Great British Railways

• Candidate Pack

Appointment of CEO

Great British Railways

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GBR

Introduction from the Secretary of State

Dear Candidate

Few leadership opportunities offer the chance to shape the future of a nation. The role of Chief Executive Officer of Great British Railways is one of them.

Rail has helped define Britain's economic, social and industrial history for nearly two centuries. Today, as we establish Great British Railways, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a railway that is simpler, more accountable, more innovative and more responsive to the needs of passengers, freight customers, communities and taxpayers.

This is far more than the leadership of a transport organisation. It is the stewardship of a national institution that connects people to employment, education and opportunity; supports businesses, freight connectivity and economic growth; and strengthens communities across the country. The decisions taken by the next CEO will help shape how the railway serves the nation for decades to come.

The scale of the opportunity is matched only by the scale of the challenge. Great British Railways will bring together operational excellence, an unwavering commitment to safety, customer focus, commercial acumen and long-term strategic thinking to deliver a modern railway fit for the future. Success will require an exceptional leader capable of inspiring a diverse workforce, building trusted partnerships across government and industry, harnessing technological innovation and delivering outstanding outcomes in a highly visible environment.

We are seeking an individual with the vision to reimagine what a public service can achieve, the credibility to build confidence among stakeholders, and the determination to drive meaningful and lasting change. The successful candidate will inherit an organisation with extraordinary strengths and talented people, while also having the rare privilege of shaping its future direction from the outset.

This is a role of considerable national significance. It offers the opportunity to help create a railway that delivers the highest standards of safety, better serves passengers and freight customers, supports economic growth, contributes to environmental sustainability and delivers lasting value for the country.

Thank you for your interest in Great British Railways, we look forward to receiving your application.

Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP
Secretary of State for Transport

Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP

GBR

Introduction from the Chair

We are looking to appoint the first Chief Executive Officer of Great British Railways, an exceptional leader for a role of real national significance.

GBR will be the new publicly owned directing mind for Britain's railways, bringing together the strategic leadership needed to create a more integrated, dependable and passenger-focused railway. As its first CEO, you will have the rare opportunity to shape the organisation from its outset and to play a central role in delivering the Government's rail reform programme.

You will lead the establishment of GBR as a single, strategic national body, responsible for significant public investment and a large, diverse workforce. Your focus will be to ensure that Britain's railway is safe, reliable and financially sustainable, delivering better performance, value for taxpayers and improved outcomes for passengers and freight customers.

This will require both vision and practical leadership. You will set GBR's long-term direction and turn that ambition into meaningful delivery: fostering a culture that puts customers first, improving efficiency, embracing innovation and maintaining the highest standards of governance, accountability and assurance to Parliament.
The scale and visibility of this role demand someone with a strong record of leading complex organisations through substantial change. You will bring strategic and commercial judgement, a deep personal commitment to safety and public service, strong public communication skills, and the ability to inspire confidence in those around you.

Above all, we are seeking an inclusive and credible leader who can build trusted relationships across government, the rail industry, trade unions, communities and the wider public. This is an opportunity to establish and lead an institution that will matter greatly to the future of Britain's railways.

Sir John Kingman
Chair, GBR

GBR

About GBR

Great British Railways (GBR) is the new publicly owned body at the centre of the Government's rail reform programme. Established to provide strategic leadership for Britain's railways, GBR will bring track and train closer together, creating a more integrated and accountable national railway for passengers, freight and the communities it serves, while helping to drive economic growth, connect people to jobs, education and services, and support opportunity across the country.

GBR will replace the current fragmented operating model with a single, customer-focused organisation responsible for aligning infrastructure, operations and passenger outcomes. Its purpose is to deliver a railway that is safe, reliable, accessible and financially sustainable, while providing clearer accountability for the public funding invested in passenger services.

In practical terms, GBR will assume key responsibilities currently undertaken across Network Rail and the Department for Transport Operator, including infrastructure management, timetabling, fares and passenger services. Most passenger services will be directly owned by or contracted through GBR with some services in Scotland, Wales, Merseyside and London remaining separately delivered by public and private sector operators.

GBR will operate within, and help to advance, the Government's wider devolution agenda. It will work with devolved administrations, mayors and strategic authorities to ensure that national rail planning is informed by local priorities and supports place-based economic growth, housing, connectivity and opportunity. While retaining the benefits of a coherent national network, GBR will build enduring partnerships that enable local leaders and communities to play a meaningful role in shaping the railway in their areas. Through its infrastructure, stations and wider estate, GBR will also support regeneration and unlock opportunities for housing, commercial development and investment in communities across Britain.

Operating at substantial national scale, GBR will oversee around £20 billion of annual expenditure with funding coming through grants from the Department for Transport and Transport Scotland as well as other avenues such as ticket revenue, access charges and property income. GBR will bring together a workforce of more than 100,000 people from a number of existing organisations, such as Network Rail, DFTO and the Train Operating Companies.

For prospective leaders, GBR represents a rare opportunity to help shape a major public-service transformation: creating a modern railway that is simpler for customers, more responsive to place, and better equipped to support Britain's economic prosperity, social mobility and environmental ambitions and long-term growth.

GBR

Why this role matters

Britain's railway is one of the country's most important national assets. Every day it connects millions of people to employment, education, healthcare, family and leisure. It helps businesses access customers and markets, supports the movement of freight across the country, and strengthens the economic and social fabric of communities large and small. As the UK seeks to drive economic growth, improve connectivity and deliver a more sustainable future, the railway has a vital role to play.

The creation of Great British Railways represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reshape how the railway serves passengers, freight customers and taxpayers. Bringing track and train together under a single directing mind will create greater accountability, improve performance and enable a more integrated, customer-focused railway for the future.

As the founding Chief Executive, you will have the rare opportunity to build a new national institution from the ground up. Your leadership will influence an organisation responsible for significant public investment, a large and diverse workforce and services relied upon by millions every day.

Few leadership roles offer this combination of scale, complexity and public impact. The decisions made by GBR's first Chief Executive will help shape how Britain's railway contributes to economic growth, supports communities, enables opportunity and delivers for future generations. For an exceptional leader motivated by both performance and purpose, this is a chance to leave a lasting legacy through public service.

The role at a glance

- Founding Chief Executive of Great British Railways
- One of the UK's largest operational organisations
- Stewardship of c.£20bn annual expenditure
- Leadership of a workforce of c.100,000 people
- Responsibility for a service relied upon by millions every day
- Leading one of the most significant public service reforms of a generation

Responsibilities

As the first CEO of Great British Railways (GBR), you will lead a once in a generation transformation to create a high performing, efficient, customer focused railway with safety at its heart, that recognises its role in driving economic growth, the building of new homes, promoting green transport and creating good jobs. The scale of the job is significant, as is the opportunity to make a difference to communities across Great Britain. We are looking for an exceptional, inclusive leader with the vision, judgement and energy to deliver lasting change. You will have high levels of public accountability both to Ministers and officials and through intense media scrutiny. Direct experience of the rail sector would be advantageous but is not essential.

Leadership, culture and transformation

- Overseeing the creation of GBR, bringing together disparate infrastructure, assets, and operations into a single, agile organisation.
- Lead GBR in its role in overseeing both the strategic and operational running of the railway and its infrastructure, with accountability for day-to-day operations and the safe performance of the network.
- Lead and motivate a large, diverse workforce of c. 100,000 people creating a culture focused on users, performance and safety.
- Build and motivate a high-performing, executive leadership team with the right skills and experience to drive performance across the railway.
- Ability to lead at scale in a geographically diverse organisation.
- Alongside the GBR Chair, be the public face of GBR from day one, ready and able to act as a strong public communicator including in the media.

Delivering for Customers

- Improve rail reliability, punctuality and customer satisfaction, and grow usage.
- Drive innovation and commercial growth while maintaining world leading safety standards.
- Design the long-term plan for Great British Railways and develop multi-year strategies to realise it.

Financial and Operational Stewardship

- Improve the financial position of the railway through increased revenue, driving efficiencies, reducing net subsidy and delivering better value for money.
- As GBR's Accounting Officer, you will provide Parliament with assurance that public funds are managed properly and in line with government guidance.
- Ensure GBR has strong governance and is run to the highest standards.
- Ensure the safe operation of the business and inspire a culture of shared responsibility for safety throughout the company.
- Champion safety as GBR's foremost priority, ensuring it is embedded in decision-making, leadership behaviours and operational delivery across the organisation.

Stakeholder Relationships

- As CEO of a public body, build strong, trusted relationships with Ministers, regulators, unions, devolved administrations, Mayoral Combined Authorities and passenger bodies.
- Communicate a clear vision for the future of the railway, building confidence among passengers, employees, industry partners and wider stakeholders.
- Represent GBR at parliamentary committees and major national events.
- Bring together different parts of the industry to deliver a high-performing railway.

Person Specification

The ideal candidate will be an accomplished transformation leader, able to set a clear strategic direction, ready to work as part of the public sector, and deliver large-scale organisational and cultural change in a complex, operationally critical environment. They will bring outstanding strategic and commercial leadership, a deeply embedded customer-first mindset, an ability to oversee the operational running of the railway, and a proven commitment to safety, together with the ability to build trusted relationships with governments, regulators, unions, partners, communities and the media to drive sustained improvements in performance, value for money and customer outcomes.

- Experience leading large-scale or complex transformation (in any sector).
- Demonstrable track record of leading complex organisational and cultural change.
- Outstanding strategic and commercial leadership, with a proven track record of setting and delivering organisational strategy in a complex, operationally critical environment; delivering sustained improvements in performance, costs and customer outcomes.
- 'Customer First' mindset – shaping and delivering a high-quality end to end customer experience and driving sustained improvements in customer satisfaction.
- Ability to form productive relationships with a range of stakeholders including governments, regulators, unions, commercial partners, communities and the media to meet diverse needs and drive performance.
- Experience of embedding a strong culture of safety, care and accountability across complex operations, ensuring the wellbeing of colleagues, customers and the public.

We strongly encourage applications from candidates of all backgrounds, including those from outside the rail sector, who can demonstrate transferable leadership experience. We value diverse career paths and leadership styles that can drive innovation and organisational change. This role will appeal to exceptional leaders motivated by purpose as much as performance. For those seeking the opportunity to apply their experience to a national endeavour, improve a service relied upon by millions and leave a lasting legacy for communities, passengers and the wider economy, few roles can match the significance, visibility and impact of becoming the founding Chief Executive of Great British Railways.

How to apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to the Department for Transport on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at **roles.saxbam.com** using code **OCAHA.**

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV, cover letter and declaration of interest form and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring* form.

The closing date for applications is noon on Thursday 26th November.

* The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.

GDPR personal data notice
According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

We operate a Disability Confident Scheme (DCS). We are committed to making reasonable adjustments in order to support disabled job applicants and ensure that you are not disadvantaged in the recruitment and assessment process. All monitoring data will be treated in the strictest confidence and will not affect your application in any way. If you wish to make an application under the DCS, please complete the relevant section in the diversity monitoring form.

- **Read our guide to writing cover letters**

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