

Senior leaders from key rail organisations endorse the Rail Technical Strategy to fast-track rail innovation

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Britain's railway must increase the speed that research, and innovation is conducted and put into action to improve performance and reduce costs. This will be vital to attract customers back to the railway in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The requirement to invest in forward-looking technical solutions from development to successful deployment is more prominent now than ever before.

Senior rail leaders from across the industry have reaffirmed their commitment for the shift needed in innovation set out in this latest edition of the [Rail Technical Strategy](#) (RTS). This RTS identifies five priorities that are key to the future of the railway and require a step change in the technical solutions used. These priorities are: easy to use for all, low emissions, optimised train operations, reliable and easy to maintain, and data driven.

For each of these five priorities, this RTS represents the industry's aligned thinking on the steps needed over the next five years to deliver against the 2040 vision. High-level representatives from organisations across the industry have endorsed one of five specific functional priorities relevant to their expertise and

experience.

The development of this new RTS was made possible by RSSB, Network Rail, and UKRRIN working closely together under the steer of the Technical Leadership Group. Invaluable support and input were provided from across the industry including: the Rail Delivery Group, the Railway Industry Association, more than 100 organisations, and over 30 prominent cross-industry groups.

This new RTS is digital only. This is to recognise the need to keep the strategy alive and have easy mechanisms to capture, share and review progress, bring to industry's attention new opportunities, and ensure it continues to align and support long term industry plans.

The RTS will continue to be written by industry, for industry, as industry continues to place passenger experience at the forefront of service. Its success will help to promote the world-class expertise that the UK has to offer in rail and the vibrant innovation community that underpins the Strategy.

Welcoming the new version of the Strategy, Rail Minister, Chris Heaton-Harris MP, Department for Transport said: "The Rail Technical Strategy will play an important role in shaping the future of our railway. Each of these five priorities are essential for industry to keep in mind as it faces the challenges and opportunities ahead. I am pleased that these priorities will sit at the core of investment by businesses and academia, to bring much-needed technology and innovation to the UK's rail network."

Andrew Haines, Chief Executive, Network Rail, said: "Now maybe more than ever with the dual challenge of climate change and COVID there is a compelling case for innovation in Britain's railways. This strategy can make a critical contribution and at Network Rail we are committed to working with others to put it into practice."

Paul Plummer, Chief Executive, Rail Delivery Group (RDG), said: "It is impossible to know exactly what the future looks like for any mode of transport, but we know that now there is an opportunity to build a better, greener and more customer-focused railway fit for the digital age and ready for changing travel patterns. Train operators will work together with industry partners to deliver this strategy and innovate across Britain's railway now and for the future."

Darren Caplan, Chief Executive, Railway Industry Association (RIA), said: "The Rail Technical Strategy sets out a clear plan for the industry to deliver an effective, efficient, green, reliable and data-driven rail network, for the benefit of customers, freight users and the wider economy. Rail suppliers have a key role to play in delivering this vision, utilising their experience, knowhow and innovative thinking. We look forward to working with the industry and our key partners to achieve the Rail Technical Strategy together."

Luisa Moisio, R&D Programme Director, RSSB, said: "The rail industry needed this RTS to break down our long-term rail industry goals and focus on areas for which we need both the stimulation of new ideas and the acceleration of their adoption. The fact that it has been produced as a result of strong industry collaboration stands as a testament to our hopes for its future success and ability to make a real impact. Making this a live strategy ensures that it can support and remain aligned with the future industry direction, and will continue to support new innovation activities, capabilities and facilities."

Jo Binstead, Chair of UKRRIN Steering Committee, said: “This RTS is key to helping industry increase the speed at which new thinking can be translated into tangible change. It will help us keep a finger on the pulse and facilitate closer collaborative relationships, both nationally and across the globe.”

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