

Railtex / Infrarail: a vibrant UK rail sector back out in force

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The Railway Industry Association (RIA) has highlighted the importance of the railways to the UK at a major in-person tradeshow. In remarks to Railtex / Infrarail 2021, RIA Chief Executive Darren Caplan welcomed representatives from right across the sector and celebrated the vibrancy of the rail industry.

During his speech, Caplan highlighted how the railways have kept essential goods and services moving over the last 18 months, and, looking ahead, will be at the heart of the 'levelling up' agenda and essential to help reach the UK's climate targets.

The three-day tradeshow, which took place from Tuesday 7 to Thursday 9 September at the NEC in Birmingham, saw visitors and exhibitors covering a host of disciplines, with some travelling from overseas, many of whom were attending their first in-person in almost two years.

The event heard from a range of leading figures and politicians, including Transport Minister Andrew Stephenson MP, who used his speech to set out how HS2 expects to support 34,000 jobs in construction and, combined with other projects, will form a key part of the Government's plans to build a green transport system in the UK. Williams Rail Review Author Keith Williams also spoke at the show on the

reforms set out in the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail. And Shadow Rail Minister Tan Dhesi MP also gave a keynote, emphasising that rail can be a great connector in society with the power to transform for communities, jobs, leisure and boost economic growth.

Commenting on the event, Chief Executive of RIA Darren Caplan said: “Encouragingly, this month has seen mainline rail passenger numbers rise to 60% of pre-covid levels already, at a time when many people have been on summer holidays, and we expect this to rise throughout the Autumn and beyond. Rail has played a major role in supporting the UK economy and its connectivity during the pandemic, and will continue to support economic growth, jobs and investment right across the UK.

“So it was fantastic to see real optimism about the future of the supply sector at Railtex / Infrarail, with such a vibrant and diverse range of companies exhibiting, and industry leaders, policy makers and rail businesses coming together.

“It is clear rail is a prime candidate to support the Government’s build back better agenda and lead the economic recovery. As Railtex / Infrarail shows, the industry is ready to deliver, supporting passengers and freight users as well as boosting the wider economy in the months and years to come.”

Photo credit: Railway Industry Association