

# Derby's bid to become home of Great British Railways

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Derby is putting itself forward to become the home of Great British Railways, as part of the Government's national relocation and levelling up agenda.

Great British Railways (GBR) is a new public body, created in May this year, that will integrate all aspects of the rail network with an aim to make UK railways more efficient.

Last year, the Government announced their commitment to move 22,000 civil service jobs out of London by the end of the decade. The relocations will be an opportunity to improve the capacity of the civil service, by helping to attract and retain talented staff across the whole of the UK and for decision-making to better reflect the whole population.

In February, The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) announced that 500 civil servants would be relocated to the West Midlands with a new headquarters based in Wolverhampton. New regional offices for other Government departments are expected in Manchester, Darlington, Stoke-on-Trent and York by 2025.

The economic analysis has confirmed that dispersal of government activity is likely to bring economic benefits and new opportunities for those locations that have been selected for new Government headquarters.

City leaders and politicians are coming together to back Derby's vision along with Alstom, D2N2 LEP, Toyota and East Midlands Chamber of Commerce have now written to the Secretary of State for Transport, Grant Shapps, to ask for the city to become the new home for Great British Railways.

The letter comes just days after MP Pauline Latham showed her support for the move in the House of Commons. Mrs Latham said: "Derby had played a central role in the history of British rail transport. Derby has also invested in the future of the industry, with local businesses helping to develop the UK's first hydrogen trains."

Secretary of State for Transport, MP Chris Heaton-Harris added, that "Derby played an important role in the history of rail in this country."

The bid is also supported by other local MP's including, Margaret Beckett MP.

Government investment in Derby would not only bring decision-making to the city for the first time in decades but would maximise the full east-west Midlands Engine offer while leveraging Derby's unique strengths in the rail industry. This vision would not only bring new jobs to the city but would boost the regional economy and help to support planned regeneration and future developments in Derby's city centre.

As a city, Derby offers significant opportunities for levelling up the East Midlands, located in the centre of the UK, with a strong productive economy. The city's existing links to the rail industry – past and present – and its large and diverse pool of rail expertise spanning operations, design, manufacture, testing, safety, data and finance mean Derby offers a fresh start for GBR and a prime opportunity for Government to consider.

Paul Simpson, Chief Executive of Derby City Council, said: "Derby has a two-hundred-year legacy as being the centre for the rail industry and geographically sits in heart of UK rail network. We welcome MP Pauline Latham's support in the House to help champion our city to become the strategic home to help drive the transformation on UK rail.

"As a city we're home to Europe's largest and most diverse rail cluster and speaking with key rail industry stakeholders, there is outstanding appetite for the Great British Railways headquarters to be in Derby.

"The move would offer a unique opportunity for the Government to collaborate with the rail industry, as well as supporting the levelling up agenda for the city. We look forward to discussing the next steps of this bid with Government."

The bid would not only bring new jobs into the city but would boost the local economy and help to support planned regeneration and future developments in Derby.

Alstom – who runs the UK’s largest train factory from Derby – have also shown strong support for the move.

Will Tanner, Communications Director at Alstom UK and Ireland, said that Derby was well placed to support the Government relocation.

“The business and national strategic case for locating Great British Railways in the city is very strong indeed and we are delighted that Derby is putting itself forward, he said.

“Alstom is the UK’s leading train builder and maintainer and is proud to call Derby home. The city has been building trains for Britain and the world since 1839 and its still doing so today.”

John Forkin, Managing Director of Marketing Derby, added: “Derby is a can-do city that hosts one of the world’s largest rail clusters and I cannot think of a better home for the new Great British Railways.

“From a Government perspective, it makes business sense and locating these jobs in the East Midlands would also contribute to the levelling up agenda.”

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