

## What the parties pledge to do for rail

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The General Election campaign is well underway details of the parties pledges released and members touring up and down the UK canvassing for support.

One which is at the heart of all the manifestos is public transport, particularly the railways – an issue which impacts millions of voters on a daily basis.

The amount of investment in the network, fare prices and the ownership of the railways are among the issues which have featured heavily.

With the December 12<sup>th</sup> vote looming, RBD has taken a look at some of the things the main parties have been saying when it comes to the railways.

### **Conservatives**

- The Conservatives has pledged to build Northern Powerhouse Rail between Leeds and Manchester and then focus on Liverpool, Tees Valley, Hull, Sheffield and Newcastle.
- Invest in the Midlands Hub, strengthening rail links between Birmingham, Leicester, Nottingham, Coventry, Derby, Hereford and Worcester.
- There will also be improvements to train lines to the South West and East Anglia.
- Contactless pay-as-you go ticketing will be extended to almost 200 more stations in the South East.
- City regions will be given funding to upgrade train, tram and bus services.
- The party will end the complicated franchising model and create a 'simpler, more effective' rail system, which includes giving metro mayors control over services in areas.
- The findings of the Oakervee review will be considered when it comes to the costs and timings of HS2 and the pledge is to work with leaders of the Midlands and the North to decide the optimal outcome.
- Plans to restore many of the Beeching lines.

## **Labour**

- Labour has pledged to bring the railways back into public ownership as franchises expire.
- Simpler, more affordable fares are also mentioned in the manifesto, with a pledge to cut the wastage of private profit, improve accessibility for disabled people and ensure safe staffing levels and end driver-only operation.
- Labour's publicly owned rail company would steer network planning and investments, co-ordinate mainline upgrades, resignalling, rolling stock replacement and major projects.
- A long-term investment plan includes Crossrail for the North, High-speed rail networks and the completion of the full HS2 route to Scotland.
- They will consult with local communities to reopen branch lines.
- The party will deliver rail electrification and expansion across the whole country, including Wales.
- Labour also plans to expand the provision of publicly owned rail freight services and promote the use of rail freight, which would reduce congestion on the roads and carbon emissions.

## **Liberal Democrats**

- Freeze rail fares for commuters and season ticket holders for a parliament, while the party says it will 'fix broken fares and ticketing system' so that it provides better value for money.
- Start a revolution in rail franchising by opening up the bidding process to public sector companies, local or combined authorities, not-for-profits and mutuals.
- Be far more proactive in sanctioning and ultimately sacking train operators if they fail to provide a high-quality public service to their customers.
- Create a new Railways Agency to oversee the operations of the railway network, removing the Department for Transport from day-to-day decision-making.
- Support High Speed 2, Northern Powerhouse Rail, East-West Rail and Crossrail 2.

### **Brexit Party**

- The Brexit Party says it would raise £200 billion by scrapping HS2 and would invest over £50 billion in the 'left behind' regions in local rail and road schemes.
- The party would also invest in digital infrastructure providing free base level domestic broadband for everyone and free Wi-Fi on all public transport.
- The Brexit Party says it would also invest in strategic national industries, saying more freedom is needed to invest in key strategic industries and create thousands of jobs in railways, steel and defence.

### **Green Party**

- Commits to renationalising rail over 10 years, scrapping HS2 and creating three electrified rail lines running from Liverpool and Manchester to Sheffield, Hull and the Tees Valley.
- Councils or groups of councils would be given franchising powers for local rail services.
- Rail and bus fares to be reduced to encourage people to switch from cars.

### **SNP**

- Demand that full control of Scotland's railway system be devolved to the Scottish Parliament – putting Scotland's railways into public hands.
- A pledge to make rail services significantly more efficient, faster and greener with reduced journey times between London and Scotland.
- A commitment to de-carbonise Scotland's railways to reach net zero by 2035.

### **Plaid Cymru**

- The electrification of all mainline rail lines by 2030 including the South Wales Valley Lines and the North Wales Coast Line.
- Building a super-Metro for south-east Wales with new stations acting as development hubs.
- Building the new Swansea Bay and Western Valleys Metro, and reopening rail services for the Amman, Swansea, Neath and Dulais Valleys.
- Developing a metro for north-east Wales and relocate the Chester Transport for Wales Depot to the north of Wales.
- Creating a trans-Wales railway: connecting Wales' coastal communities by re-opening the Carmarthen to Aberystwyth line, with a second phase linking north to south.
- A Cross-Rail for the Valleys – from Porth to Pontypool.
- Scrap HS2.

## **UKIP**

- UKIP will scrap HS2, claiming it will destroy people's lives and will have huge environmental impacts. Instead the party says it will invest in the existing railways to improve capacity and journey times.
- All options would be considered in terms of rail operators, but UKIP suggests problems could be solved by taking control by means of a new Government-owned company to run the franchises.