

# WORKING TOGETHER FOR BRITAIN'S PROSPERITY



**Paul Plummer, Chief Executive of the Rail Delivery Group, which brings together train companies and Network Rail to enable a better railway, writes about the rail industry's plan to change, improve and secure prosperity for Britain**

In a landmark coming together last year, the rail industry launched a joint plan, In Partnership for Britain's Prosperity. This plan, delivered by the partnership railway, will secure the economic benefits from current investment by the public and private sectors, and enable further improvement and investment.

The plan was backed by business and passenger groups, including the Federation of Small Businesses, British Chambers of Commerce, CBI and Transport Focus.

In the plan, rail companies make four commitments to change and improve: to protect the benefits of investment and innovation to unlock extra economic benefits, improve journeys, better connect communities and increase jobs in rail, supporting the country as it leaves the European Union.

This was supported by independent research which shows how investment from both the public and the private sectors will secure almost £85bn of additional economic benefits for the country by connecting people to jobs, housing and new business opportunities. This is in addition to the existing £31bn of economic benefits the railway delivers each year.

The plan details the progress that the industry has made since it was restructured in the 1990s, when Britain's railway ran a £2bn a year operating deficit (1997-98) compared to generating a £200m surplus today, benefiting taxpayers.



The redeveloped London Bridge station from above. £1 billion is being invested in London Bridge station as part of the Thameslink Programme, which will see trains running through central London every 2 to 3 minutes.

## IN PARTNERSHIP FOR BRITAIN'S PROSPERITY

In the next 18 months alone, customers and communities across the country will see a transformation in their railway with more trains, better services and improved stations;

*Investment into rail of over £50bn, including at least £13.8bn by the private sector, will help to deliver over 7,000 new carriages and 6,400 additional services per week by 2021;*

Customer journeys will be improved using technology to increase capacity by running trains closer together, to improve information to help passengers during disruption, and to make buying and using tickets quicker and easier;

*Improved services and greater confidence for customers with the introduction of a new Independent Railway Ombudsman, in 2018, ruling on unresolved complaints;*

A stronger voice for customers in England and Wales with customer representation on joint supervisory boards, or an equivalent – a partnership between the rail industry and customer groups;

*Employees in the railway will benefit with 100,000 job opportunities, £1bn investment in our people, 20,000 new apprenticeships in rail and its supply chain by 2020 and doubling the number of higher level apprenticeships every five years.*



Paul Plummer, centre, is joined by employees of train companies and Network Rail as well as leaders from the rail industry, business and passenger groups, including (left to right) Tim Shoveller, Stagecoach; Mark Carne, Network Rail; Anthony Smith, Transport Focus; Maggie Simpson, Rail Freight Group; and Dr Adam Marshall, British Chambers of Commerce

The plan is being delivered now. Over the last year, the Ordsall Chord in Manchester was completed, allowing for improved journey times across the north; the first phase of Crossrail was delivered which will increase rail capacity across the capital by 10% when complete; and new stations were opened in Cambridgeshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire.

This past Christmas and New Year alone, 260 projects worth over £160m finished on time. This included signalling upgrades in Liverpool, electrification between Preston and Blackpool and the re-opening of London Bridge station: all of which support new housing and job opportunities across the country.

We look forward to delivering many more major upgrades: 2018 brings with it newly electrified lines to the west of England, the North West and Scotland to name just a few places, and a number of new trains to make our customers' journeys faster and more reliable. Our aim is to work together to connect communities, building the economy and deliver a better railway across Britain.

As well as these key improvements to stations and track, new figures released in February reveal that 7,000 new carriages are being built for Britain's railway. The new carriages represent an investment of at least £13.8bn by the private sector in rail.

This is bolstering public investment in major upgrades to the railway infrastructure which, combined with new carriages, will enable the partnership railway to run more than 6,400 extra services each week by 2021, benefitting all parts of Britain.

The new carriages will mean the retirement of some of the oldest trains on the network, including pacer trains which operate in the north of England, with rolling stock that has more seats, Wifi, power points, improved accessibility, air-conditioning and, in the case of the Caledonian Sleeper, even double en-suite bedrooms.

Existing trains are also being refurbished to give much the same customer experience as new trains including Wifi, power sockets and information screens, with small and medium sized businesses across Britain supplying everything from new toilet systems, Wifi routers and low energy lighting systems.

The partnership railway of public and private sectors is working together with a plan to change, improve and secure prosperity for Britain while enabling further investment and improvement. We are delivering this plan, including our four commitments, now and for the long term.



Apprentices from across the rail industry gather together in the Canal Tunnels near Kings Cross, a brand new section of track opening this year, enabling people to travel directly from East Anglia to the South Coast via London, to highlight the publication of 'In Partnership for Britain's Prosperity'

**Rail Delivery Group**



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