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May 6, 2021



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Network Rail is on a collision course for a national strike if it goes ahead with plans to cut thousands of jobs, the new general secretary of the RMT transport union has warned.

An article in The Times says Mick Lynch, who has been elected leader of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers, has pledged to take on Network Rail over plans for mass redundancies.

The article says Andrew Haines, chief executive of Network Rail, has said of the need to reform, saying “outdated practices and the impact of COVID-19 on passenger numbers show that the railway is not

serving passengers, taxpayers or staff as well as it should.”

[Click here for more details about Mick Lynch being elected as new general secretary at the RMT.](#)

The cost to the taxpayer and passengers of leasing the nation’s 16,000 trains has nearly doubled in five years, according to official figures.

An article in The Times says much of the rise is due to the ill-starred introduction of new express trains on the East Coast and Great Western lines, which during their procurement were derided as the most expensive trains of their type in the world.

The soaring cost of leasing has emerged in a National Audit Office (NAO) report on the state of the industry, which has effectively been nationalised during the pandemic.

The Railway Industry Association says modernisation of rolling stock made higher leasing costs “inevitable”.

A Department for Transport spokesman said “an unprecedented number of trains entered service and during that period operators also needed to lease more trains to keep up with growing demand”.

Finally, ahead of the arrival of new trains for the Tyne and Wear Metro, Stadler and construction partner, VolkerFitzpatrick, are making progress on the construction of a new depot, with the first stage of demolition now complete and work to build track foundations under way.

The state-of-the-art facility will accommodate the new fleet of trains, which will transform rail travel in the north east.

Three depot roads and an area of the main depot building have been successfully removed, as part of the first of a four-part demolition process.

[Click here for more details.](#)

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