and policy, ensuring the network operates as a coherent whole and can deliver wider policy outcomes, including supporting housing, jobs and thriving local communities. Within GBR, the Network will be in charge of determining capacity allocation in the public interest subject to its duties for even-handedness as set out in the Railways Bill. As GBR's 'directing mind', this function will take whole-system decisions and where necessary make trade-offs across Business Units and Divisions to secure an efficient, high-performing national network.

Taken together, this model will create a more efficient and accountable railway, with clear roles at each level and a strong delivery and cultural focus on passenger and customer outcomes. Network Rail and DfT Operator are now driving forward local delivery of GBR, which will bring to life the improvements that we want to deliver through the organisation.

As the Railways Bill continues its passage through Parliament, in the coming weeks we will publish more details on the journey to GBR establishment and what we will do and when to deliver it.

I hope you will join me in welcoming this progress to set up GBR and I would be happy to meet or arrange a briefing for you with one of my officials should you wish to understand more about the work in this area.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Peter Hendy', written over a light blue rectangular background.

Peter, Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill

MINISTER OF STATE FOR RAIL