

Off the rails: £1.4bn Thameslink train deal set for further delay

Awarding the deal to Siemens cost 1,400 jobs at Britain's last train maker Bombardier in Derby and put the long-term future of the works in jeopardy

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Siemens today admitted the controversial £1.4 billion Thameslink deal might not be signed until the autumn.

Awarding the deal to the German firm cost 1,400 jobs at Britain's last train maker Bombardier in Derby and put the long-term future of the works in jeopardy.

Last month the Mirror revealed that the deal was unsigned one year after transport ministers insisted it needed to be finalised urgently to avoid delays to the massive project.

MPs and union leaders accused the government of treating British workers with "utter contempt."

In the latest development Steve Scrimshaw, the head of Siemens' UK train division, said "there is a lot of contractual stuff to be sorted out" and added that the signing of the commercial and financial contract is a "love to" "early autumn."

But the RMT rail union attacked the Government for "dragging out an act of industrial vandalism that continues to leave the future of train building in the nation that gave the railways to the world hanging by a thread."

Bob Crow, general secretary of the RMT, said: "More than one year on the botched handling of the Thameslink contract nails once and for all the government lie that it is too late to award of the work to Bombardier in Derby which is geared up and ready to go."

"It is sheer Government ineptitude that has left thousands of jobs dangling by a thread and the whole future of train building in the UK on the critical list."

"For Siemens to fob this catalogue of chaos off as "contractual stuff" is nothing short of a kick in the teeth for UK manufacturing as a whole and the UK train builders at Bombardier specifically."

"It is now high time for this act of industrial vandalism to be called to a close and RMT is demanding an end to the whole long drawn out Thameslink fleet scandal and a cancellation of the failed Siemens deal in favour of Bombardier in Derby where the skills and capacity to deliver these trains isn't bound up with the Eurozone financial crisis."

The Transport Select Committee was so concerned about the procurement process, it wants the government's financial watchdog, the National Audit

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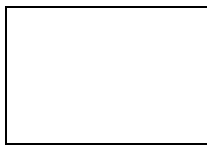
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Office to review it in "the public interest."

However, the Department for Transport refuses to discuss any aspect of the deal claiming it would be a breach of commercial confidentiality.

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
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