

Scepticism greets Network Rail chief choice

Posted 15/09/13

Network Rail's decision to appoint a new chief executive with no rail experience has received a lukewarm reception from rail industry sources who said it was indicative of insufficient emphasis on refocusing Network Rail from a project management and engineering organisation to one prioritising customer service and train operations.

"Network Rail is in danger of creating a cadre of senior management with insufficient depth of rail industry knowledge," said one source. "At board level, both the chairman and chief executive are from outside the industry and the executive directors have a relatively limited breadth of experience, particularly in transport operation."

"At route director level there has been some doubling up of management responsibility which also indicates a lack of depth. It means the expertise is not there to challenge people on operational issues and you can see the impact of that on performance results in many areas."

Although soon-to-leave chief executive David Higgins is regarded as having had an adequate tenure, it was suggested that his reputation in the media had been tarnished by his time as chief executive at the Olympic Delivery Authority and his easy manner. "The results on the ground from his programme of devolved responsibility do not appear to match his reputation," a senior rail industry executive commented.

Network Rail's announcement on Carne's appointment ([TB 9595](#)) focused on his international experience and business development capabilities. "As executive vice president for Shell in the Middle East and North Africa, Mark was responsible for the company's business in a vital but volatile region at a time of significant political change," the company said.

"He placed particular emphasis on developing local staff and businesses, supporting each country as they addressed the issue of unemployment - and in the process helped Shell achieve a strong position in countries such as Iraq."

Carne's CV also includes a spell as executive vice president and managing director for BG Group in Europe and Central Asia and an initial 21-year period at Shell which included responsibility for oil and gas platforms in the North Sea.

Endorsing Carne's appointment, Network Rail chairman Richard Parry-Jones said the chief executive role "poses a unique set of challenges,

Carne: new Network Rail boss has engineering rather than rail operations background



RELATED ARTICLES

[ORR: Network Rail missing efficiency targets](#)
[Oil and gas man Carne to lead Network Rail](#)
[PR13: Higgins tries to claw back cash for CP5](#)
[Rail industry calls on ORR to shelve 90% goal](#)
[ORR: rail must realise its commercial potential](#)
[Next step for 30 year rail technical strategy](#)
[PR13: Network Rail to pay £3m a day servicing...](#)
[PR13: Surprise HLOS leaves NR playing catch-up](#)
[PR13: Network Rail told to cut spend by £2bn](#)
[ORR: rail punctuality in England not good enough](#)

PASSENGER TRANSPORT

This article was first published in *Passenger Transport*, the leading fortnightly magazine for the UK transport sector.

demanding the skill and experience to translate engineering excellence into daily operations safely and effectively, as well as keeping the public informed of what we are doing and why.

"Through his work with Shell and BG Group in very testing and difficult environments, Mark Carne has shown that he has the necessary skill and global experience to build on, and develop further, what Network Rail has already achieved in meeting these challenges under the leadership of David Higgins," said Parry-Jones.

[News index](#) [Front page](#)

[Front page](#) [News & analysis](#) [Intelligence & resources](#) [Agenda & monitors](#) [Subscribe](#) [About](#)

Transport Briefing is published by [Acumen Intelligence Ltd](#). Unless otherwise specified all content © Acumen Intelligence 2013.
We've been writing about transport infrastructure since 2002 - we also produce the [Crossrailnews](#) and [HS2 News](#) websites.
Contact Transport Briefing: email editor@transportbriefing.co.uk Follow us on Twitter [@transportb](#).