

THE OFFICE OF RAIL AND ROAD
229th BOARD MEETING
Tuesday 1 April 2025, 10:15 - 11:30
Via MS Teams

Non-executive members: Declan Collier (Chair), Xavier Brice, Ian Dobbs, Anne Heal, Justin McCracken, Daniel Ruiz, Catherine Waller.

Executive members: John Larkinson (Chief Executive), Richard Hines (Director of Railway Safety).

In attendance: Feras Alshaker (Director of Planning and Performance), Fiona Bywaters (Board Secretary), Will Godfrey (Director of Economics, Finance and Markets), Russell Grossman (Director of Communications), Graham Richards (Director, TfL Analysis and Interim Director, Corporate Operations), Elizabeth Thornhill (General Counsel), Stephanie Tobyn (Director, Strategy, Policy and Reform).

Other ORR staff who attended are shown in the minutes.

Item 1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Madeleine Hallward.

Item 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. There were no declarations of interest.

Item 3a RAIL REFORM UPDATE

3. Stephanie Tobyn introduced the item, referring to slides circulated in the agenda pack. A brief update was provided on the latest developments in rail reform, noting that this would now be overseen by Richard Goodman, Director General – Rail Reform and Strategy (DfT). The Board would be seeking clarity on ORR duties and responsibilities, as well as assurance of visibility throughout the legislative process.

**Item 3b EXTERNAL GUEST: RICHARD GOODMAN, DIRECTOR GENERAL
 – RAIL REFORM AND STRATEGY**

4. The Chair welcomed Richard Goodman (Director General – Rail Reform and Strategy), Lucy Ryan (Director, Rail Reform) and Alissa Ede (Deputy Director, Legislation) from the Department for Transport to the meeting.
5. The guests gave a brief introduction, referring to the focus on regulatory systems at present and rail reform consultation ('A railway fit for Britain's future' – due to close on 15 April 2025).
6. Questions and discussions focused on the regulatory environment; the design of Great British Railways (GBR); incentives, checks and balances within the

wider system; the central importance of passengers and other railway users; industry culture; investment in the railways and economic growth; and the importance of continuous dialogue.

7. The Board emphasised the need to be kept informed as rail reform progressed, particularly in relation to ORR's duties and responsibilities. It also highlighted the value of ORR being recognised as a provider of expert, independent advice, and noted that open and honest engagement with the new Director General would be positively received.
8. The Chair thanked the guests for their attendance and contributions.

Item 3c REFLECTION: EXTERNAL GUEST

9. The Board briefly reflected on the guests' contributions, discussing whether sufficient assurance had been provided in respect of process visibility. It had been an important opportunity to emphasise regular engagement.
10. The Board considered whether and how it might respond to the rail reform consultation. It was decided that were a response to be submitted, it should be constructive in nature and include reference to ORR's strengths and positive outcomes rather than process.
11. **The Board resolved to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to finalise any consultation response, subject to the above comments.**

Item 4 SPENDING REVIEW

Lucy Doubleday (Associate Director – Finance and Governance) joined the meeting for item 4.

12. Graham Richards briefly introduced the item and confirmed submission was due by 10 April 2025. In response to questions, it was confirmed that:
 - a. Following feedback, both the Consumer Expert Panel and Railway Industry Health and Safety Advisory Committee (RIHSAC) were no longer put forward for savings.
13. Further discussion focused on:
 - a. Scenarios where the ability to ensure duty holder compliance could be compromised;
 - b. The potential circularity of any redundancy costs, which was not yet clear;
 - c. Greater emphasis on the implications of savings scenarios on the effective working and statutory duties of the organisation;
 - d. The increased cost associated with obligations to operate from government hubs via the Government Property Agency (GPA);
 - e. The reordering of savings implications, with legal and safety implications at the start of any narrative.

14. **The Board resolved that:**

- a. **the Zero-Based Review final return, due for submission by 10 April 2025, be approved.**
- b. **the comments on the savings required to meet the flat cash and 2% per annum reduction scenarios be noted.**

Item 5 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 15. The Chair reported on a recent meeting with the Permanent Secretary of DfT, also attended by the Chief Executive.
- 16. There was no other business.

Meeting end: 11.31am
Approved: 29 April 2025