

Debate Pack

18 January 2023

Number CDP-0014 (2023)

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Restoring Your Railway Fund

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1 Background

A debate is scheduled to be held on 24 January 2023 at 9.30am in Westminster Hall on Restoring Your Railway Fund. The debate will be opened by Kevin Foster MP.

1.1 Restoring the rail network

Great Britain's rail network is roughly half the size of the network 100 years ago.¹ The pace of line closures, which started after the First World War, accelerated following a report in 1963 by Dr Richard Beeching, the then Chairman of the British Railways Board, entitled [The Reshaping of British Railways](#).² Following Dr Beeching's report, the length of the country's rail network fell by a third in 10 years.³

The 2019 Conservative Party general election manifesto pledged to restore railway lines and stations closed during the Beeching cuts of the 1960s:

Connectivity is not just about the UK's great cities. To help communities across the country, we will restore many of the Beeching lines, reconnecting smaller towns such as Fleetwood and Willenhall that have suffered permanent disadvantage since they were removed from the rail network in the 1960s.⁴

In January 2020, the Government pledged £500million for the Restoring Your Railway Programme to deliver this manifesto commitment.⁵ In a press release at the time, the then Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said that:

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.⁶

As part of the Restoring Your Railway Programme, the DfT invited MPs, local councils and community groups in England and Wales to submit proposals to reinstate old services and restore closed stations. Scheme proposals are split into three categories:

- The Ideas Fund. This including funding to support local communities to explore the options for restoring old lines and stations.

¹ DfT, [Rail Usage, Infrastructure and Performance Statistics: Table RAI0101](#), 16 December 2021.

² British Railways Board, [The Reshaping of British Railways](#), March 1963

³ House of Lords Library, [Reversing the Beeching Closures: Full Steam Ahead?](#), February 2020

⁴ Conservative Party, [Conservative Party Manifesto 2019](#), November 2019, p 27 [PDF]

⁵ DfT Press Release, [Government pledges £500 million to bring back historic rail lines, improving connectivity for communities across the country](#), 28 January 2020

⁶ DfT Press Release, [Government pledges £500 million to bring back historic rail lines, improving connectivity for communities across the country](#), 28 January 2020

- Advanced proposals. This funding is designed to support the reinstatement of old lines and stations which were already considered for restoration.
- New Stations Fund. This is designed to support proposals for new stations, including the restoration of old sites.⁷

As of November 2021, the Restoring your Railway (RYR) Fund has not accepted new proposals and the Government is focussing “on realising the benefits of existing schemes to regenerate local economies and improve access to jobs, homes and education.”⁸

1.2 Successful RYR bids

In June 2022 the Government published a [Restoring your Railway Fund programme update](#), with details of all successful and unsuccessful bid schemes (including maps of the successful ones). In total, the programme update lists 44 successful schemes, which are at different stages:

- 23 schemes are being funded to develop a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC), one of the earliest stages in considering a transport intervention.⁹
- 13 schemes, that have already developed an SOBC (either with funding from RYR or prior to the programme’s inception) are being supported to develop further.¹⁰
- 8 schemes are being delivered. Of these, the Dartmoor line between Okehampton and Exeter, has already reopened (in November 2021).¹¹ All the schemes being delivered are listed in the table below.

⁷ Collection [Restoring Your Railway Fund](#) 18 June 2022

⁸ Collection [Restoring Your Railway Fund](#) 18 June 2022

⁹ DfT [Restoring your Railway Fund programme update](#) 18 June 2022, Pages 8-9

¹⁰ DfT [Restoring your Railway Fund programme update](#) 18 June 2022, Page 10

¹¹ DfT [Restoring your Railway Fund programme update](#) 18 June 2022, Page 11

Table 1 Restoring Your Railway: Schemes Being Delivered			
Name	Region	Route into RYR	Notes
Dartmoor Line	South West	Advanced Proposal	Delivered November 2021. Enhanced service introduced May 2022
Northumberland Line	North East	Advanced Proposal	Delivery by December 2023
Marsh Barton Station	South West	New Stations Fund 3	Currently in construction, delivery in 2023
Thorpe Park Station	Yorkshire and Humberside	New Stations Fund 3	Delivery by March 2024
Thanet Parkway Station	South East	New Stations Fund 3	Currently in construction, delivery in 2023
Edginswell Station	South West	New Stations Fund 3	Delivery by March 2024
St Clears Station	Wales	New Stations Fund 3	Delivery by March 2024
White Rose Station	Yorkshire and Humberside	New Stations Fund 3	Currently in construction, delivery in 2023

Source: [DfT: Restoring your Railway Fund programme update](#), 18 June 2022, Page 11

A written statement to Parliament was made by the then Transport Minister Wendy Morton, to accompany the publication of this programme update. The Minister said that “if delivered, these lines and stations will make a real contribution to levelling up the country, reinvigorating high streets and breathing new life into previously cut-off areas.”¹²

In oral evidence to the Transport Committee on 18 January, the Rail Minister Huw Merriman said it will be necessary to “manage expectations” of the RYR

¹² DfT Written statement to Parliament [Restoring Your Railway update](#) 20 June 2022

programme, given there is a limited budget which “can’t deliver anything like the number of bids.”¹³

1.3

Costs

The costs of reopening railway lines depend on the scope of the project and various local factors, such as the value of the land and the condition of the existing infrastructure.¹⁴ According to the Campaign for Better Transport (CBT), it is difficult to develop accurate estimates of the likely costs before detailed preparatory work is completed.¹⁵ However, based on schemes that had either been completed or had recently reached an advanced stage of development, the CBT calculated a cost of between £9 million and £16.7 million per mile to reopen railway lines.¹⁶

Further information on the Beeching closures and the UK Government’s plans to restore old lines and stations is outlined in the House of Lords Library briefing, [Reversing the Beeching Closures: Full Steam Ahead?](#)¹⁷

¹³ Transport Committee [Formal meeting \(oral evidence session\): Rail services and infrastructure](#) 18 January 2023

¹⁴ The Campaign for Better Transport, [The case for expanding the rail network](#), January 2019 [PDF]

¹⁵ The Campaign for Better Transport, [The case for expanding the rail network](#), January 2019 [PDF]

¹⁶ The Campaign for Better Transport, [The case for expanding the rail network](#), January 2019, page 13 [PDF]

¹⁷ House of Lords Library, [Reversing the Beeching Closures: Full Steam Ahead?](#), February 2020

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Press Articles

The following is a selection of news and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or the accuracy of external content.

[Reopening Stoke-Leek railway could mean new Stoke Station platform](#)

Stoke Sentinel

Phil Corrigan

19 October 2022

[Operation restoration: Britain's historical railway revival, from Devon to Derbyshire](#)

National Geographic

Sarah Barrell

7 September 2022

[Additional funding secured for rail restoration schemes](#)

Rail Technology Magazine

Elliot Griffiths

21 June 2022

[Disappointment as Maid Marian Line Restoring Your Railway bid rejected - but renewed hope for its reopening](#)

Chad

Jon Ball

21 June 2022

[Nine more abandoned rail schemes win cash for restoration](#)

New Civil Engineer

Catherine Moore

21 June 2022

[UK grants £15m for nine railway restoration projects](#)

Railway Technology

20 June 2022

[Rebirth of the line: Devon joy as rail link reopens after 50-year hiatus](#)

The Guardian

Steven Morris

20 November 2021

[Peak District railway restoration plan divides local opinion](#)

The Guardian

Nazia Parveen

10 November 2021

[Daily passenger trains to return to Okehampton this year](#)

Rail

19 March 2021

[RIA: Restoring Your Railway and Coventry Shuttle](#)

Rail Technology Magazine

Ailsa Cowen

17 December 2020

3 Parliamentary Material

3.1 PQs

Weardale Line

Asked by : Peter Gibson

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what recent progress she has made on re-establishing a passenger service along the Weardale line in County Durham.

Answering Member : Kevin Foster

Department of Transport

The £500m Restoring Your Railway Fund is supporting over 45 promising schemes with the potential to level up areas and reconnect communities. The Department has now received the scheme's Strategic Outline Business Case and will review it in the coming months.

UIN 54649, tabled on 22 September 2022

Railways

Asked by : Michelle Donelan

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what steps his Department is taking to reopen previously closed railway lines and stations, including Corsham station.

Answering Member : Wendy Morton

Department of Transport

The £500m Restoring Your Railway Fund is supporting over 45 promising schemes with the potential to level up areas and reconnect communities. Wiltshire Council was successful in its Round 3 bid to the Restoring Your Railway Ideas Fund to reopen Corsham Station. As a result, Wiltshire Council is receiving up to £50,000 in development funding to complete a Strategic Outline Business Case for the scheme to be submitted to the Department in September 2022

UIN 35016, tabled on 12 July 2022

Restoring Your Railway Fund

Asked by : Ruth Cadbury

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, how many bids were made as part of the Accelerating Existing Proposals category within the Restoring Your Railway Fund; and if he will publish a list of those bids.

Answering Member : Wendy Morton

Department of Transport

The £500m Restoring Your Railway Fund is supporting over 45 promising schemes with the potential to level up areas and reconnect communities. We reopened the Dartmoor Line in November 2021. On 18 June 2022 we announced £15m of further development funding for nine schemes and published a Programme Update with an overview of all schemes, including Advanced Proposals and those which were part of the announcement.

UIN 27639, tabled on 29 June 2022

3.2

Debate

[Formal meeting \(oral evidence session\): Rail services and infrastructure](#)

Transport Committee

18 January 2023

[Reopening Railway Lines and Stations](#)

House of Commons

Volume 717: debated on Thursday 30 June 2022

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Further Reading

House of Lords Library, [Reversing the Beeching Closures: Full Steam Ahead?](#), February 2020

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