

[News story: Unions suspend strike action on Southern Rail](#)

ASLEF and the RMT suspend planned strike action on Southern Rail on 1, 2 and 4 August 2017.

ASLEF and the RMT have suspended planned strike action on Southern Rail on 1, 2 and 4 August and lifted a ban on overtime and rest day working.

This follows nine repeated offers by Transport Ministers to meet with ASLEF and the RMT if they called off strike action, beginning in November 2016. The Transport Secretary wrote to the unions with this offer most recently on Tuesday 18 July.

The Transport Secretary will meet with ASLEF and the RMT shortly to discuss a solution that ensures passengers receive the high quality rail services that they deserve.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

I remain committed to a strong future for the railways and one where the number of staff is likely to increase. I hope we can discuss ways in which we can maximise the potential of new technology and how it can improve services to customers.

[News story: David Davis' closing remarks at the end of the second round of EU exit negotiations in Brussels](#)

Thank you Michel. Thank you for your contribution and indeed your team's constructive talks this week.

On Monday we agreed to get down to serious business. But before turning to the substance I want to reiterate the four core principles that continue to guide the United Kingdom's approach.

First, we continue to engage constructively, as a full and responsible Member State.

Second, we continue to work hard and at pace. We had 98 civil servants here

this week.

Third, we negotiate for every nation and region of the United Kingdom. Our goal is to secure a deal that works for all parts of the country.

And finally, we will keep Parliament and the public informed as the negotiations unfold.

Which moves me onto the substance.

Overall, I am encouraged by the progress we have made on understanding each other's position on citizens' rights; the financial settlement; the first meetings of sub-groups on separation issues, and on the issues around Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Citizens' rights

Since the first round of negotiations, the UK has published its approach to citizens' rights.

The talks this week have demonstrated that this was both a fair and serious offer.

I am pleased by the progress we have made.

We have looked at each other's proposals in depth and identified many concrete areas where we agree as well as areas where there will be further discussion, which will be a priority for the next round as Michel has said.

We have also agreed to publishing a joint paper today that sets out the many areas of convergence in our proposals, and the areas we need to prioritise for future discussion in our future rounds.

Michel listed a number of the areas which require that future discussion and I won't reiterate them, I'll add to them: issues like voters' rights, posted workers and of course as he said the need for shared certainty. We agreed on the need for certainty on the part of citizens both the EU and the UK, we obviously have different views on how we achieve that.

Financial settlement

On financial settlement, we both recognise the importance of sorting out the obligations we have to one another, both legally, and in the spirit of mutual cooperation.

We have had robust but constructive talks this week.

Clearly there is a lot left to talk about, and further work before we can resolve this. Ultimately getting to a solution will require flexibility from both sides.

But as Michel said, we shouldn't expect incremental progress in every round.

Ireland

On Ireland and Northern Ireland, our coordinators – this is a discussion rather than a working group – have had a good discussion.

Both sides remain committed to the Good Friday agreement and again as Michel said, achieving a flexible and imaginative solution to address the unique circumstances around the border, and particularly on the north/south dimension of the agreement.

These include the mechanisms we have discussed to preserve the Common Travel Area and the rights associated with it. Rights laid down of course in a British Act of Parliament as well as in part to the Amsterdam Treaty.

Separation issues

On separation issues, we have made progress on a range of issues, Michel mentioned most of them: Euratom; legal cases pending before the European Court of Justice and administrative procedures before Union institutions; and of course goods on the market.

These discussions have laid important groundwork for progress in the next round.

Conclusion

All in all, the second round of negotiations have given us a lot to be positive about.

And they have also highlighted the need for both sides to demonstrate a dynamic and flexible approach in the way we approach these challenges.

We have conducted this round constructively and at pace, and I hope this is a model we can continue going forward.

To coin a phrase Michel, the clock is ticking.

I came here saying that it was important that we now made progress, identifying the differences so we could deal with them, and finding the similarities so we could reinforce them.

And this week, I think we have done just that.

Thank you.

[Notice: BH20 5PF, Perenco UK Limited:](#)

environmental permit application advertisement

The Environment Agency consults the public on certain applications for waste operations, mining waste operations, installations, water discharge and groundwater activities. The arrangements are explained in its [Public Participation Statement](#)

These notices explain:

- what the application is about
- where you can visit to see the application documents
- when you need to comment by

The Environment Agency will decide:

- whether to grant or refuse the application
 - what conditions to include in the permit (if granted)
-

Notice: S021 1DD, Island Gas Limited: environmental permit application advertisement

The Environment Agency consults the public on certain applications for waste operations, mining waste operations, installations, water discharge and groundwater activities. The arrangements are explained in its [Public Participation Statement](#)

These notices explain:

- what the application is about
- where you can visit to see the application documents
- when you need to comment by

The Environment Agency will decide:

- whether to grant or refuse the application
 - what conditions to include in the permit (if granted)
-

[Press release: HMRC's Welsh language customer services team to remain in Porthmadog](#)

The HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) team offering tax services for customers in Welsh is to remain in Porthmadog.

HMRC has confirmed that the 17 people currently based at Ty Moelwyn will be co-locating with colleagues at the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP's) Thedford House site in early 2018.

This move allows HMRC to keep its Welsh language team in Porthmadog and also enables both departments to explore how they might work together in the future to provide Welsh language customer services.

Rachel McLean, Director General of Customer Services, HMRC said:

This move is vital to the success of our plans to continue to provide Welsh language customer services from Porthmadog. It will also allow us to explore how we might develop those services with both DWP and other government departments in the future.

UK Government Minister Guto Bebb said:

I am delighted that we have been able to secure the future for this vitally important UK Government office, which provides an essential service for Welsh speakers.

Several UK Government departments in Wales have worked hard to make this happen and it shows what we can achieve when we work together to reach a joint solution.

This demonstrates the UK Government's commitment to the Welsh language and to ensuring that we maximise the benefits that come from co-locating Government offices to provide the best possible service for the taxpayer.

Fiona Jones, Work Services Director for Jobcentre Plus Wales, said:

We look forward to welcoming HMRC colleagues into Thedford House from early next year, and sharing our delivery experiences with them. Delivery of Welsh language customer services is a growing part of our jobcentres and service centres across Wales.

Notes for Editors:

1. The Modernisation Programme includes investment in new online services, data analytics, new compliance techniques, new skills and new ways of working, to make it easier for the honest majority of customers to pay their tax, including by improving customer service, and harder for the dishonest minority to cheat the system. The changes have already resulted in over 80 per cent of people filing their self-assessment returns online and given customers new, simple ways to check their payments, make changes or find answers to questions.
2. HMRC's workforce in Wales is currently spread throughout five offices, which range in size from around 2,750 people to fewer than 10.
3. Ty Moelwyn was originally scheduled to close in the 2019-20 financial year.
4. HMRC will be closing five offices in Wales in total including Ty Moelwyn. Ty Nant in Swansea and Ty Glas and Brunel House in Cardiff will close in 2019-20, although there will be no estate changes until the Regional Centre in Cardiff opens. Plas Gororau in Wrexham will remain open until 2020-21.
5. We announced the locations for the regional centres in November 2015.
6. HMRC is phasing in the moves over 10 years to allow staff time to make choices for their future and reduce the number of possible redundancies.
7. The high-level plans for transforming HMRC were first shared with its people in November 2015. Since then, HMRC has held around 2,000 events across the UK, talking to colleagues about how it is changing and involving them in the discussions.