

House of Lords Committee calls for “accelerated” rail electrification and “battery and fuel cell trains”

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The House of Lords Science and Technology Committee has published its report following an inquiry on batteries and fuel cells.

It has said “the Government must ensure that the railway electrification programme is accelerated” and said that “the development of battery and fuel cell trains should be supported to serve those parts of the network that remain non-electrified.”

In its report it says: “The UK risks losing its existing automotive industry and falling further behind global competitors in battery manufacture. Despite recent announcements of new battery gigafactories, without further investment in supply chains, training and research there is the very real risk that manufacturing of batteries and vehicles will move overseas.

“The Committee was concerned by the lack of a longer-term strategy. The Government is not investing

enough in next-generation batteries, even though this offers its best chance of overtaking international competitors. Similarly, the Government is providing too little support for fuel cells, despite the UK having significant expertise and the potential to take a global lead.

“The Committee was alarmed by the contrast and apparent disconnect between the optimism of Ministers about the UK’s prospects and the concerns raised by other witnesses who fear that the UK is lagging behind its competitors.”

Responding, David Clarke, Technical Director at the Railway Industry Association (RIA), said: “It is good to see the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee backing the asks of RIA’s Rail Decarbonisation 21 campaign, which is calling for Government to commit to a rolling programme of electrification and fleet orders of battery and hydrogen rolling stock – in line with the Transport Decarbonisation Plan – before COP26 in November.

“This is now the third parliamentary committee to back the recommendations of RIA’s campaign, showing a head of steam amongst policy makers to deliver a clean, environmentally friendly, low carbon rail network. We look forward to working with Peers from across the political spectrum, and the Government, to support the Committee’s findings.”

The House of Lords Science and Technology Committee [report can be found here](#).

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