# Jeremy Westlake named as first internal CEO to lead Network Rail into Great British Railways transition



Jeremy Westlake has been announced as the new Chief Executive of Network Rail, set to take the helm on 20 October 2025, succeeding Sir Andrew Haines after a notable seven-year tenure. This appointment is significant as Westlake is the first internal candidate to be promoted to the role, having served as Network Rail’s Chief Financial Officer since 2016. His prior experience includes senior finance, operational, and supply chain positions at Rolls-Royce and Alstom Transport, underscoring a well-rounded background in both finance and the rail sector. Westlake holds a master’s degree in manufacturing from the University of Cambridge and is a fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

Westlake’s leadership coincides with a pivotal period of transformation for Britain's rail industry, as Network Rail embarks on the transition into Great British Railways (GBR)—the government’s integrated rail body aiming to unify rail infrastructure and services. Reflecting on this unique moment, Westlake described it as an opportunity to foster a more collaborative industry environment that leverages data and technology to enhance both train and infrastructure performance. “We are on an exciting journey to GBR and with it, an opportunity to work more collaboratively as an industry to deliver improvements,” he told Rail Business Daily.

He emphasised the necessity of continued focus on safety, performance, reliability, and efficiency, recognising that while not all infrastructure failures are preventable, many are avoidable with improved technology and predictive maintenance. Westlake criticised the rail industry’s historically slow uptake of new technologies, noting that GBR should help streamline alignment and adoption of such innovations. Under his financial stewardship, Network Rail realised savings of £4 billion during Control Period 6 (CP6), marking a turnaround from prior periods characterised by frequent cost overruns. The organisation now targets £3.5 billion in savings for the upcoming Control Period 7 (CP7).

Networking speaking highly of the operational freedom granted by Sir Andrew Haines, Westlake highlighted several initiatives that illustrate the shift towards more modern, efficient practices. One such initiative is Project Reach, a partnership addressing telecom infrastructure by deploying ultrafast fibre optic cables and mobile infrastructure to eliminate longstanding signal blackspots on critical routes—an effort projected to save taxpayers around £300 million. Another example is the greening of energy supplies with a solar farm in Norfolk, backed by a 14-year agreement with EDF Renewables, designed to provide approximately 15% of Network Rail’s non-traction energy needs through clean power.

Beyond infrastructure and technology improvements, Westlake envisions a broader role for the railways, extending into economic regeneration and community development. The creation of Platform4, which merges London and Continental Railways with Network Rail’s Property team, aims to accelerate housing delivery and investment around surplus rail land. Westlake specifically mentioned exploring opportunities for station rebuilds, residential developments, and place-making, underscoring his ambition to leverage the railway’s assets for wider social and economic benefits.

Industry voices, such as Mike Putnam, Acting Chair of Network Rail, and Darren Caplan, Chief Executive of the Railway Industry Association, have expressed confidence in Westlake’s leadership and extensive experience. Both highlighted his proven record in encouraging cross-industry collaboration as crucial for the successful transition to GBR. Secretary of State for Transport Heidi Alexander has also conveyed strong support for Westlake’s ability to ensure financial stability and operational efficiency during this transformative era.

As Westlake prepares to take command, the rail sector anticipates a continuation of the passenger-first approach advanced by Sir Andrew Haines, alongside an expanded vision that views the railway not merely as a transport network but as an engine for innovation, sustainability, and community revitalisation.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://news.railbusinessdaily.com/network-rails-new-ceo-the-journey-to-great-british-railways-gbr/), [[2]](https://www.networkrail.co.uk/who-we-are/how-we-work/our-leadership/our-board/), [[3]](https://www.railjournal.com/infrastructure/network-rail-appoints-new-ceo/), [[4]](https://www.railwaynews.net/network-rail-gbr-transition-westlakes-uk-rail-strategy.html), [[5]](https://www.railwaygazette.com/uk/network-rail-announces-jeremy-westlake-as-next-chief-executive/69274.article)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://news.railbusinessdaily.com/network-rails-new-ceo-the-journey-to-great-british-railways-gbr/), [[3]](https://www.railjournal.com/infrastructure/network-rail-appoints-new-ceo/), [[4]](https://www.railwaynews.net/network-rail-gbr-transition-westlakes-uk-rail-strategy.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://news.railbusinessdaily.com/network-rails-new-ceo-the-journey-to-great-british-railways-gbr/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://news.railbusinessdaily.com/network-rails-new-ceo-the-journey-to-great-british-railways-gbr/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://news.railbusinessdaily.com/network-rails-new-ceo-the-journey-to-great-british-railways-gbr/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://news.railbusinessdaily.com/network-rails-new-ceo-the-journey-to-great-british-railways-gbr/), [[3]](https://www.railjournal.com/infrastructure/network-rail-appoints-new-ceo/), [[5]](https://www.railwaygazette.com/uk/network-rail-announces-jeremy-westlake-as-next-chief-executive/69274.article), [[6]](https://www.riagb.org.uk/RIA/Newsroom/Press_Releases/RIA_welcomes_new_CEO_of_Network_Rail_Jeremy_Westlake.aspx), [[4]](https://www.railwaynews.net/network-rail-gbr-transition-westlakes-uk-rail-strategy.html)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://news.railbusinessdaily.com/network-rails-new-ceo-the-journey-to-great-british-railways-gbr/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/who-we-are/how-we-work/our-leadership/our-board/> - Jeremy Westlake has been appointed as the new Chief Executive of Network Rail, succeeding Sir Andrew Haines. He will assume the role on 20 October 2025, following a transition period. Westlake has been with Network Rail since 2016, serving as Chief Financial Officer. Prior to this, he held senior finance, operational, and supply chain roles at Rolls-Royce and Alstom Transport. His appointment marks the first time the organisation has appointed someone internally into the position. Westlake is a fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales and holds a master’s degree in manufacturing from the University of Cambridge.
3. <https://www.railjournal.com/infrastructure/network-rail-appoints-new-ceo/> - Network Rail has announced the appointment of Jeremy Westlake as its new Chief Executive, effective 20 October 2025. Westlake, currently Chief Financial Officer, will succeed Sir Andrew Haines, who is retiring. He will oversee the amalgamation of Network Rail with Great British Railways. Westlake has been CFO at Network Rail since 2016 and previously held senior roles at Rolls-Royce and Alstom Transport. Acting Chair of Network Rail, Mike Putnam, highlighted Westlake's extensive leadership experience and track record in encouraging cross-industry collaboration as crucial for the transition towards Great British Railways.
4. <https://www.railwaynews.net/network-rail-gbr-transition-westlakes-uk-rail-strategy.html> - Jeremy Westlake has been appointed as the new Chief Executive of Network Rail, effective 20 October 2025. This appointment coincides with the planned transition into Great British Railways (GBR), the government's integrated rail body. Westlake, currently serving as Chief Financial Officer, will oversee the amalgamation of Network Rail with GBR. His experience as CFO will play a crucial role in ensuring financial stability and operational efficiency during this transformative period. The Secretary of State for Transport, Heidi Alexander, has expressed confidence in Westlake’s abilities to drive lasting change and growth within the rail sector.
5. <https://www.railwaygazette.com/uk/network-rail-announces-jeremy-westlake-as-next-chief-executive/69274.article> - Network Rail has announced the appointment of Chief Financial Officer Jeremy Westlake as its next Chief Executive, effective 20 October 2025. Westlake will succeed Sir Andrew Haines, who is retiring. He will oversee the amalgamation of Network Rail with Great British Railways. Westlake has been CFO at Network Rail since 2016 and previously held senior roles at Rolls-Royce and Alstom Transport. Acting Chair of Network Rail, Mike Putnam, highlighted Westlake's extensive leadership experience and track record in encouraging cross-industry collaboration as crucial for the transition towards Great British Railways.
6. <https://www.riagb.org.uk/RIA/Newsroom/Press_Releases/RIA_welcomes_new_CEO_of_Network_Rail_Jeremy_Westlake.aspx> - The Railway Industry Association (RIA) has welcomed Jeremy Westlake as the new Chief Executive of Network Rail. RIA Chief Executive Darren Caplan expressed confidence in Westlake's leadership and financial experience, noting his strong engagement with RIA members and the supply chain. Caplan highlighted the importance of Westlake's role as Network Rail moves forward towards Great British Railways over the next few years. The RIA also extended their best wishes to Sir Andrew Haines, who is retiring in October, thanking him for his accessibility and openness during his seven years at Network Rail.