

Rail Forum Midlands General Election 2019 Manifesto

Introduction

Rail Forum Midlands (RFM) represents over 200 rail companies spanning the whole supply chain. Established over 25 years ago we have a regional focus with national reach; representing our members and providing them with a range of services to support reliability and innovation, as well as driving growth and productivity.

Rail is a key driver of economic growth and development. The UK railway is a vital national asset providing 4.8 million passenger journeys every day and carrying over 75m tonnes of freight each year. A natural choice as a sustainable mode of transport the railway and its supply chain needs to be able to plan ahead to ensure that capability and skills meet the future work-bank for a growing network. To help achieve this RFM has identified the following key 'asks' of the next government.

1. Commitment to rail playing a major role in the UK government's de-carbonisation and clean air agendas.

- A long-term rolling programme of electrification of key InterCity and Commuter routes, including the Midland Main Line;
- Support for the accelerated deployment of battery and hydrogen trains to help decarbonise the UK network by 2040 (2035 in Scotland).
- Strategic Investment in gauge-clearance and additional capacity to support rail freight growth.

2. Commitment to completing HS2 and Midlands Engine Rail in full, together with other regional priorities (e.g. Northern Powerhouse Rail and Crossrail 2).

- In order to increase much needed rail capacity, reduce road congestion, shorten journey times and improve air quality, it is vital that there is investment in new rail infrastructure.
- The Midlands and wider UK supply chain is well placed to help deliver these critical projects that will help increase Britain's productivity and stimulate employment.
- HS2 will also generate much needed economic and housing growth around new and existing stations across the Midlands.

3. Commitment to publish a long-term plan for infrastructure renewals and enhancements, as well as a future rolling stock strategy.

- Creating capacity and putting an end to 'peaks and troughs' in the rail supply industry, increasing investment, retaining skills and ensuring UK competitiveness;
- Enabling the railway industry to meet the 2040 decarbonisation target as well as delivering value for fare and taxpayers.

4. Commitment to transparent, auditable targets for UK content with progress being published annually.

- Ensuring local content targets are included, and given sufficient weight in, tender assessment criteria will support our strategic UK supply chain, allowing investment in new technologies, innovation and skills as well as providing a stable supply chain that has the confidence to seek overseas markets.