

Network Rail launches Rail Investment Centre of Excellence to bring focus on efficient delivery of major projects and investment

March 1, 2021



- The Rail Investment Centre of Excellence will act as a hub for its devolved regional businesses and its wider network functions, bringing an increased focus on efficient delivery of major projects and investment
- Several teams will be incorporated within this new department, including much of the 'Open for Business' programme – meaning the programme can now transition to 'business as usual' one year ahead of schedule
- Network Rail remains committed to being easier to engage with, agile, and an efficient and dependable partner, with the Rail Investment Centre of Excellence acting as a body of knowledge for rail investment

Network Rail has established a new team to help achieve its ambition of becoming a more efficient and dependable partner within the rail industry, and bring an increased focus on efficient delivery of major projects and investment.

Part of wider organisational changes, the launch of the Rail Investment Centre of Excellence will give the company a more seamless view of rail investment through to capital delivery, and provide confidence that

benefits will be delivered for passengers and freight users more efficiently.

This new structure also means the Open for Business programme will be able to transition to 'business as usual' one year ahead of schedule, having completed the milestones set out by the Hansford review.

Several teams from Network Rail's System Operator, Network Services and the Open for Business programme will move over to the Rail Investment Centre of Excellence. By 1 April 2021, the Rail Investment Centre of Excellence department will receive accountability for:

- Client Portfolio Services team (moving from System Operator)
- Delivering work within possessions team (moving from Network Services)
- Contestability team (moving from the Open for Business programme)
- Value for money engineering team (moving from the Open for Business programme)

The Rail Investment Centre of Excellence will support all aspects of management throughout the investment lifecycle and delivery of major projects, by working closely with Network Rail's five devolved regional businesses, as well as supporting traditional operations, maintenance and renewals (OMR) activities.

Stuart Calvert, director, Rail Investment Centre of Excellence said: "The Centre of Excellence will provide ongoing support to help our regional businesses deliver projects quicker, more efficiently and at lower cost. Fundamentally, an effective Centre of Excellence is a catalyst, supporting and accelerating continuous improvement of investment management in the regions by looking at new technology, innovation and smarter ways of working."

The teams and workstreams established for the Open for Business programme – which has helped to establish new cost-saving and customer-focussed systems and processes within Network Rail's devolved regions – will be subsumed within the business, meaning that the programme leadership team can now be disbanded.

David Ollerhead, programme director for Open for Business, said: "We've really moved the dial to help make it easier for other organisations to invest in and build on the railway. By definition, all programmes have a beginning, middle and end – in effect, today's announcement means, thanks to everything we've set-up, we are now 'open for business as usual'.

"Though we can be proud the programme has delivered so much, there is still work to be done to embed the changes. That is why many of the teams have moved to the Rail Investment Centre of Excellence. We've made good progress on our journey to become more efficient and more customer-focussed, and we've laid the foundations for our route and regional businesses to continue that success."

Since its inception in July 2017, the Open for Business programme has established new business development teams in the routes and regions to work closely with third party funders, overhauled 400 of its most difficult and restrictive standards whilst introducing a 'standards challenge' process, which has produced multi-million pound savings, and regularly published a pipeline of schemes for other organisations to invest in.

Additionally, it has overhauled how Network Rail works with other organisations by establishing new frameworks to work next to the railway, overhauled the website to make it easier for customers and suppliers to engage with Network Rail, introduced and published customer satisfaction surveys, and also introduced the concept of contestability to bring new players into the market.

Photo credit: Network Rail