

# Record number attend Rail Forum Midlands Annual Conference 2021

October 27, 2021



Rail Forum Midlands' (RFM) Annual Conference on 20 October 2021 has been described as a huge success with over 300 delegates attending in person or online, to network and listen to high-level rail industry speakers talk on the challenges and opportunities currently facing the industry.

The conference was opened by RFM Chairman, Paul Robinson followed by a video keynote address from newly appointed Lee Rowley MP, Minister for Industry at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

The morning session was dedicated to The Challenge and in particular a Customer Focussed, Green and Affordable Railway. Delegates heard from Piers Wood of Alstom about taking over the Litchurch Lane site and renewing trust in Derby; Steven Hart of Network Rail discussed traction decarbonisation network strategy and the short, medium and long-term goals; Lorna McDonald of Hitachi highlighted the ways Hitachi Rail is becoming a climate change innovator and Richard Morris of CrossCountry looked at how the company and its supply chain are working together to deliver for their customers.

The audience also heard from Stuart Calvert of Network Rail who addressed a new way of delivering rail

investment projects through SPEED and Ian Purdham of Amco-Giffen looked at driving culture change through the supply chain. The session finished with Haydon Bartlett-Tasker of Hack Partners who convinced the audience that failing better can drive improved passenger and cost outcomes.

After a break there was a visit from special guest, 15-year-old Harry Burr, CEO of Sustainable Transport Midlands and young rail campaigner, who wowed the audience with his knowledge of the industry and his active stance on making transport environmentally and economically sustainable in the Midlands.

The afternoon session looked at The Opportunity and in particular 'Great British Railways'. Andrew Haines of Network Rail opened the session with a brief message by video link followed by Julian Edwards of West Midlands Trains who talked about the impact of Covid-19 as a train operator and new beginnings. Alistair Gordon of Keolis then addressed the issue of revenue recovery following the pandemic and how to attract passengers back on board followed by Rufus Boyd who described the role of GBR transition team and the importance of retaining a customer-led focus. The session concluded with a visit from Rail Minister, Chris Heaton-Harris.

RFM's CEO, Elaine Clark said "Our Annual Conference is always a highlight of the year for us and our members. We were delighted to welcome around 300 delegates both in person and online. We had some fantastic speakers throughout the day who covered a variety of topics affecting the rail industry and we are grateful for their support. The RFM team worked extremely hard to put this event together and we take pride in the fact that we include our prestigious conference as a complimentary event for our members. Feedback has been really positive and we will take away the key points raised and look forward to working with our members to address the many challenges and opportunities discussed during the day."

*Photo credit: Rail Forum Midlands*