

RIA research highlights lack of transparency for suppliers

October 24, 2022



Railway Industry Association (RIA) has published its own Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline (RNEP), three years after the last announcement was made public by the UK Government.

Created in 2019, the RNEP was billed as a ‘new approach for rail proposals’, which would provide certainty and transparency through the annual publication of a pipeline of enhancement projects in England and Wales. However, Friday 21 October 2022 will mark three years since the publication of the first and only iteration of the RNEP – since then there has been a reduction in the CP6 rail enhancement budget, and the lack of any subsequent update has led to considerable rail supply sector uncertainty and concern.

RIA’s Chief Executive Darren Caplan said: “The 21 October marks three years since the first and last publication of the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline, despite the Government committing to publish an annual update. This has led to a lack of visibility for rail suppliers, who are simply looking to plan and invest in their businesses and workforces to conduct the work.

“Whilst we are all aware there are difficult economic times ahead, as well as increased pressure on public spending, RIA and our members are simply asking for visibility on what the Government is planning on rail

enhancements projects – we are not lobbying on budgets. Real jobs, investment and even tax revenues from the rail supply sector rely on understanding the Government's intentions.

“So RIA has conducted its own analysis of the RNEP on behalf of its members, which shows a mixed picture. We respectfully ask the DfT to also have a look at our analysis, and to let the rail supply sector know the progress of the projects in it as soon as possible. It is welcome that many RNEP projects are actually being completed or progressing, but a clear matter of concern that there has been no update on almost half of these schemes since 2019.

“Ultimately, this uncertainty is holding back the supply sector's potential to deliver both economic growth around the UK and also improvements for passengers and freight customers, key objectives for the Government.”

Based on publicly available information, RIA has published its own RNEP to give some understanding of enhancement projects to its members. The trade association has analysed all 58 projects included in the original RNEP and given each one a red, amber or green rating, based on:

- Green: scheme is complete, under construction or there is public information confirming that the project will be delivered;
- Amber: public information suggests the project development is progressing, but there is not yet certainty it will be delivered. In practice this usually means that the project is progressing towards a Strategic Outline Business Case or an Outline Business Case; and
- Red: no information about the status of the project; or there is a large amount of uncertainty over whether it is progressing.

We found that there are:

- 18 Green projects;
- 21 Amber projects; and
- 19 Red

RIA have also identified eight projects which were not included in the 2019 RNEP but have subsequently been announced. These include major schemes such as Midland Main Line Electrification and the Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands. The projects also include the Restoring Your Railway Fund which is made up of many smaller schemes.