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## Rail Supply Group Coronavirus (COVID-19) Taskforce: Act Now Report sets out path for sector recovery

Today, the Rail Supply Group (RSG) – the leadership body for the UK rail supply chain – has published its report and the actions to be taken to support the best possible recovery of businesses supplying the rail industry.

By harnessing the views of the industry through an independent survey, the RSG Taskforce was able to understand the current outlook and the actions needed to support a bounce back across the rail supply chain.

The RSG's three Act Now priorities are to:

1. **Improve work pipeline visibility** and cashflow across the whole supply chain to allow organisations to plan and deliver with confidence
2. **Simplify data access** to allow better decision making and new services to be developed including improved customer information
3. **Change railway access arrangements** to maximise the time available and boost productivity

Earlier this year the RSG was invited by Government to form a Coronavirus Taskforce to set out a clear path from the current crisis to the fullest, fastest and best recovery for the rail supply chain.

The work – which included the independent survey and stakeholder interviews - anticipated **lack of demand and cash flow** as being **significant barriers** for the recovery of their organisations to pre-virus levels.

Following analysis, the RSG has shaped a clear way forward which will see elements of the Rail Sector Deal being adapted and accelerated in response to these industry needs and concerns by:

- **Improving work pipeline visibility:** Working with industry partners, the RSG will complete expenditure analysis at contract level throughout the supply chain and highlight opportunities to accelerate work where it can be done productively.
- **Simplying access to rail performance data:** The RSG will accelerate existing work by the Rail Data Council to simplify data access to allow better decision making in the short, medium and long term across all parts of the industry.
- **Changing railway access arrangements:** Working with industry partners, the RSG will explore whether access arrangements can be extended or enhanced for a large number of planned smaller projects to increase productivity.

**Philip Hoare, Chair of the Rail Supply Group and President of Atkins, said:**

“While our report shows that many businesses are confident about survival, it is evident that we need to recover quickly to prevent wider impacts on cash flow, people, passengers, freight, skills and jobs. Put simply, the longer-term resilience requires swift, decisive action.

“The RSG’s Taskforce has quickly mobilised to agree a plan of action and our focus over the coming weeks and months is to work with the wider industry to deliver against the priorities set out in the report.”

**Nadhim Zahawi MP, Minister for Business and Industry at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, said:**

“The Rail Supply Group has reacted quickly to the challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic and have identified clear priorities for the sector through this survey.

“The Government will now work with industry to adapt the Rail Sector Deal, so that our supply chains can have a bright future and achieve the best possible recovery.”

**Chris Heaton-Harris MP, Minister for Rail at the Department for Transport, said:**

“The rail industry has been right at the centre of our efforts to combat this virus, and I am immensely grateful for the skill, dedication and vast amount of hard work that has gone into keeping our railway running.

“I welcome this report and the action taken to support the swiftest possible recovery from the pandemic. By working together, we can build back better and bolder from Covid-19, improving journeys, boosting economic growth and levelling up across the country.”

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**Notes for editors**

1. The Rail Supply Group (RSG) is the leadership body for the UK rail supply sector, whose aim is to strengthen the capability and competitiveness of the UK rail supply chain to grow business at home and abroad. Council members comprise of senior representatives drawn from across the rail supply chain including clients, providers, Government and key stakeholders, amongst others.
2. The RSG was invited by Government to form a Coronavirus Taskforce and its terms of reference can be viewed at <https://rsgtaskforce.org/>. The Chair of the Taskforce is Philip Hoare, President of Atkins, a member of the SNC-Lavalin Group and the Vice-Chair is Anna Ince, Chief Executive Officer of Resonate. The secretariat is provided by the Department for Transport (DfT). Membership includes Government representatives, Sector Deal industry champions, co-opted suppliers, trade associations, client representatives and trade union representatives.
3. The Rail Supply Group’s Act Now report charts a clear way forward for the rail sector, including adapting the Rail Sector Deal to the impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19).

The Rail Sector Deal will continue to provide the focus and impetus for the rail industry and Government, to work together and improve the rail infrastructure for our country, while supporting a faster recovery from the current emergency.

4. The research survey conducted by [Savanta ComRes](#) on behalf of the Rail Supply Group, interviewed 442 individuals working in the UK Rail Supply Sector between Thursday 30 April to Monday 18 May 2020. Savanta ComRes also conducted 10 in-depth interviews with individuals representing organisations across the UK rail supply chain between 12 May and 3 June 2020. Read the research survey results at <https://rsgtaskforce.org/>
5. More information about the work of the Rail Supply Group Coronavirus Taskforce can be found at <https://rsgtaskforce.org/>