

North-east rail revolution begins with Beeching reversal and fund for new trains across Tyne and Wear

- rail minister confirms £1.5 million to accelerate re-opening Ashington-Blyth-Tyne line for passengers, with project at forefront of £500 million commitment to reversing Beeching cuts
- government invests £337 million to deliver new, modern metro train fleet across Tyne and Wear
- Middlesbrough Station to receive £500,000 package to drive forward proposed station upgrades

A major investment package into new trains, the re-opening of closed routes and new upgrades for stations was unveiled by Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris in Newcastle (28 January 2020), with passengers across the north-east set to see significant rail improvements.

The Department for Transport is investing £1.5 million in Northumberland County Council's project to re-open the Ashington-Blyth-Tyne line to passenger services. Closed during the Beeching cuts, this funding places the project at the front of a new nationwide drive to [re-open former rail routes, through a £500 million government fund](#).

The fund is aimed at bringing back the rail connections needed to level up access to opportunity across the country.

This announcement comes on the same day that Nexus, the operator of the Tyne and Wear Metro, announces the manufacturer of their new £362 million fleet. Backed by £337 million of government funding, the new trains are set to transform journeys, providing more comfortable seats and better information for millions of passengers who use the network.

Middlesbrough Station could also see major redevelopment as the government commits £250,000 of funding, matched by the Tees Valley Combined Authority, to take forward upgrades to Middlesbrough Station. This would enable the station to accommodate more, and longer, trains, benefiting to the hundreds of thousands of passengers who use the station every year.

Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris said:

We are committed to reinvigorating rail connections across the north-east, improving access to jobs, leisure and education across the region.

Levelling up the north is a priority for this government. This investment – to reconnect isolated communities, improve stations and deliver new trains – shows that we are putting our money where

our mouth is.

The visit coincides with [Transport Secretary Grant Shapps visiting Fleetwood](#) to launch the government's £500 million fund into reversing Beeching closures across the country.

The cuts, which were initially proposed by British Rail chief Dr Richard Beeching in 1963, ended passenger services on around a third of the rail network, closing more than 2,300 stations and up to 5,000 miles of track across the UK.

Visiting Poulton-le-Fylde line today (28 January 2020), which has been closed to passengers for over 50 years, Mr Shapps set out how the new investment will see long-isolated communities benefitting from better rail connections.

To launch the reversal scheme, the government is also announcing £1.5 million of funding for the Ashington-Blyth-Tyne Line in Northumberland, the Fleetwood line in Lancashire, and an Ideas Fund.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

Many communities still live with the scars that came from the closure of their local railway more than five decades ago. Today sees work begin to undo the damage of the Beeching cuts by restoring local railways and stations to their former glory.

Investing in transport links is essential to levelling up access to opportunities across the country, ensuring our regions are better connected, local economies flourish and more than half a century of isolation is undone.

Recognising that not all growing towns can re-open previously existing stations, and that some areas may never have been served by rail, the government is also announcing a fresh round of the New Stations Fund.

Two previous rounds of the scheme have already helped develop 10 brand new stations across England and Wales. The new round will be allocated £20 million.

The Transport Secretary has invited MPs, local authorities and community groups across England to come forward with proposals on how they could use funding to reinstate axed local services. £300,000 has been committed to an 'Ideas Fund' to kickstart the process and encourage innovative ideas that will then be considered for further funding in the future.

Journeys to be planned down to the minute as open data revitalises bus use across England

- government brings buses into the digital age with pioneering open data project to improve passenger journeys
- information on timetables, fares and live location to help passengers plan journeys
- the [Bus Open Data Service](#) launches today (28 January 2020)

Bus passengers across England will soon be able to plan their journeys down to the minute thanks to a pioneering project to share bus data.

Buses Minister Baroness Vere has announced a huge project to standardise and openly publish information from operators, which will enable bus users to plan routes, understand costs in advance and predict bus arrival times. Information on timetables will be available from early 2020, followed by location and fares data during 2021, encouraging more people to choose buses by making them easier to use than ever – improving connectivity for communities and boosting the environment as more people turn to public transport.

Developers will be able to add the information into existing apps or develop new products to bring the benefits to passengers across the country.

Buses Minister, Baroness Vere, said:

We know the value of our buses – responsible for around 12 million trips a day, they take us on the everyday journeys that make up our lives.

But we want to create a golden age for our buses, and we can only do this if passengers find them easy to use and understand how much journeys will cost.

This pioneering project will bring transparency to passengers, boosting bus use and helping the sector thrive – just one example of how government is harnessing technology to make journeys across the UK greener, easier, safer and more reliable.

Only half of bus users think that it is easy to stay up to date with timetables and fares, impacting the number of journeys taken and the user experience, according to Transport Focus.

The latest annual bus statistics demonstrated that whilst bus patronage figures have continued to fall year on year, the decline is tailing off. In

areas where bus operators and local authorities have already invested in their passenger information offer, such as the West Midlands, this trend has been fully reversed with year on year patronage growth of 7.8 million journeys being reported.

The Bus Open Data Service will be followed by new regulations which will mean bus operators are legally required to provide timetable data by the end of 2020 and fare, ticket and location data by 2021. The new regulations will mean a better deal for bus passengers – providing live location data boosts passenger confidence and providing greater transparency across different operators will help to keep fares down following years of fares increasing beyond the rate of inflation.

Ed Parsons, Geospatial Technologist at Google said:

Open transport data is valuable both in providing real time information to passengers and enabling a broader ecosystem of app developers and service providers that will allow future innovative solutions to the challenges of urban mobility

Johan Herrlin, CEO at Ito World, said:

Accurate, timely and rich public transport information is crucial in encouraging the use of public transport which, in turn, helps address congestion and pollution issues. We're excited to be working with DfT to make this a reality.

David Sidebottom, Director at Transport Focus, has supported the announcement saying:

Making it easier for passengers to find bus times and fares is good news. Ensuring that information is accurate and timely will be crucial to the success of the open data service.

David Beardmore, Commercial Director at the Open Data Institute, said:

We're delighted to see this significant step forward. Consumers are the ultimate winners. Armed with better information, they can plan their journeys more easily and make better choices about tickets.

Barry White, CEO at Transport for the North said:

We welcome the launch of the Department for Transport's Bus Open Data's Digital Service as a watershed moment in the industry's collective efforts to transform the provision of information for

bus users and other public transport passengers.

In 2020 the project will standardise information from operators and legally mandate the open publication of data; bringing greater transparency to passengers to help them use the UK's bus network.

The government will work with technology companies, app developers and information providers to ensure a range of innovative products are designed to make the most of the data and help all bus users make informed choices.

Full data on fares and locations will be available from 2021, by which point it is expected that a range of apps will be on the market, allowing passengers to manage their journeys from start to finish from their smartphones.

This follows the government's recent announcement of new low-fare, high-frequency 'Superbus' networks, Britain's first all-electric bus town and contactless payments on every city bus.

The package, worth £220 million in the first year, will see many cuts to services reversed. It will create 'express lanes' for buses in the West Midlands and elsewhere, and will invest in new ways of providing more frequent public transport in the countryside and other places where conventional buses have dwindled or disappeared.

The government has also committed to the UK's first-ever long-term bus strategy and funding settlement, including support for councils who want to create London-style franchised services in their areas.

[Fishing regulations as the UK leaves the EU](#)

The UK will be actively negotiating new trading and fisheries agreements with the EU and other third countries during this transition period, up to December 31st 2020. The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is reminding the fishing industry that the UK will continue to abide by the current rules, which apply to all UK, EU and other vessels fishing in UK waters, throughout this period.

The regulations are designed to keep fish stocks at sustainable levels to protect the marine environment and support the viability of fishing businesses now and in the future.

The MMO is responsible for managing fishing opportunities and ensuring compliance with the regulations that protect fisheries in English waters.

The MMO undertakes compliance monitoring through data and intelligence gathering and surveillance operations at sea and in port, using regular aerial and offshore patrols by dedicated aircraft and patrol vessels. Its 150 operational staff, predominantly based in coastal offices around England, continue to work with the fishing industry to improve understanding of the regulations as well as monitoring activity and where necessary boarding and inspecting vessels.

Michael Coyle, Head of Compliance and Control at the MMO, says: "It's important that anyone planning to fish in UK waters from January 31st 2020 is aware that there is no change in regulation at this stage and all they need to do is ensure they continue to comply with the existing rules."

"Those who break the rules disadvantage hard working fishermen and their businesses who are committed to seeing thriving fish stocks for the future so it's important we maintain a strong presence and deterrent."

Any changes that may come about through the new negotiated arrangements will be communicated in advance of becoming operational.

The MMO will provide businesses with the information required to prepare to trade with the EU from 1 January 2021 but in the meantime, for information on the transition [click here](#).

Further Information

In compliance with UK's obligations under UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) and SOLAS (Safety of Life at Sea) the UK's territorial sea limit, exclusive economic zone limit and international maritime boundaries as well as 6 and 12 nautical mile fish limits are on UKHO's standard navigational charts (paper charts and electronic navigational charts (ENCs)). The UK Hydrographic Office's ADMIRALTY Standard Nautical Charts and Electronic Navigational Charts can be obtained from an international network of ADMIRALTY Chart Agents. You can find a list of these agents and their locations [here](#)

For illustrative purposes diagrams and shape files (digital data files) are available on the [UKHO's Marine Data Portal](#).

[Support for the UK's intent to accede to the Lugano Convention 2007](#)

The UK, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein have today signed the EEA EFTA Separation Agreement, which largely mirrors the Withdrawal Agreement negotiated with the EU. The agreement protects the rights of 17,000 UK nationals living in the EEA EFTA states and 15,000 EEA EFTA nationals living

in the UK, ensuring that at the end of the transition period they will be able to enjoy broadly the same rights as they do now.

The EEA EFTA Separation Agreement does not cover civil judicial cooperation (or 'Private International Law') matters. Private International Law matters between the UK and relevant EFTA states (in this instance Norway, Iceland and Switzerland only) are governed by the Lugano Convention 2007. This international agreement sits outside of the EEA legal framework. The UK welcomes the statements of support it has received from its EFTA partners on its intention to accede in its own right to the Lugano Convention 2007 at the end of the transition period.

Lugano Convention 2007

The Lugano Convention 2007 ('the Convention') provides certainty on which country's courts may hear a civil or commercial cross-border dispute and ensures that the resulting judgment can be recognised and enforced across borders. It helps prevent multiple court cases taking place on the same subject matter in different countries and reduces the costs and expenses for the parties involved.

This is an important convention for UK businesses, the legal services sector, individuals and families (due to the inclusion of family maintenance arrangements within its scope). The UK will continue to participate in this convention for the duration of the transition period. Our continued participation beyond then is subject to negotiation with the EU, Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. Denmark has an 'opt-out' of justice and home affairs under relevant EU treaties, but is a contracting party to the Convention. The UK remains committed to joining the Convention in its own right.

We have received the following statements of support for the UK's intent to accede to the Lugano Convention 2007:

Iceland and Norway:

"Iceland and Norway welcome the intent of the United Kingdom (UK) to accede to the Convention on jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters (the 'Lugano Convention 2007') before the end of the transition period and will support a request for accession from the UK.

Should the UK not have become a party to the Lugano Convention 2007 by the end of the transition period, the UK, Iceland and Norway shall seek to agree alternative options for providing legal certainty and maintaining a framework for civil judicial cooperation. If necessary, such arrangements may consist of an orderly winding down of cooperation under the Lugano Convention 2007.

To this end, the three states agree to meet no later than six months before the end of the transition period to assess the situation and seek to agree the necessary arrangements."

Switzerland:

“Switzerland welcomes the intent of the United Kingdom (UK) to accede to the Convention on jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters (the ‘Lugano Convention 2007’) and will support a request for accession from the UK.”

[A letter from John Glen to Stephen Jones on Mortgage Prisoners](#)

[unable to retrieve full-text content]A letter from John Glen, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, to Stephen Jones, Chief Executive Officer of UK Finance