



## **New generation of Link-up Governance will bring greater collaboration in the rail industry and increased focus on procurement**

**Extract from press release issued July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011**

An overhaul to the Governance of the rail industry's supplier information and assurance management scheme will allow a wider range of organisations to become involved. Network Rail and Achilles, the service provider delivering the Link-up scheme, believe that with industry wide collaboration procurement will become the key route through which to deliver reform and world-class quality services. In addition, rail industry input into the new Link-up version 3 (v3) will help to deliver greater value to procurement professionals and a simplified supplier pre-qualification process.

Neil Willings, Achilles' Regional Director for the UK, said: "This innovation in Governance is occurring at a time when the industry is rapidly evolving. Involving the wider rail community to contribute will ensure v3 incorporates the industry's experiences and requirements. Link-up will continue to support the 6,000 scheme users from buyers and suppliers in the UK rail industry, making the most of the capabilities and the creative spirit of the UK's businesses, large and small."

In summary, the new Governance will aim to deliver:

- 1) Greater collaboration ensuring industry intelligence is used to develop Link-up to meet the needs of the entire rail industry.
- 2) A greater alignment and recognition of supplier qualification information across the rail industry.\*
- 3) An improved Link-up system from a procurement perspective especially focusing on content (e.g. sustainability) and process support (e.g. search functionality).
- 4) Access to validated information for other parties involved in supplier assurance to reduce the duplication of effort for suppliers.

John Green from Birse Rail has been appointed as interim chair to lead the formation of the new Link-up Steering Group. He commented: "The new Governance will aim to cut duplication of work and make the procurement and assurance processes simpler and more effective."

Ian Sexton, Director of Contracts and Procurement at Network Rail, says, "We are keen to increase collaboration with the industry to deliver value for money through improved procurement practices. Link-up v3 will provide a huge opportunity to create a tool of choice that benefits the entire industry."

John Abbott, Director of National Programmes at RSSB, facilitating the rail industry-wide Supplier Assurance Framework Project says, "Industry's own research shows that there is a genuine appetite and opportunity to improve supplier assurance arrangements. The first step is to improve the alignment and understanding of the various supplier assurance schemes to remove duplication and improve the quality of assurance. We therefore welcome the opportunity to work with the new governance arrangements to help achieve this objective. The next stage of the project will be to develop, collaboratively, a future specification for supplier assurance interventions and this initiative will provide a valuable input."