

Public competition launched to find new home for Britain's railways

- public will have their say with an online vote to find home for Great British Railways
- towns and cities across the country with strong links to the railways are encouraged to enter nationwide competition
- new HQ will see home of the railways set up outside of London, spreading opportunities and levelling up communities
- Great British Rail will integrate the railways and deliver simpler, cheaper, passenger-focused travel

The [competition to find the new home of Great British Railways \(GBR\)](#) officially opens today (5 February 2022), with towns and cities across England, Wales and Scotland invited to apply.

As part of the government's commitment to level-up the UK, and following the publication of the [Levelling Up white paper](#), the new GBR HQ will be based outside of London and bring a number of high-skilled jobs to the winning location.

Local economies will be further boosted by a number of new regional headquarters across the country, putting decision-making and investment at the heart of the communities that use those railways day-to-day.

The creation of GBR was announced as a major pillar of the once-in-a-generation reforms launched by Transport Secretary Grant Shapps in the [Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail](#). GBR will be a single guiding mind that ends the fragmentation of the rail industry and drives benefits and improvements across the network for passengers and freight customers.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

Our railways have kept this country moving for almost 200 years, but it's time to kickstart a new age that will shape our network for the next 200.

I'm calling on people across the country to make the case for why the true home of the railways is on your doorstep.

Locations across the country with strong historical links to the railway are

encouraged to make the case for why they should be the new home of GBR.

The GBR transition team will shortlist the best applications in May, after which a public vote will help determine the winning location.

Applications will be measured against 6 criteria:

- alignment to levelling up objectives
- connected and easy to get to
- opportunities for GBR
- railway heritage and links to the network
- value for money
- public support

This central headquarters will be the heart of the rail network and provide strategic direction for the running of GBR.

Leader of the Great British Railways transition team, Andrew Haines, said:

This is the chance for cities and towns across the UK to pitch to be a key part of an exciting chapter in the history of Britain's railway.

Local authorities, MPs and business groups are being encouraged to drive forward campaigns for why their community should be the [#DestinationGBR](#).

Today's announcement follows the publication of the Levelling Up white paper, which sets out the government's plan to transform the UK by spreading opportunity and prosperity, with improving transport a core driver of this mission.

It includes 12 bold national levelling up missions, which will be given status in law, and shift government focus and resources to Britain's forgotten communities throughout the 2020s.