

Search is on for a home for Great British Railways

October 4, 2021



Transport Secretary Grant Shapps has today (4 October 2021) announced that a competition will be run to identify the headquarters for **Great British Railways (GBR)**, the single, accountable public body responsible for running Britain's railways.

As part of major reforms designed to ensure decisions about the railway are brought closer to the passengers and communities they serve, GBR will require a new national headquarters alongside regional headquarters.

The government will soon launch a competition by welcoming expressions of interest with a commitment that the national headquarters will be based outside of London – ensuring skilled jobs, investment and economic benefits are focused beyond the capital.

The competition will recognise towns and cities with a rich railway history that are strongly linked to the network ensuring the first headquarters will take pride of place at the heart of a new era for Britain's railways.

Grant Shapps said: “Great British Railways will need a home. Today I’m announcing that we will be launching a competition to find the town or city that will become home to the new rail body and the future capital of our railway industry.”

Responding to the news, Andy Bagnall, Director General at the Rail Delivery Group, representing train operators, said: “The government’s reforms need to get the railway working better for every part of the country so it’s sensible to look beyond the capital to set up the headquarters for the new Great British Railways.

“Delivering much needed reform of the railway is good for passengers, and train companies want to work with government to get the details right so that local train companies can use their expertise to attract passengers back – as that will be critical to boosting the nation’s recovery from the pandemic.”

The Transport Secretary also announced today the creation of the GBR Transition Team under the leadership of Andrew Haines, who will continue to work as CEO of Network Rail.

The Transition Team will now be responsible for driving forward reforms and creating the railway’s new guiding mind. They will initially focus on driving revenue recovery efforts post-pandemic, bringing a whole industry approach to tackling cost and promoting efficiency and establishing a strategic freight unit to boost the sector.

The Transport Secretary has also set out the core goals that will define GBR, including:

- changing the culture of the railways not simply creating a bigger version of Network Rail
- thinking like our customers, both passengers and freight, and putting them first
- growing the network and getting more people travelling
- making the railways easier to use
- simplifying the sector to do things quicker, driving down costs and being more accountable
- having a can-do, not a can’t do culture
- harnessing the best of the private sector
- playing a critical role in the national shift to net zero

GBR was commissioned in May 2021 as part of the [Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail](#), focused on delivering sweeping reforms that create a truly passenger-focused railway.

Photo credit: Department for Transport