

The Railways Bill:

10 key points from the supply chain



1. The creation of Great British Railways (GBR) will help create a more strategic approach to co-ordinating passenger rail services through better integration of track and train, underpinned by a long-term plan for investment.
2. Railway Industry Association (RIA) members want to see GBR established as a high-performing organisation which delivers for passengers, rail freight and taxpayers.
3. The UK's private sector rail supply chain will play a significant role in delivering GBR's plans. For example, rail suppliers are the primary delivery partners in Network Rail's five-year programme of rail maintenance and renewals (more than £30bn between 2024 and 2029) and provide and maintain most of the rolling stock fleet.
4. The creation of GBR as an integrated body of around 100,000 employees will require a significant mobilisation and implementation plan ahead of probable establishment in 2027. This change programme needs to start soon, as should the appointment of GBR's leadership team.
5. Under GBR, rail professionals should be made accountable to run the operational railway free of day-to-day political and official interference. This is a much-needed departure from the existing system. It is not clear that the Railways Bill will provide the required separation of oversight.
6. RIA believes GBR should be constituted akin to a development corporation, which runs train services and rail infrastructure but also leverages assets like the railway's substantial property and land portfolio to build housing, create jobs and boost regional and national economies. RIA's proposal for [Station Investment Zones](#) makes the case for such opportunities, particularly through the use of private investment.
7. To generate efficiencies, GBR will need to manage several funding streams and integrate decision-making across track and train, which will require shifting annual spending decisions on train operations and some enhancements to a fully integrated 5-year planning cycle.
8. The railway has benefited from 5-year funding settlements for infrastructure for over 30 years, but the legislation proposes that the Transport Secretary will be able to reopen these at any time without consultation. Any deviation from 5-year funding stability risks increased future costs for taxpayers and a deteriorating experience for passengers.
9. The majority of GBR's expenditure will be through the rail supply chain. It is vital that GBR provides a clear outlook on future work and procurement to help reduce costs. For example, the Core Valley Lines in Wales combines strong public sector leadership and vision with a substantial transfer of risk to the supply chain to provide services to manage the railway efficiently. It is a long-term partnership and integrates both track and train operations.
10. Private and 'third-party' investment would give a significant boost to central Government funding, whether from private investors and developers, local governments, or community and regional partnerships. GBR must be established to attract inward investment.