



Department
for Transport

Andrew RT Davies MS
Chair of the Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs
Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay, Cardiff
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From the Secretary of State
Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP

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21 January 2026

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your letter of 30 September, following your visit to the Global Centre of Rail Excellence (GCRE). Please accept my apologies for the delayed response.

My department recognises the potential of GCREs proposal to support innovation in British Rail. We have carefully considered the case for additional support, beyond the £20m already provided by the UK Government, to help it secure the private investment needed to move the project forward. My officials remain in close contact with GCRE and have encouraged them to strengthen their business case. This will help provide clearer evidence around feasibility, costs, and benefits to the wider UK rail network, and how the proposals align with other testing facilities. I believe it is the shared interest of both the UK and Welsh Governments to ensure public money is managed responsibly and effectively.

As you know, we are working closely with Transport for Wales, and Welsh Government on delivering the Railways Bill. This will help stronger collaboration between our governments and support the partnership between GBR's Wales and Borders business unit and Transport for Wales. The creation of Great British Railways (GBR) presents a key opportunity to put technological transformation and innovation at the heart of the industry's efforts to modernise rail infrastructure, improve services, enhance reliability and safety, and reduce costs.

While we cannot make any commercial commitments on behalf of GBR, my officials are open to continuing discussions with GCRE and on other ways to support UK rail innovation, I would also strongly encourage the GCRE team to engage with Network Rail and the DfT Operator (DFTO), who are well placed to help refine and validate their proposals ahead of GBR's formal establishment.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Heidi Alexander". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Heidi" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Alexander".

Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT