

MP shown London Overground trains at Alstom depot, in first Rail Fellowship Programme visit of 2022

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Conservative MP for Harrow East, Bob Blackman, has visited Alstom's Willesden Depot to learn about the invaluable work that goes on there for his local community, as well as to meet some of the railway workers who keep London's transport system running.

Blackman was introduced to representatives from Alstom and Railway Industry Association and was taken on a guided tour of the site. The London Overground, serving Blackman's constituents in Harrow, is maintained on site at Willesden – a significant employer of rail workers in Blackman's region of north-west London. Blackman was able to meet a number of these workers on site and witness the work going on to keep this vital London line running.

Max Sugarman, Public Affairs & PR Director at RIA, said: "The Willesden Depot is a key part of London's rail network and supports jobs and investment in the local area. We are grateful to Alstom for hosting the visit and creating such an exciting experience for Bob Blackman.

“The RIA Rail Fellowship Programme was set up with a very simple goal: to bring politicians closer to the rail industry and enhance their understanding. As we begin our fifth year, we are proud of what has been achieved and excited for the programme to keep running for many years to come.

“Welcome to the RIA Rail Fellowship, Bob Blackman!”

Will Tanner, Communications Director, UK & Ireland, said: “It was a pleasure to host Bob Blackman MP and show him the vital work we do at Willesden for London Overground. We are keen supporters of the RIA Rail Fellowship Programme, a great way of enhancing understanding of the rail sector amongst parliamentarians.”

Bob Blackman MP said: “I had an enjoyable and informative day down on site at Alstom’s Willesden Depot, meeting workers and apprentices, and gaining a clearer understanding and experience of how the London Overground line to Harrow is being maintained.

“My thanks go to Alstom, and RIA for running their Rail Fellowship Programme, allowing MPs like me to get a valuable glimpse behind the scenes.”

Blackman’s visit marked the opening of the RIA Rail Fellowship Programme, Class of 2022. This is the programme’s fifth year, and it has grown immeasurably in that time, welcoming Cabinet Ministers, Transport Select Committee Chairs, prominent MPs, Lords, Assembly Members and local councillors onto rail sites across the country, to ensure politicians have a deeper and more personal understanding of the day-to-day goings on in the rail industry.

The rail industry is a major economic contributor to UK plc, generating £43 billion in economic growth, supporting 710,000 jobs and providing £14 billion in tax revenue. So, it is more important than ever that policy makers understand the work the rail supply sector does to support the network, getting a hands-on experience of railway work. The pipeline of interest for the programme in 2022 is already strong, and it continues to go from strength to strength.

Photo credit: Alstom