Improving the performance of our railways.

UK rail customers have suffered a period of unprecedented service disruption and delays. While most services are back to ‘normal’, there is still a large gap between customer expectations and what is being delivered.

The priority needs to be on re-establishing confidence in a safe, reliable and robust railway operation.

Achieving day-in, day-out reliability in any complex business is about creating clear responsibilities, measurement, monitoring and management accountability for each part of the operation.

GB Railways has an extensive record of:

- Clear management accountability for performance throughout the business.
- Introducing new performance reporting systems within operations and maintenance.
- Successful joint performance initiatives with Railtrack.

All this has led to our principal operating company, Anglia Railways, achieving one of the best and most consistent records for performance of any Intercity train operator.
UK Railways.
Too many businesses.
Or too few excellent ones?

There has been much media comment suggesting the rail industry is too fragmented or is unmanageable in its current form. We believe this opinion is mistaken.

In our view the rail industry needs:

- A well managed Railtrack plc, with the resources to maintain the network and to lead infrastructure improvements.
- Efficient, well-resourced maintenance contractors working to tightly managed contracts for repair and renewal of the network.
- Customer-oriented train operating companies focused on local communities and the needs of longer distance routes.

The industry does not, in our view, need wholesale restructuring. Indeed, a period of stability allowing good management teams to work together to produce joint solutions is much more likely to deliver improved performance over the next 3 to 4 years.

The present industry structure can be made to work both safely and effectively. Any fundamental restructuring is likely to impede, rather than improve, the much needed focus on detailed service recovery.

Franchise replacement or franchise extension.

While there is justification for continuing with some long term refranchising proposals, we welcome the Government’s greater emphasis on the more immediate improvements that can be achieved through franchise extension.

GB Railways believes that greater benefits can be delivered, more quickly, and with lower risk, by offering franchise extensions to successful franchisees such as Anglia Railways.

Most of the routes used by Anglia Railways have benefited from significant investment in recent years and do not require the scale of upgrade that is necessary on some other routes.

Investment in new trains, targeted infrastructure schemes, and performance initiatives could all be delivered faster and more effectively without the turmoil and uncertainty of protracted rebidding.

Regaining the trust and confidence of the travelling public, and delivering improved performance, are most likely to be achieved by building on the loyalty and relationships already established by successful operators - not by creating new and unknown trading entities. Right now, the general public wants urgent improvements in performance, safety and customer service, restoring their belief in the current network, not vague promises for investment 10 or 20 years hence.
Anglia Railways.
A railway to be proud of.

Anglia Railways has a franchise for the London to Norwich Intercity route and local services in and around East Anglia, expiring in April 2004.

The company’s major achievements to date are as follows:

- Increasing the number of mainline train services by over 60%.
- Growing passenger numbers and revenues by more than 50%.
- Acquiring 13 new trains worth £36 million.
- Refurbishing the mainline fleet at a cost of £10 million.
- Refurbishing stations and investing with Railtrack in new car parks.
- Introducing (after a gap of many years) direct services between local line stations (Bury St Edmunds, Lowestoft, Great Yarmouth) and London.
- Introducing the new London Crosslink service from Chelmsford to Basingstoke, with support from the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA).
- Securing SRA support for the launch of a new Norwich to Cambridge service (from Autumn 2002).
- Introducing its unique Commuter Club which gives regular users a reserved seat every day.
- Providing all trains with better facilities for disabled passengers and dedicated space to carry bicycles.
- Increasing patronage and services on branch lines with improved community transport links (through effective community rail partnerships).
- Working with communities on rail and local regeneration initiatives.
- Integrated transport schemes and through ticketing.
- Winning a series of independent awards for customer service, innovation and performance.
Hull Trains.
A new direct service for passengers.

GB Railways has created the first new Intercity operation since privatisation. Hull Trains offers four direct services in each direction between London and Hull/Humberside every week day.

These new services have opened up more journey options for both leisure and business travellers. Hull and Humberside were previously very poorly served, with only one direct train per day.

Now they enjoy regular, through services to the capital using modern, high quality trains, with a friendly and professional on-board team offering high standards of customer service.

GB Railways is procuring high speed 125mph rolling stock to enable even shorter journey times and, in the future, an even more frequent service.

The development of Hull Trains by GB Railways is an example of innovation in railways creating new, improved journey choices, and stimulating travel in an under-served community.
GB Railfreight.
The new alternative in rail freight.

GB Railways supports the Government’s commitment to substantial growth in rail freight - and has formed a separate division, GB Railfreight, to develop this market.

The company is already gaining a positive reputation, by delivering a high quality, reliable service at an attractive price.

GB Railfreight sets new standards for service and performance, and offers a real alternative for freight customers.

We have deliberately recruited a team which is flexible, focused and has extensive experience of rail freight operations in the UK, enabling us to build our service around our customers' needs.

With highly trained, committed staff and a growing fleet of new locomotives, we see great opportunities for this business.

If you have any questions about GB Railways, its businesses or any of the issues raised in this publication, please contact us using the details provided on the back cover.