

Mark Harper: There is no 'bottomless pit' of money to improve RMT offer

Transport Secretary [Mark Harper](#) has insisted an offer made to the Rail, Maritime and Transport union (RMT) in a bid to break the deadlocked dispute over pay, jobs and conditions will not be improved.

The Cabinet minister said there is "not a bottomless pit" of money available to railway workers.

The Rail Delivery Group (RDG), representing train operators, has described its proposal to the [RMT](#) of a minimum pay rise of 9% over two years as its "best and final offer".

Mr Harper was asked on a visit to a business near his Forest of Dean constituency if a rejection of the offer would be "the end".

I think they've got a very fair offer and it's comparable to what you've got in the private sector, and I hope members of the union get the opportunity to set out their views on it

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He told the BBC: "It is. I've made it very clear there is not a bottomless pit of taxpayers' money.

"I think they've got a very fair offer and it's comparable to what you've got in the private sector, and I hope members of the union get the opportunity to set out their views on it."

Mr Harper went on to tell the PA news agency he has "tried to change the tone" of the debate since becoming Transport Secretary in October last year.

He went on: "I've made sure and helped facilitate some fair and reasonable pay offers.

"And I very much hope that those pay offers now get the opportunity to be put in front of the members of those unions, to accept them to help get the railways working more effectively for passengers."

RMT general secretary [Mick Lynch](#) said on Thursday the union's executive will consider the offer and decide its next steps "in due course".

Train services have been decimated by a series of strikes by railway workers since June 2022.

Talks continued this week in a bid to resolve the dispute between the RMT and [Network Rail](#).

Andrew Haines, chief executive of Network Rail, told PA: "I don't think there will be any more money on the table now as part of this, the [Government](#) has made that very, very clear.

"We've been at these conversations now for over two years and we think the way forward is to sit down coolly and calmly, look at the detail of what's on the table for people to have a chance to realise the value of the offer, and then to put that

to a referendum.

“I am confident that if people get a chance to understand what the offer really is, they will say we’ve had enough strike action, this is a fair deal, let’s get back to work, let’s start restoring pride in Britain’s railways.”