

# [News story: HM Land Registry launches new Business Strategy](#)

Today, 29 November 2017, we published our Business Strategy which covers the direction we will take over the next 5 years to become the world's leading land registry for speed, simplicity and an open approach to data.

We safeguard land and property ownership worth in excess of £4 trillion, including around £1 trillion of mortgages. The Land Register contains more than 25 million titles, showing evidence of ownership for some 84% of the land mass of England and Wales.

Launching the strategy at our third annual stakeholder event, Lord Henley, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy said:

HM Land Registry's new Business Strategy sets out the programme of work towards innovation and transformation. As a critical component of the UK's national infrastructure, HM Land Registry's work to make conveyancing simpler, faster and cheaper fits in with the government's Industrial Strategy and looks forward to a digital future. This strategy is something I am pleased to put my name to.

Introducing the Business Strategy, Chief Executive and Chief Land Registrar Graham Farrant said:

We have a great heritage and history. Our new 5-year strategy comes as we mark our 155th anniversary and the registration of our 25 millionth title. It sets out how we will achieve our ambition to become the world's leading land registry for speed, simplicity and an open approach to data and to achieve comprehensive registration by 2030.

## **1. Brilliant at the basics**

We will make registration simpler and faster by becoming even more customer focused and efficient while upholding our values at all times. We will look at how we can better support conveyancers through customer training and education programmes to remove duplication of effort and simplify the registration process. We aim to digitise and automate 95% of our daily transactions by 2022 to help simplify, speed up and improve the efficiency of registration.

## **2. A comprehensive register**

We will create a more definitive record of property ownership in England and Wales to help us make buying and selling houses simpler, faster and cheaper. A comprehensive land register with high quality and comprehensive data promises to be a significant tool to support economic and housing growth, innovation and the overall property market.

## **3. Digital Street**

Our ground-breaking research and development project exploring how land registration might work in 2030. We are creating a pilot digital register for a small selection of properties by the end of 2017. This pilot register will be fully machine-readable and able to be updated instantly. Digital Street will contribute towards a property industry where people will buy, rent, sell, finance, build and manage property with ease.

## **4. Opening our data**

We will publish a wide variety of data in high quality and accessible formats to maximise its use for the benefit of wider society and to drive innovation in the digital economy. The release of data we hold on 25 million land and property registered titles will support the government's transparency agenda.

## **5. Expert people**

In order to modernise and reshape the organisation, we need to empower our people and develop their skills. We will continue to develop the skills of our caseworkers to enable them to become the most digitally skilled land registration experts, blending their registration expertise with digital systems. We will invest in developing leadership and management skills, giving our people an opportunity to work towards professional standards, aligned to both government and external benchmarks.

## **6. Financially strong**

We will have a robust financial plan to make sure our aims are affordable, deliver value for money and can respond to fluctuations in the market.

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## **[News story: Strategic vision for rail](#)**

- the next phase for rail with a new way of operating train and track – bringing them closer together
- a railway fit for the 21st century and the huge volumes of passengers it now carries

- government to explore opportunities to increase railway capacity to drive economic and housing growth
- modernising the railway by bringing forward digital technologies to dramatically improve services for passengers

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling today (29 November 2017) set out a new vision for our railways, including plans to end the operational divide between track and train and an evolution of the franchising system.

The proposals – contained in the government’s [Strategic vision for rail](#) – also include commitments to expand the railway network to boost housing and economic growth, and deliver major passenger benefits – including rolling out improved compensation schemes for passengers.

The sweeping proposals aimed at creating joined up teams running track and train will make the railway more reliable for passengers and ensure that it works as one to deliver for its customers.

The reforms build on the Secretary of State’s [speech to Policy Exchange](#) in December 2016 and the recommendations of the [McNulty](#) and [Shaw](#) reports.

Building on Network Rail’s recent devolution of infrastructure management to route-based businesses, the plans include complementary changes to the [franchising system](#) to ensure that the railway is prepared to manage the challenges of the future, while maintaining the railway infrastructure in public ownership.

[Transport Secretary, Chris Grayling, explains why we have launched the Strategic vision for rail](#)

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

The last few years have seen massive growth on Britain’s railways. This industry has reversed decades of decline under British Rail, delivered new investment and new trains, and doubled the number of passengers.

But now we need to build on that success by building a new model for the 2020s and beyond, one more able to deal with the huge rise in passenger numbers and the challenges of an increasingly congested network.

Rail passengers deserve a more reliable, more efficient service – and I will deliver it by ending the one-size-fits-all approach of franchising and bringing closer together the best of the public and private sector.

Changes to the franchising system include:

- the first of the new generation of long-term regional partnerships on the East Coast Mainline, which will be introduced from 2020 – the East

Coast Partnership between the public sector and a private partner will be operated by a single management, under a single brand and overseen by a single leader

- rolling out joint teams running day to day operations across the [South Eastern network](#) with plans to introduce a new Alliance Director, responsible for a joint team operating the trains and tracks
- introducing a joint team to run the East Midlands franchise following next year's franchise competition
- introducing smaller train companies, ensuring that every line, station and passenger is central to each train operator's strategy – this includes splitting up the Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern franchise in 2021, and consulting on a new West of England franchise

### [Three ways the rail strategy will affect you](#)

The [Strategic vision for rail](#) also commits to explore opportunities to restore capacity lost under the Beeching and British Rail cuts of the 1960s and 1970s by identifying new schemes that unlock new housing or economic growth and offer good value for money.

The government is already planning to reopen the railway line from Oxford to Cambridge and our new development programme will identify new connections and lines that were closed to passengers by British Rail, as part of finding and funding future rail schemes which offer good value.

At the heart of the new strategy is a commitment to improve passenger experience across the network and take advantage of new technology to improve services. This includes major changes that will extend passenger rights – including compensation for passengers when trains are more than 15 minutes late. We are also supporting the introduction of a Rail Ombudsman to ensure all passengers are treated fairly.

The vision also pledges to introduce digital rail – new technologies that have the potential to reduce crowding and improve train punctuality for passengers – across more of the country. This includes funding to develop schemes on the Transpennine Route, on the South East Route and East London Line, and on the Moorgate Branch. It also reinforces the important role for freight on the rail network to support the British economy and environment.

## **More detail on franchising changes**

### **East Coast Partnership**

The East Coast Partnership will be responsible for both intercity trains and track operations. It will be set up over the next 2 years as a partnership between the public and private sectors, with responsibility for the lines between London, Yorkshire, North East and Scotland.

The private partner will have a leading role in defining future plans for route infrastructure.

The government and the Office of Rail and Road will continue to ensure that

robust protections for freight and other passenger operators are maintained.

Further details about the new East Coast Partnership will be set out in the coming months. The government is currently in discussions with the existing operator of the East Coast franchise, Stagecoach-Virgin, to ensure the needs of passengers and taxpayers are being met in the short term whilst laying the foundations to bring forward the reforms in full under a long-term competitively procured contract.

## **South Eastern and East Midland**

The government is today publishing the [invitation to tender for the new franchise on the South Eastern network](#) between London and the Kent coast, which will be headed by a new Alliance director, with a joint team operating the trains and the tracks on a day to day basis.

We will publish an invitation for tender in 2018 for the franchise on the Midland Mainline between London and Sheffield, which will also be operated by a joint team.

## **Great Western franchise consultation**

A [consultation has been launched on the future of the Great Western franchise](#), including a proposal to create a new West of England franchise that would provide long-distance services between London, Wiltshire, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall (including the Sleeper) together with regional and local services across the south-west.

To provide a period of stability before the franchise is next competed, the department will be asking FirstGroup, the current operator, for a proposal to continue operating the franchise until 2022.

## **More detail on expanding the network**

The new development programme will identify opportunities to restore capacity lost to passengers under British Rail, as part of finding and funding future rail schemes which offer good value.

The government has already created [one team to drive forward design, development and fund raising of East West Rail](#) and work is due to start on the next phase of the route in 2018.

Other proposals that are in discussion as part of the new development programme include suburban lines around Bristol, a freight route that runs through Central Birmingham, the line from Okehampton to Exeter and from Blyth to Ashington in County Durham. Proposals will need to demonstrate a strong business case where they are seeking government funding.

## **More detail on the Shaw and McNulty reports**

## McNulty

In 2011 Sir Roy McNulty produced a [report](#) which identified that a greater alignment of the industry and uniting track and train was a key issue for the railway. One form of reunification he proposed was alliances between Network Rail and train operating companies, which could align teams to form a single operating unit that can work together on a day to day operational basis as well as planning work on the network.

McNulty said that there “needs to be better alignment of organisations and their incentives, particularly between Network Rail and train operating companies”.

## Shaw

In 2016 Nicola Shaw produced a [report into the structure of Network Rail](#). She recommended that it should be a much more devolved structure. Placing maintenance and upgrades in the hands of local teams, who know how to best improve performance and efficiency.

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# [Statement to Parliament: Strategic vision for rail, 29 November 2017](#)

Announcing a new strategic vision for rail, a consultation on the next Great Western franchise, and an invitation to tender for the South Eastern franchise.

I am today (29 November 2017) publishing [Connecting people: a strategic vision for rail](#), which describes our vision for the railways, and the actions we are taking to make it a reality. We are bringing the organisations that run the tracks and trains closer together to deliver better services for passengers. We are pressing ahead with Network Rail devolution to a series of route based businesses. We are investing in upgrades to the network to deliver faster journey times, more capacity, and unlock growth. We are also improving the customer experience, including smart ticketing.

I will make copies of the strategic vision available in the libraries of both Houses.

I am also today announcing a [consultation on the future of the Great Western franchise](#), and issuing the [invitation to tender](#) for the next South Eastern franchise.

These documents are now available on GOV.UK.

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## News story: Better journeys for South Eastern rail passengers

- plans unveiled to boost capacity with space for at least an extra 40,000 passengers per day
- improved, longer, more comfortable trains and fast wifi connectivity by 2022
- region will become the first in the country to have a new joint team running day to day operations for track and train to cut delays and improve performance
- next operator required to remove first-class accommodation on all services within 18 months of taking over the franchise to increase space for all commuters

Thousands of rail passengers will benefit from more space, longer trains and more reliable journeys on the South Eastern franchise under new plans announced today (29 November 2017) by Rail Minister Paul Maynard.

The [competition for the next company to run the franchise](#) starts today as the Department for Transport set out a host of improvements potential operators should provide on the network between London and the Kent coast.

Under innovative new plans, the network will be the first in the country where a single director is responsible for a joint team – made up from the train operator and Network Rail – that operates the trains and the tracks on a day to day basis and is accountable for the performance of the network.

Bidders will need to show how they can deliver extra services and more space for passengers on services across the region, as well as providing greater connectivity, smarter ticketing systems and improved compensation.

The next operator must:

- provide longer trains and upgrade or replace older trains, creating space for at least an extra 40,000 passengers
- introduce fast wifi on all services, making journeys more productive and enjoyable for passengers
- bring in improved compensation with a simple, easy to claim system that will provide a refund after 15 minutes
- introduce new smart ticketing systems, including a pilot for pay-as-you-go
- improve customer service, with staff better able to respond quickly to passenger's needs
- deliver significantly enhanced cooperation between Network Rail and operator through a new structure designed to increase the reliability of the railway and put the passenger first in all decision making

Rail Minister Paul Maynard said:

We are investing in the biggest railway modernisation for over a century. Today marks a major step forward in giving passengers better journeys across the south-east and beyond.

We've listened carefully to passengers and have introduced innovative new plans that see smoother, more comfortable journeys for passengers, with new, longer trains and more space.

South Eastern will be also – for the first time – be run by a joint team from the operator and Network Rail under a single director – responsible for day-to day performance and accountable to passengers.

South Eastern services carry 640,000 passenger journeys a day, and will soon need to integrate seamlessly with future Thameslink and Crossrail services to transform the way people travel across London and the south-east.

The next operator must also meet tough targets for improved wifi to increase the speed of data connection and coverage on trains.

And when passengers are delayed, travellers must be able to claim compensation quickly and easily when their journey is delayed by more than 15 minutes under an improved Delay Repay scheme.

More than 10,000 responses were received for the [department's consultation on the future of South Eastern](#). The department has listened closely to passengers and South Eastern trains will still travel to the same London stations as at present including Victoria, Charing Cross and Cannon Street.

There will be some limited changes to services to deliver significant benefits for all suburban passengers including fewer delays and a regular 'turn up and go' timetable.

The next train operator and Network Rail must also work closely together to make these transformative changes happen. Bidders must put forward plans for integrated joint teams between themselves and Network Rail to bring track and train closer together, cutting delays and improving operations.

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## [News story: The future of the Great Western franchise](#)

- Great Western rail franchise could be split up to ensure best possible experience for passengers

- option put forward in new consultation on future priorities for the franchise

The Great Western rail franchise could be split up to maintain the strongest possible focus on passengers under proposals unveiled today (29 November 2017).

The plans would create a new West of England rail franchise to provide long-distance services between London, Wiltshire, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall together with local and regional services across the south-west.

The proposals were released today in a [consultation asking passengers how they want the Great Western rail service to look in future](#).

Billions of pounds are being spent to upgrade services for passengers on Great Western, which carries 100 million passengers a year and stretches from London to Penzance and from Portsmouth to Worcester.

Improvements include brand-new electric and bi-mode trains to provide more seats and more comfortable journeys, while timetable changes will mean faster and more frequent trips on many routes by 2019.

The Government has decided to extend the franchise for the current operator Great Western Railway (GWR) until March 2020 to make sure passengers get the best possible service while these upgrades are carried out.

And the Department for Transport will also seek to agree terms for them to continue operating until 2022, which will allow the improved services to bed in fully before running a competition for a new long-term franchise.

Rail Minister Paul Maynard said:

We are investing in the biggest modernisation of the railways for over a century. Working with GWR, we are bringing the very latest in rail technology to some of the world's oldest lines, putting passengers first so that they benefit from a transformational programme of upgrades as quickly as possible.

The benefits of these improvements will be felt right across the franchise area. But as the franchise continues to grow into the 2020s, we want to ensure every line, station and passenger remains central to the train operator's strategy. This consultation asks passengers how they want their railway to look into the 2020s and beyond and how it will best deliver for them.

The [consultation opened today and will run for 12 weeks, closing on 21 February 2018](#).