

# Rail Supply Group Coronavirus Taskforce update – Act Now Priorities and next steps to support supply chain's recovery

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The Rail Supply Group (RSG) – the leadership body for the UK rail supply chain – has provided an update on its three Act Now priorities which will support the rail supply chain's COVID-19 recovery.

In July this year, having been invited by Government to form a Coronavirus Taskforce, the RSG published its Act Now report following a comprehensive independent survey into the impact of coronavirus on businesses supplying the rail industry.

Three priorities were identified – which will also see elements of the Rail Sector Deal being adapted and accelerated in response to these industry needs – with significant progress being made over the last four months:

1. Improve work pipeline visibility

- Progress: Two pilot studies involving the Network Rail Transpire and REAL Alliances, including BAM Nuttal and VolkerRail, looking at work pipeline visibility on in-flight projects have been completed. Further pilots are underway with HS2, Nexus, TfL, Porterbrook, and Stadler Rail. Through open and collaborative conversations about expenditure profiles on projects across the supply chain, we have established that expenditure forecast information is readily available to share, often at nil cost, and that the associated commercial issues around sharing and uncertainty can be easily managed.
- What next: A further 9 pilots will be completed by the end of the year, Developments associated with a supplier work pipeline transparency charter and links to supplier assessments and contractual requirements will be explored in the first quarter of 2021.

## 2. Simplify data access

- Progress: We have accelerated our work to provide 'Open Data' that can be used to bring improvements to customer journeys and freight to increase economic prosperity to Build Back Better. A four-stage process is being undertaken to obtain industry-wide agreement on how data access can be opened up from a legal and commercial perspective to enable the development of a data marketplace.
- What next: The four-stage process will be completed in December 2020. Focus then will shift to developing a digital marketplace which will enable the seamless sharing of data and help facilitate the introduction of products to restore passenger ridership and revenues through service and experience improvements and increased freight capacity.

## 3. Change railway access arrangements

- Progress: An access review to explore boosting productivity has been completed to gain insight from 11 of the industry's previous studies.
- What next: Recurring themes, problem statements and lessons learnt around possessions and access have helped inform a number of priorities that will be piloted on the ground, by working in collaboration with Network Rail in the Southern, and North West and Central Areas.

Please see the [Act Now Update report](#) for further details on each priority area and the important next steps to make a tangible difference in the short term to boost opportunities for the rail supply sector.

Philip Hoare, Chair of the Rail Supply Group and President of Atkins, said: "The progress to date demonstrates the value of collaboration as we work together to chart the rail industry's recovery and longer-term transformation.

"It's clear that greater transparency increases productivity and trust, especially in a supply chain which is large, diverse and in need of support during these challenging times.

"We now look forward to progressing each of the 'Act Now' priorities as part of the Rail Sector Deal which aims to drive productivity and build on data to deliver an improved customer experience for both operators and passengers."

Nadhim Zahawi MP, Business and Industry Minister, said: "I'm delighted to see the tangible progress the

Rail Supply Group has made as it drives forward its work to fuel economic recovery in the sector.

“Today’s updated report highlights the importance of everyone in the rail sector working together, boosting productivity through close collaboration, as it builds back better from the coronavirus pandemic.”

Chris Heaton Harris, Rail Minister, said: “As we build back better from COVID-19, these Act Now priorities will be key to ensuring that the rail supply chain can get back on its feet.

“The work of the Rail Supply Group to lay out the key priorities for the industry helps establish a clear pathway to future success. Working together across the sector means that the rail supply chain is more robust and can remain a vital pillar in the UK’s infrastructure.”

The three Act Now priorities will continue to move forward and develop plans to make industry-wide change at pace.

Given that circumstances continue to change, a ‘[pulse survey](#)’ is also being launched today to gather the latest industry views to ensure the taskforce continue to focus on what is needed most.

Darren Caplan, Chief Executive of the Railway Industry Association, said: “We welcome the Rail Supply Group’s update on progress and ongoing work of the three ‘Act Now’ priorities to help the rail sector recover from the Coronavirus pandemic.

“These priorities – improving work pipeline visibility, simplifying data access and changing railway access arrangements – are all critical for RIA members in the supply chain, and will help increase productivity and drive change in our industry. Working collaboratively and innovatively in these areas will enable the UK rail sector to plan for the future and help lead the UK’s economic recovery, following what has been a difficult year for many.”

*Photo credit: Atkins*

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