

News Release from Network Rail

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NETWORK RAIL COMMITS £250m TO REDUCE PASSENGER DISRUPTION

Passengers will reap the benefits as Network Rail continues its investment in high-tech track renewals technology. Disruption will be significantly reduced using high-output technology which can carry out track renewals quicker than conventional methods.

Today, Network Rail announced Amey Colas as its preferred bidder for a new contract to operate and maintain its fleet of high-tech, high-output track renewal systems. Over the next few years, Network Rail is increasingly moving towards carrying out more work at night, reducing disruption and making the network more available for passengers. The contract, worth around £250m, will see more than 1,600 miles of track – nearly 30% of Network Rail's total renewals workload - renewed and replaced over the next four years, with £85m in cost savings identified.

Network Rail's director of infrastructure investment, Simon Kirby, said: "We are committed to delivering a high-performance railway for passengers and freight users. Technological innovation combined with commercial rigour is key to securing this."

Through modern machinery and efficient automation methods, Network Rail's high-output systems can replace between 400-600 metres of track and ballast within eight hours, significantly reducing costs and disruption to passengers and freight users.

Note to editors

Network Rail currently operates three high-output systems consisting of high-output ballast cleaners (which renew ballast to maintain a smooth ride), high-output track renewals trains and other support machinery and plant. The company is expecting delivery of a fourth high-output system in December 2010.

The contract will be set up under a framework agreement with annual packages of work awarded for the operation and maintenance of each high-output system. The framework creates incentives to improve performance and increase efficiencies that deliver the targets set by the Office of Rail Regulation. The contract is due to start on 1 January 2010. In total the framework contract will cover four separate high-output systems – each with its own geographical base. Network Rail's high-output fleet includes:

System 1

2 ballast cleaning systems

System 2

1 high-output ballast cleaning system

1 high-output track renewal system

support plant

System 3

1 high-output ballast cleaning system
support plant

System 4

(Delivery of plant scheduled towards end of 2010)

1 high-output ballast cleaning system
1 high-output track renewal system
support plant

The framework replaces existing contracts for operation and maintenance of systems two and three with First Swietelsky, and operation of system one with Fastline, both of which have reached the end of their contract period.

Competitive tenders were invited and returned from the following pre-qualified suppliers with relevant experience of high-output operations in the UK and Europe:

- AmeyColas JV (Amey Rail and Colas)
- Rail Link JV (Balfour Beatty, Sersa and Bahn Bau)
- SB Rail JV (Babcock Rail and Swietelsky)
- VolkerWeiss JV (Volker Rail and Leonhard Weiss)

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About Network Rail

Network Rail is the 'not for dividend' owner and operator of Britain's railway infrastructure, which includes the tracks, signals, tunnels, bridges, viaducts, level crossings and stations - the largest of which we also manage

We aim to provide a safe, reliable and efficient rail infrastructure for freight and passenger trains to use

Our website: www.networkrail.co.uk