

MEDIA STATEMENT

RMT Accepts Merseyrail's Invitation for Talks, to be held Monday 20 March

17 March 2017: The RMT has accepted Merseyrail's offer to attend talks, and a meeting has been set for 20 March 2017. The purpose of the session is to bring to an end the current dispute with guards over working practices on the new trains ordered for the Merseyrail network.

We have asked the RMT to discuss the following with us:

- Roles, responsibilities and safety training of the new team of on-board staff, to be introduced
- Securing the right outcome for guards as individuals under the new fleet

This brand new fleet will be in public ownership, and will be modern, safer, faster and comfortable with more capacity to support the economic growth of city region. Like most new trains ordered for intensive urban railways, they will operate without a traditional guard, but there will still be staff on-board, focusing on customer rather than operational duties.

Merseyrail has already made clear that all the current permanent guards will be guaranteed an alternative job within the business, with salary levels protected. No guard will be forced to leave Merseyrail's employment.

Jan Chaudhry-van der Velde, Merseyrail managing director, commented: 'We are very pleased that the RMT has accepted our proposal for talks. I am hopeful that they will take these discussions seriously and get behind the decision made by local politicians last December to order these fantastic new trains, which will be much safer than the ones they replace. Assuming we can make progress, I am optimistic that the RMT can suspend their industrial action temporarily while we undertake these negotiations.

'The threat of continued strikes will be damaging to our customers and the local economy. With the Grand National Festival imminent, the eyes of the world will be on Liverpool. A strike to coincide with this high profile, prestigious event would be detrimental to the reputation of the city region overall, and I sincerely hope the RMT does not consider industrial action over that period.'

ends

Notes to Editors:

- *Merseyrail carries ca 110,000 passengers per weekday*
- *Merseyrail scores for reliability and punctuality averaged over 95 per cent during the last 12 months*
- *We operate one of the most intensively used networks in the UK with more than 800 trains per weekday*
- *Merseyrail is a 50-50 joint venture between Serco and Abellio*
- *Merseytravel is the transport executive body and delivery arm of the city region's Combined Authority*
- *Network Rail is the owner and operator of most of the rail infrastructure in the UK*
- *For further information, contact Alice Owen on tel 0151 955 2131.*



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