

Mayoral Partnerships

November 2025



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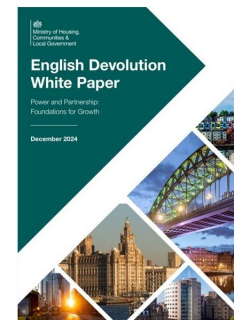
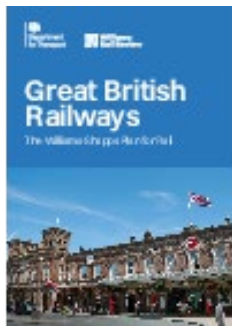
Date: 5 November 2025



Rail reform context



The journey to GBR



Williams Shapps review

Made a commitment to greater control for local people and places

Public Ownership Programme

Beginning of the end of fragmentation, frustration and poor performance

Railways and Devolution Bills

Legislation to establish Great British Railways integrating track and train, and a new devolution framework to empower Mayoral Strategic Authorities



A Railway Fit for Britain's Future

Government Response



CP 1419

November 2025

Transport Secretary's
six objectives for a
reformed railway:



Reliable

By bringing the management of track and train together to improve performance, with GBR managing day-to-day operations and taking long-term decisions in the public interest.



Affordable

Ensuring the railway works for both passengers and taxpayers to deliver financial sustainability and value for money, with clear oversight of fares by the Transport Secretary and safeguarding of railcards



Efficient

By doing away with more than a dozen existing rail bodies whose functions will move into GBR, reducing duplication and ridding the sector of the current fragmented web of interfaces and competing interests.



High quality

With a powerful watchdog to champion passengers' interests, equipped with tough powers to investigate issues, settle disputes, and highlight where improvements for all passengers can be made.



Accessible

Maximising integration across the whole rail network so that disabled and all other passengers get a safe and reliable service while removing barriers and delivering accessibility improvements in a more joined-up way.



Safe

Ensuring everyone feels safe when travelling on the railways while preserving our world-leading culture of rail safety, with oversight by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR).

English devolution context



Journey to Mayoral Strategic Authorities (MSAs)

English Devolution White paper

Power and partnership: Foundations for Growth, published December 2024

- Core part of Government's '**Kickstarting economic growth**' Mission
- *Devolution by default will end the deals-based approach*
- Integrated multi-year settlements to fund local priorities for '**Established**' MSAs
- For transport, the London model is the exemplar
- Integrated local transport, option to franchise buses, statutory roles in rail, road co-ordination
- The default level for partnerships with GBR and other national delivery bodies
- English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill currently in Parliament

Key roles and responsibilities

Local Growth Plan

- *'Setting out a long-term vision for growth in their region over the next decade and a roadmap for how this can be achieved'*

Spatial Development Strategy

- *enable their area to grow, identify the infrastructure that is needed and strategic locations for development*

Local Transport Plan

- Setting out the transport outcomes required to deliver the wider suite of mayoral strategies
- Comprises a strategy and a delivery plan
- LTP will be a statutory consideration for GBR decision-making



Mayoral Partnerships



The role of mayoral authorities in rail is changing



Mayors are becoming strategic partners for rail

- English Devolution White Paper and Railways Bill set out statutory roles in governing, managing, planning, and developing the rail network

From 'Trailblazer Deals' to 'GBR Mayoral Partnerships'

- A shift from 'deals' of the past to a focus on devolution and mutual partnership with Mayoral Strategic Authorities
- Bringing together mayors as experts of their places and communities, with GBR's rail and whole network expertise

Building place-based, integrated transport networks

- Understanding how rail can play its part in a multi-modal, integrated local transport system to drive growth and achieve local ambitions

Creating a simpler, better railway

- A railway that's easier to do business with - balancing the needs of local communities, customers, passengers and freight with whole network integrity

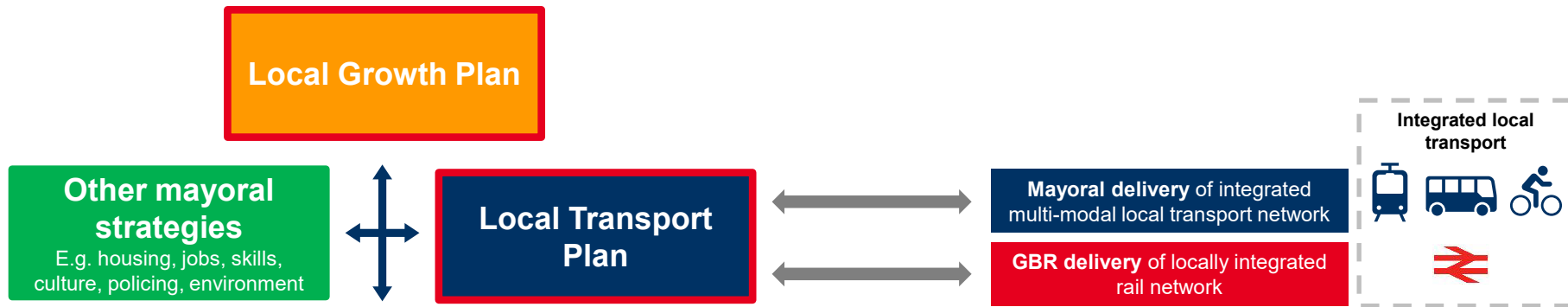


GBR Mayoral Partnerships Framework



Partnerships to secure delivery of mayoral growth plans

Securing delivery of Local Transport Plan rail outcomes will ensure GBR is delivering for local growth



The Mayor's Transport Strategy is the equivalent to the LTP in Greater London

Red outline highlights main statutory mayoral strategies (as planned)

- Transport remains at the heart of mayoral authority powers and budgets, with a substantial **multi-modal public transport delivery role**
- Mayors' **Local Transport Plans** (LTPs) set policies and drive implementation of the transport outcomes needed to deliver mayoral priorities
- Mayoral Partnerships secure collaboration to inform LTP strategies and are the channel for implementing the required rail outcomes and outputs
- In the places that want it, it will secure delivery of **local rail as an integrated part of mayoral multi-modal transport networks**

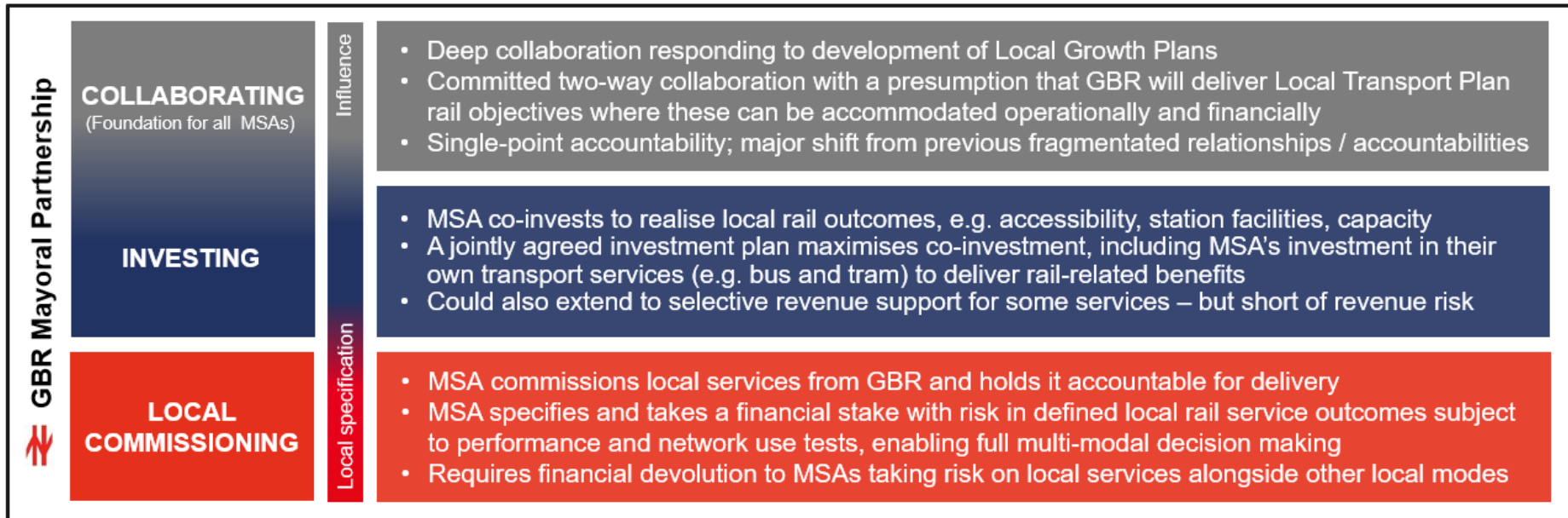




GBR Mayoral Partnership Framework

Latest version in co-development with UTG members

The framework offers a range of options for MSAs to exercise their statutory roles in partnership with GBR as the publicly owned and accountable integrated railway delivery body. Depth of partnership can flex from time to time according to local priorities.



Foundation: for all places

GBR LOCAL ENGAGEMENT

- GBR engaged with all local transport authorities (LTAs) and subnational transport bodies (STBs) to ensure local transport strategies are informed with input from the integrated public railway
- LTAs and STBs engaged with GBR to ensure rail planning benefits from local intelligence (housing and economic growth, etc) enabling GBR to respond subject to its national objectives and funding

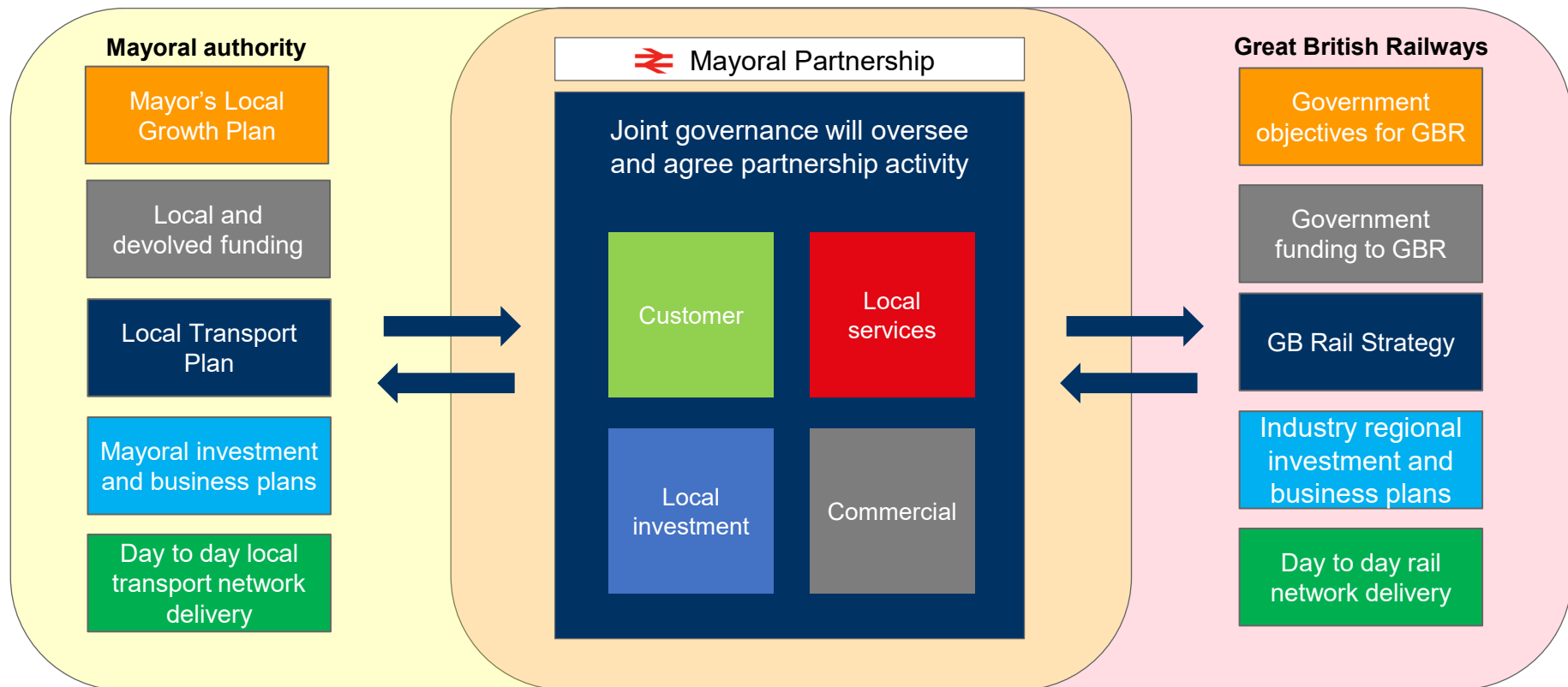
'Right to Request'

FULLY DEVOLVED

- Devolved service carve-out ('de-designation') separated from GBR (e.g. London Overground, Merseyrail Electrics), locally managed delivery with full revenue risk, with operation contracted to 3rd parties or delivered by MSA
- Transfer of assets (e.g. stations) from GBR

GBR and its partners will collaborate to develop and agree rail outcomes

GBR and mayoral authorities have their own objectives, funding and powers. Partnerships provide a process to agree local objectives and advance mutual interests while retaining these existing delivery responsibilities.



Creating the conditions for GBR Mayoral Partnership

Form and structure of GBR: Working design principles to establish the conditions for successful Mayoral Partnership

Based on current design assumptions, these principles are being refined as ongoing engagement with mayoral authorities

- **Decentralised and integrated across track and train:** GBR will be decentralised and vertically integrated across track and train. It will be structured to take decisions close to the customers, markets, and places that it will serve. This will secure close alignment with mayoral authorities as crucial partners to GBR.
- **Clear local accountability:** GBR's structure will provide mayors and their teams with single-point accountability with local GBR decision-makers. GBR data will be open by default, with transparency on performance and financial information.
- **Outcome focused national rail objectives:** GBR will be accountable for effective and efficient delivery of the railway. Instead of operating contracts, government will set clear objectives for GBR and a funding envelope. This will provide GBR the latitude to be a responsive local delivery partner.
- **Empowered local engagement:** GBR will provide mayoral authorities with much needed clarity for engagement with the industry, allowing mayoral authorities to agree local outcomes for their areas and hold GBR to account for delivery of these outcomes.
- **Performance and efficiency driven:** A high performing and efficient railway will be a priority for GBR. GBR will be accountable for the service design and operating decisions to deliver these outcomes, including those locally agreed and / or commissioned.
- **Statutory roles:** Mayoral authorities will have statutory roles to work with and do business with GBR to agree the local outcomes for GBR aligned as much as is practical to mayoral authority's priorities. This is an underpinning for the joint working relationships envisioned by GBR partnership.