

Derby named the home of Great British Railways

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Derby has been named as the national headquarters of Great British Railways (GBR HQ).

Making the announcement, the government says as Europe's largest rail hub, Derby will soon become the heart of Great Britain's rail industry too, bringing track and train together and delivering high-skilled jobs to a city already brimming with the best talent in the industry.

The statement says Derby came top of all six excellent locations in both the rigorous assessment process and the public vote. Their application demonstrated strong links to the wider network, well-established connections with the industry, supply chain and customers, as well as an extensive local cluster of private sector rail businesses.

Transport Secretary, Mark Harper said: "It's full steam ahead for the reform of our railways and today's announcement is not only a huge win for the brilliant city of Derby, but a key milestone for the entire rail industry across the country.

"Great British Railways will put the passenger first, promoting collaboration and innovation across a joined-up, efficient and modern network."

Councillor Chris Poulter, Leader of Derby City Council, said: “We’re absolutely thrilled that Derby has been selected to become the home of Great British Railways. This result is a testament to the hard work of our team, alongside our key rail and city partners based across Derby – we couldn’t have done it without them.

“Rail heritage is at the heart of our city and for this to be recognised by Government is a fantastic achievement. The investment we’ll see from this significant move will be huge, not only just for Derby but for levelling up across the whole of the wider East Midlands.

“We have a rich history of being the only city in the UK to have manufactured rolling stock continuously since 1840, so I’m thrilled that Derby’s heritage is being recognised in this defining way. We can’t wait to see what this momentous move will mean for Derby and its citizens in the future.”

While Great British Railway’s headquarters will be in Derby, other towns and cities across Britain, potentially including the five shortlisted cities, will still benefit, becoming powered up regional GBR hubs equipped with local decision making, and investment powers aimed at benefiting their local communities and further creating jobs in the locations they serve.

GBR will also have roles spanning across Great Britain including the North, South East, South West and London, with the HQ driving collaboration and innovation across the sector.

The Government is working closely and collaboratively with the Great British Transition Team to co-design the future of the railways. Passengers and freight customers will be GBR’s key priority, the new body will also take control of the industry’s finances to drive efficiency and work with the private sector to deliver for customers.

Great British Railways will be locally led and will harness the potential of the private sector locally, regionally and nationally.

Anit Chandarana, Lead Director, Great British Railways Transition Team, added: “The announcement that Derby will be the home of the Great British Railways Headquarters is another important milestone on our journey to create a simpler and better railway for everyone in Britain.

“Although Derby will be the home of our Headquarters, Great British Railways will also introduce empowered regional centres, to bring decision making and leadership much closer to local customers and communities.

“The Transition Team is continuing to work with Government and the wider rail industry to deliver this much needed reform and we look forward to working with colleagues in Derby in the coming months, too.”

GBR’s Transition Team will now work with Derby to identify the site for the HQ within the city. The Midlands is already a transport supercluster for Britain: with the Department for Transport and HS2 already having bases in Birmingham, bringing GBR’s HQ to Derby will be a further boost to the region’s transport sector and demonstrate our commitment to levelling up Great Britain.

Reaction to the news

Elaine Clark, chief executive officer of Rail Forum said: "All of the finalists were strong contenders to be the home of GBR and Rail Forum would like to commend each of the locations on the quality of their bids.

"GBR will be the guiding mind and set the strategic direction for the future of Britain's railways. Derby is an excellent location for the HQ and we look forward to continuing to develop our relationship with GBRTT, for the benefit of all our members across the whole of the UK."

Andy Bagnall, chief executive of Rail Partners said: "It's great to see Great British Railways has found its future home in Derby, a city with a rich history of railway heritage and a track record of innovation. The strength of competition for the HQ from other great railway cities up and down the country speaks to the transformative power of rail as an engine for green growth.

"Legislation in the next Parliamentary session is now the critical next step to establishing Great British Railways and maintaining momentum for reform of our railways in the interests of both customers and taxpayers."

Maria Machancoses, chief executive of Midlands Connect, said: "I am thrilled to hear Derby has been selected as the home for the new Great British Railways HQ.

"It is an excellent choice; Derby is right in the heart of the country and is home to the greatest cluster of rail sector businesses in the UK and indeed Europe making it a perfect location for the home of GBR.

"Investing in Derby is a therefore a clear vote of confidence for the rail industry bringing a host of job opportunities to the region and we look forward to working together with GBR on our plans, including the Midlands Rail Hub."

Railway Industry Association chief executive, Darren Caplan, said: "Congratulations to Derby on becoming the home of GBR, a city with a rich rail heritage! Well done also to the other competitors who were shortlisted, all of which are great rail towns and cities too, and will play a crucial role in the future of UK rail as well.

"Today's announcement is hopefully a welcome sign that the Government is pressing on with industry reform, so that the supply chain can deliver transformational rail projects effectively and efficiently in future, while delivering value-for-money for the tax and fare payer. It is now crucial that ministers keep their foot on the pedal, to provide the industry with clarity on what reform will look like and ensure that there are no further delays in the development of GBR."

Malcolm Prentice, chairman of Swadlincote rail depot maintenance firm MTMS, said Derby has been given "a monumental opportunity" to prosper after it beat off stiff competition in the race to find the ideal place to locate the new public body responsible for running the rail network across the UK.

He said: "Whenever you speak to the movers and shakers in the rail industry everyone knows about Derby's amazing rail heritage and this wonderful decision means that heritage has been reborn.

"It's a monumental opportunity for the city which deserves a huge celebration, followed by a collective

effort from everyone in the city, including the rail forum, to make sure they play an active part in the process of getting the headquarters established.

“Not only does this decision put Derby on the map, it will bring huge benefits to the area because any big players in the rail industry, if they aren’t here already, will want to set up an office in the city.

“This represents a huge boost for all of the companies in the supply chain and for any other businesses in the city, thanks to the influx of investment that this decision will bring.”

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