

Rail industry welcomes Transport Bill announced in the Queen's Speech

May 10, 2022

The Railway Industry Association (RIA) has welcomed the Transport Bill announced in the Queen's Speech, which includes plans to "improve" the railway industry.

His Royal Highness Prince Charles said: "Her Majesty's Government will improve transport across the United Kingdom, delivering safer, cleaner services and enabling more innovation. Legislation will be introduced to modernise rail services and improve reliability for passengers."

Darren Caplan, Chief Executive of RIA, said: "The railway industry will welcome the inclusion of a new Transport Bill in the Queen's Speech today. However, it would have been good to see Great British Railways specifically mentioned in the Speech, to ensure we can make progress.

"With the introduction of rail legislation, RIA has set out 'five tests' for GBR as it is established. These include the need to ensure there is no hiatus in rail work as the restructure takes place, that the new organisation is transparent, open and accessible, and that it supports a sustainable rail supply sector which encourages private investment. The ultimate challenge is to ensure GBR leaves a positive legacy, when it comes to safety, decarbonisation, exports and the economy.

"RIA and our members now look forward to working with the Government, Parliamentarians, rail clients and stakeholders, as the Bill moves forward, ensuring UK rail delivers not just for passengers and freight users, but also the wider economy too."

Andy Bagnall, director general at the Rail Delivery Group, said: "This is an important milestone towards delivering a better railway for customers and the nation as a whole with Great British Railways having the potential to join up the railway.

"To make these reforms a success, this needs to be balanced with giving private operators the contractual freedom to focus relentlessly on customers, and boldly innovate to meet their needs.

"The private sector will continue to work with government and the Great British Railways Transition Team to ensure these reforms meet the ambition and potential of the Williams Shapps Plan for Rail."

Martin Tugwell, Chief Executive of Transport for the North, has welcomed today's Queen's Speech, which included references to improving transport and delivering on the levelling up agenda.

He said: "It is reassuring to hear clear mentions of the need for rail reform in today's Queen's Speech, something that we and our region's political and business leaders have been calling for and contributing to. Combined with a focus on innovation and decarbonisation, and underpinned by the ongoing commitment to levelling up, this is a welcome commitment to enhancing connectivity.

“We now need greater detail on the role of Sub-national Transport Bodies within the new Transport Bill, setting out how we can offer our regional insights and expertise to help deliver a new rail regulatory framework that puts passengers first. Transport for the North is ready and waiting to be at the forefront of the Government’s plans to make levelling up a reality and create a sustainable transport network across the North of England.”

Norman Baker, from Campaign for Better Transport, said: “We are pleased to see that much needed improvements to the country’s rail network have been included in the Queen’s Speech today in the form of a Transport Bill, however we are disappointed there is no mention of legislation to address the failing ticketing system. Without whole-sale reform of the entire ticketing system we cannot hope to have the better and more reliable service passengers have been promised.”

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