

Application to

Great British Railway

**Bolton
Council**

Context


Bolton has a population of over 280,000, and is one of the largest towns in Europe, and larger than many of the UK's cities. Bolton is a £4.9bn urban economy.

Bolton today is shaped by the town's history as a market and mill town, and both the retail and manufacturing sectors remain major local employers. A market town since the 1200s, the rise of the cotton industry in the nineteenth century led to Bolton's rapid growth: its mixture of market halls, municipal buildings, large squares and retail thoroughfares are a legacy of its importance to the local population.


Bolton Train Station had 3.262m passengers in 2019/20 and 425,000 interchange passengers. It is ranked 173rd in the UK for passenger numbers (out of 2526 stations nationwide) and is the second highest in Greater Manchester after Manchester city centre stations.

Bolton has 11 railway stations, including three new stations in the last 35 years (Hall ith Wood, Lostock and Horwich Parkway). New trains with increased capacity are now running in Bolton.


Bolton has passed the first stage in reversing beeching proposals with the granting of £50,000 for feasibility study for a train line between Bolton and Radcliffe/Bury.




12-minute train journey to Manchester




12 miles from Manchester City Centre
20 miles from Manchester Airport




Direct access to the M61, M60, M62 and M6




60% of UK businesses within a 2-hour drive




Second highest employee base in Greater Manchester




1m people live within 45 minutes




£100m sustainable investment to pump prime the market




£4.4bn economic output per annum




280,000 residents




£16m investment in District town centres




Logistics North - largest distribution and logistics site in the North West




Rivington Chase Housing development




£50m transport interchange development




Town centre investment in residential, commercial space, retail and public realm




Wingates Employment site




Housing Infrastructure Fund. £12m Rivington Chase. £186m joint bid with Wigan for Housing Growth Corridor



4655 new homes



£412m GVA (incl. £56m household expenditure)



7,400 new jobs

- Bolton is:**
- A constituent borough of the GMCA and the second largest urban centre to Manchester city centre.
 - Bolton is closely connected to the Manchester City Centre and wider Greater Manchester economy and also Lancashire to the north, with heavy commuting flows in both directions.
 - Bolton is surrounded by the neighbouring towns of Bury, Wigan, Blackburn and Salford and surrounded by a rural catchment area of villages and small towns.
 - It has excellent schools including the prestigious public school, Bolton School and is home to the University of Bolton, which is in the top 50 best UK universities in 2021.

Government has set an aim to spread opportunity across the country through investment in infrastructure, technology, and education. Bolton has real potential – it is home to a university, theatre, museum, and successful businesses, and is already investing in a multimillion-pound town centre regeneration programme. Investing in Bolton is an opportunity to turn this potential into long-term success. A busier town centre, at day and night, will stimulate wider growth, with a thriving knowledge economy and cultural and nightlife.

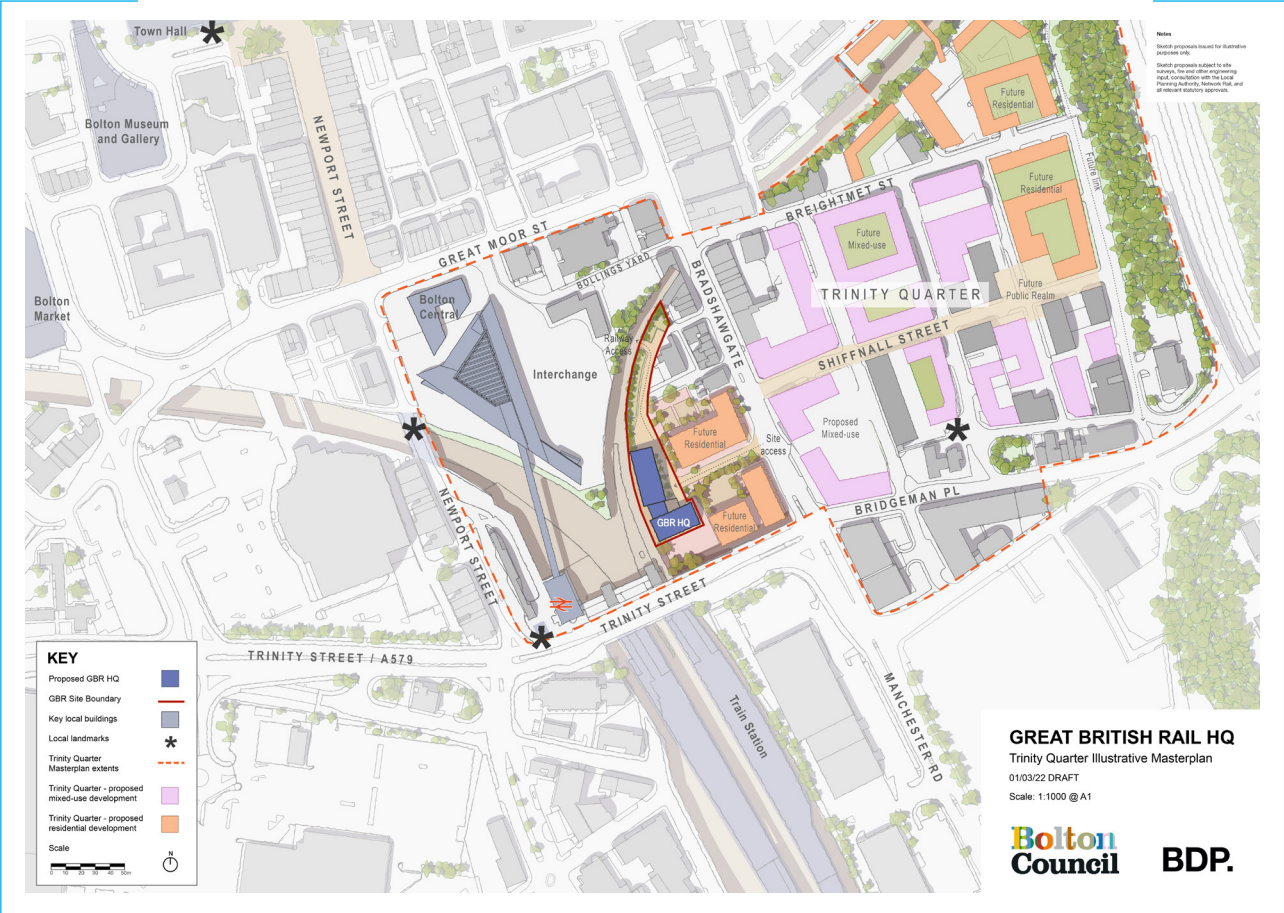
The town centre is seeing huge investment through Council, Future High Street Fund, Towns Fund, Levelling Up Fund, Brownfield Housing Land Fund, Greater Manchester

Combined Authority (GMCA) and private sector development. The investment we have already made in the town centre is beginning to bear fruit, providing solid foundations for growth, which will be further buttressed by the Council's wider strategic thinking and plans for the town. Our acquisition of Crompton Place shopping centre is a forward-thinking investment to transition our town centre towards office working and sustainable retail; we are creating new residential neighbourhoods within the town centre; our participation in the Greater Manchester Full Fibre Networks Programme will provide businesses, residents, and public services with the best-in-class internet speeds; and our university and colleges are expanding their campuses.

Our Towns Deal will see £23.9m invested in heritage buildings, public realm and a new digital innovation hub.

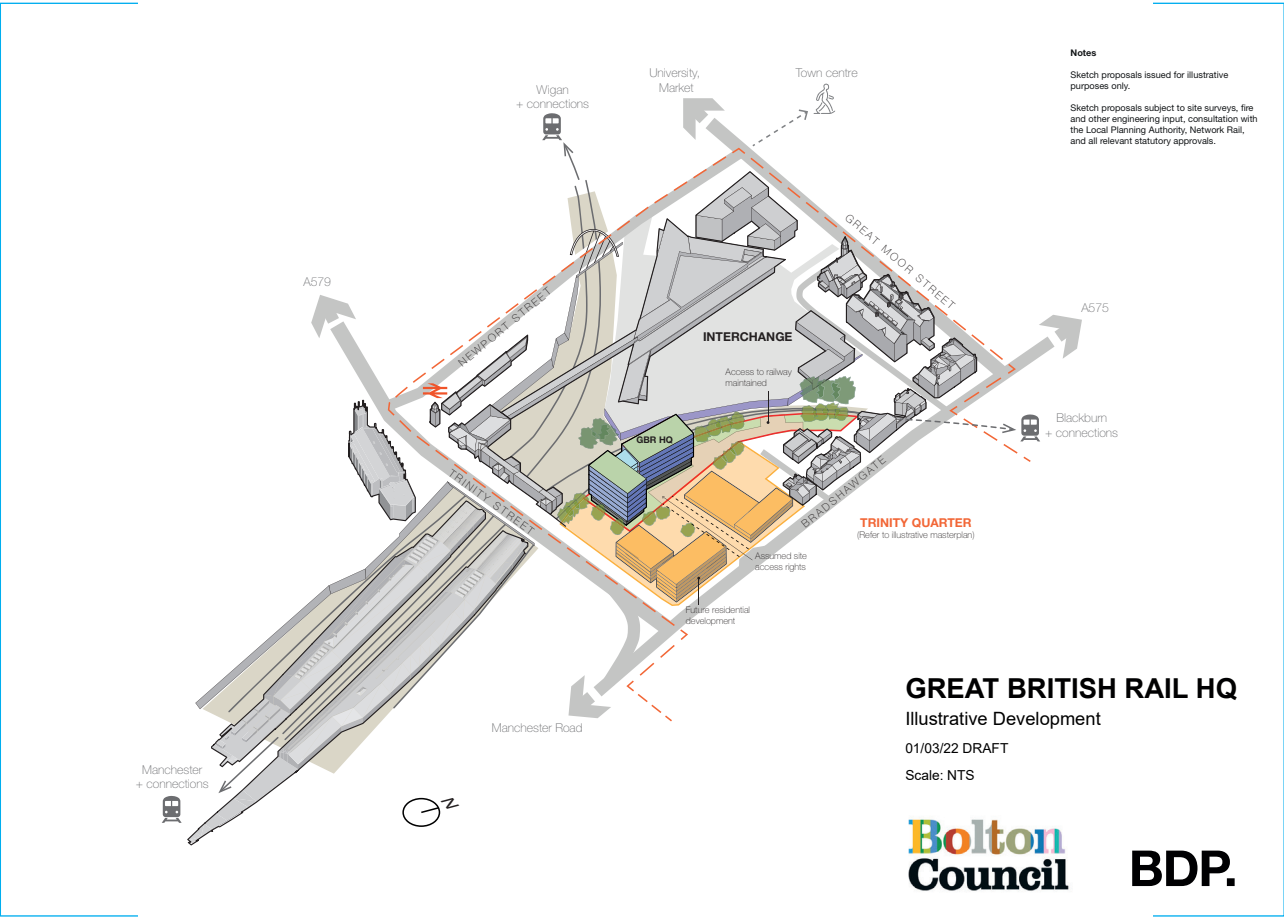
Proposed site

The site being proposed is currently owned by Network Rail and located next to Bolton's £50m Transport Interchange and only a stone's throw away from Bolton's main railway station platforms. Trinity Quarter is a fast-evolving gateway to the town centre. With a 100 metre skylink bridge and a £6.5m five storey Grade A office development. The proposed site within one of the town centre regeneration areas, Trinity Quarter, identified within the Bolton Town Centre Masterplan. Trinity Quarter will be a unique destination, with a mix of residential, commercial and hospitality developments taking place that are anchored by new public realm. It will be a hub for the business community and a focal point for commuters and visitors, showcasing the district's old and modern architecture.



The site is integral to the Trinity Gateway development, which will bring forward over 100 new homes, green space and carparking/ cycling facilities. In addition, a new Active Travel scheme and network is underway in the area, encouraging pedestrian and cycling activity and improved connectivity through the town centre.

Planning permission was recently granted for 19-storey residential tower block, on the adjacent Trinity Gateway site. Therefore, the height of any building is not unduly restricted – enabling buildings with a floor space of c.1000 sq.m. on each floor, and potentially up to 15 floors, to be built on the site - above up to three floors of parking spaces.

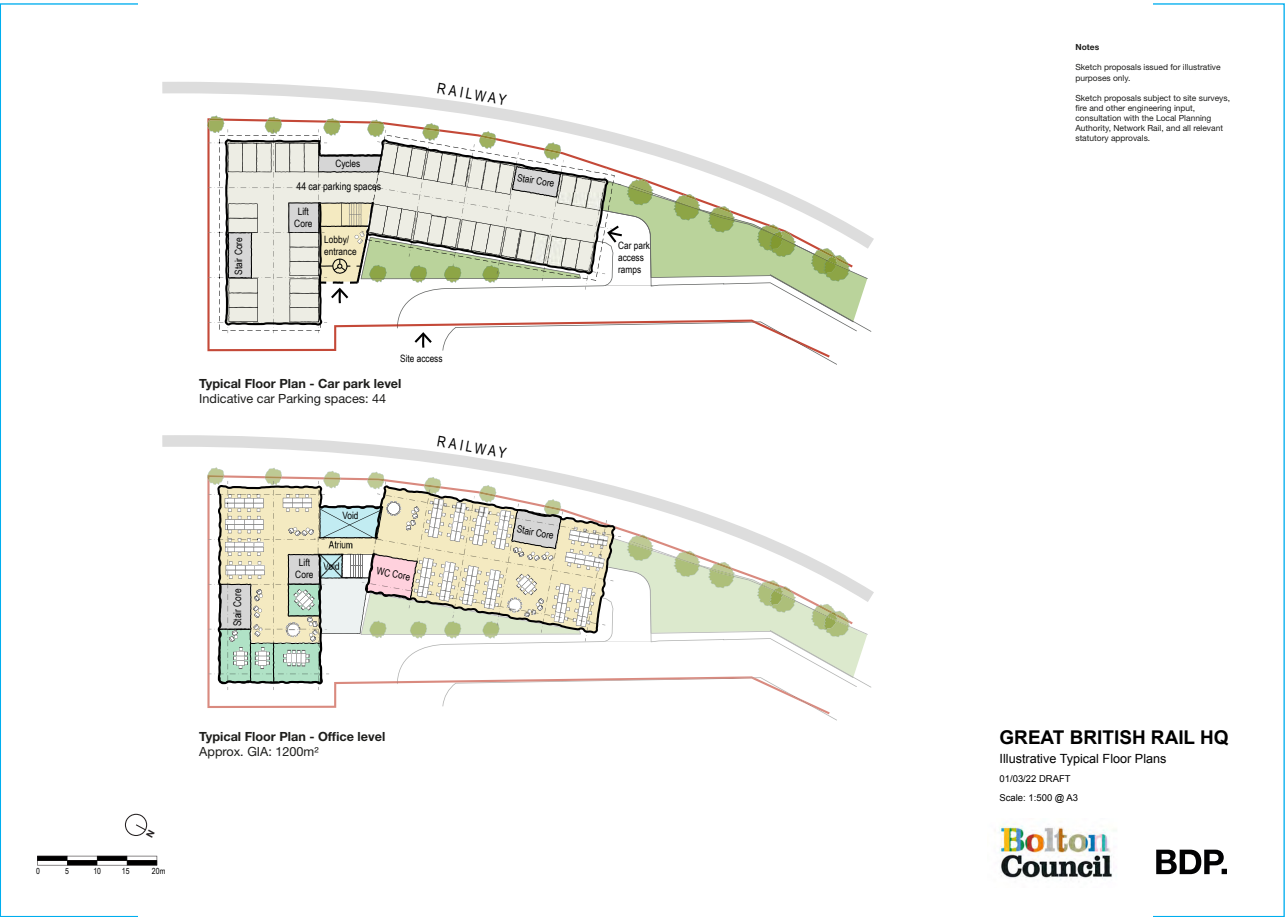
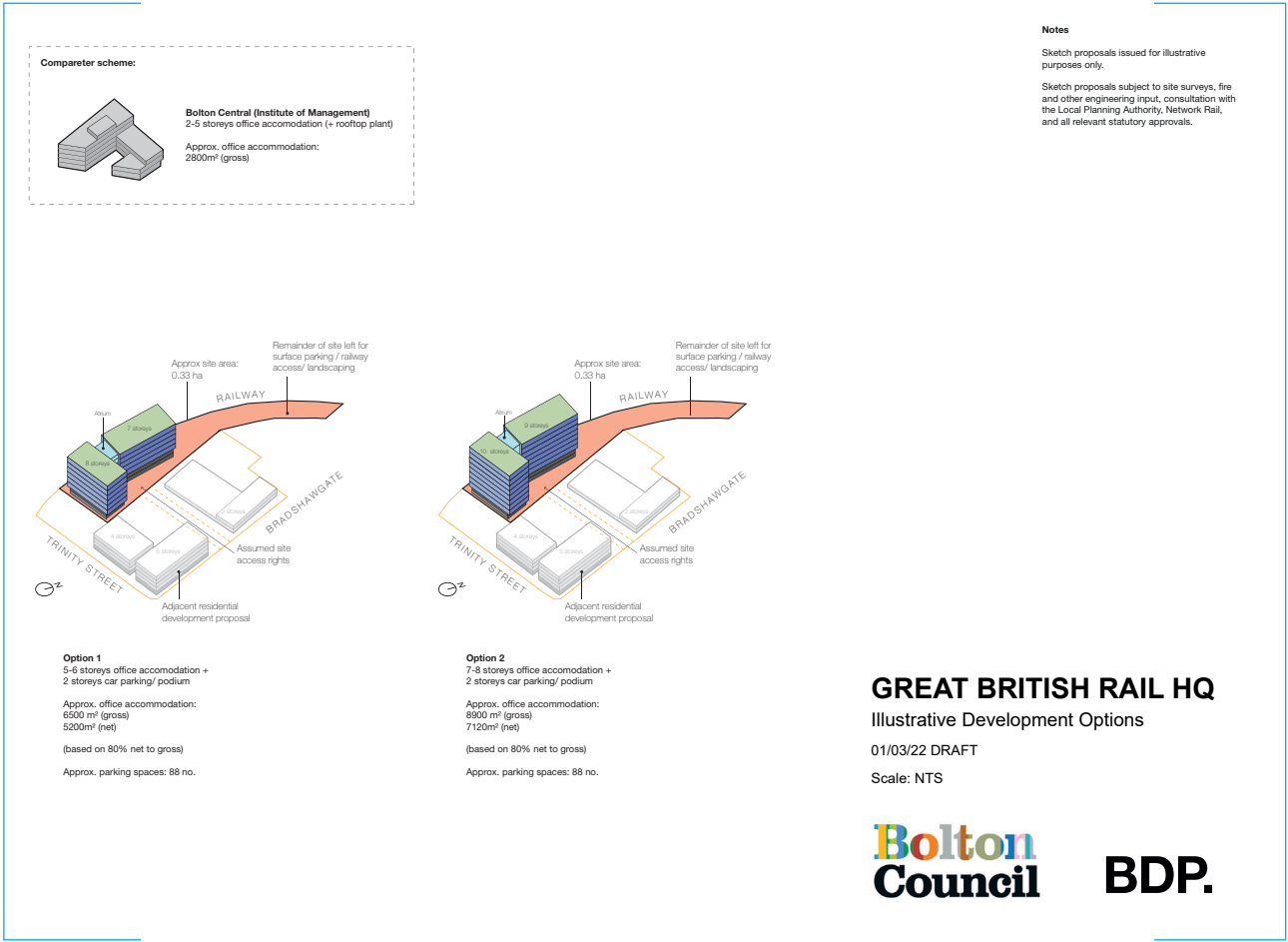


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The proposed headquarters would provide a building footprint that covers an area of c. 1600 sq.m of office accommodation over 7-8 storeys, with two storeys of car parking that will provide around 88 spaces for dedicated use by employees and visitors. The design will be able to incorporate the current track side storage

depot and accommodation for workers and will provide new and enhanced facilities. The building will also have access to landscaped areas both as part of the development but will also benefit from the gardens and courtyard at the adjacent residential site.

The drawings show two options for the site and potential layouts for the office accommodation.



Bolton has a strong track record of working collaboratively with partners to deliver large scale projects.

Bolton is campaigning along with the MPs for restoration of train service to London, which has the support of TFGM. Money has now been released for improving Castlefield Chord which will assist in realising this goal.

We have worked with our partners and key stakeholders to develop this Expression of Interest and the following are supporting the proposal.

- Council and Elected Members
- Network Rail
- Capital and Centric (developer on the adjacent sites)
- Bolton Station Community Partnership
- University of Bolton
- MP's
- Bolton-based South-east Lancashire Community Rail Partnership

Levelling up

Bolton is one of the country’s largest towns, with a strong and diverse identity and a rich history. We want to retain the best legacy of our past and be competitive in a fast-changing world.

Bolton is known for being a warm and friendly town that would welcome GBR with open arms. We have a long and successful record of partnership working, which results in a shared vision to create an active, connected and prosperous town which benefits all our communities and citizens. The council working together with other public sector bodies, private sector and educational establishments demonstrate a ‘can do’ approach to delivery.

More importantly, Bolton needs new investment. It is one of many towns in England that have been “left behind” as investment has been focussed on larger towns such as Manchester, Birmingham and London. We are a University Town with excellently rated schools and so there is a ready pool of capable workers within Bolton, comprising school leavers, graduates and many well qualified people that regularly commute into Manchester, who would rather work closer to home.

Our Vision for Bolton is...

A **vibrant place**, built on strong cohesive communities, successful businesses, and healthy residents

A **thriving place**, transitioning its economy towards new uses, nurturing new productive industries and attracting people to live and work in the town centre

A **welcoming place**, where people choose to study, work and put down roots

Bolton has its challenges and is economically disadvantaged, on the UK Community Renewal Fund's list of the UK's 100 improvement priority places.

There is an urgent need for economic growth and recovery, improved transport connectivity and regeneration.

The most striking challenges include a need to:

- connect our residents to opportunities for employment, in order to address poverty, inequality and deprivation – a foothold on the job ladder, or developing skills, leading to better paid work.
- improve skills and education to ensure residents can take advantage of the opportunities that regeneration brings, securing the workforce's knowledge base.
- repurpose the town centre to address recent retail failures, which have resulted in the loss of anchor stores including BHS, Arcadia and Debenhams. The footfall in the town centre has declined 30% over the past decade.

However, we are already on track to deliver a multi-million pound regeneration programme, which has started with key town centre sites being transformed into new residential neighbourhoods connected by public parks and improved public realm. We are also investing in our heritage and cultural assets to increase visitor numbers and dwell time in the town centre during the day and night.

We are working collaboratively with schools, colleges and the University of Bolton to match young people's skills to the modern-day so that our workforce is attractive to employers. The university and the colleges are investing in new facilities and expanding, adapting their curriculum to new business requirements.

Now we want to add to that momentum new elements to our plan – in life sciences, in clean, green energy and sustainable transport facilities. We are working with Greater Manchester on the Five-Year environmental plan to be Carbon neutral by 2038.

A successful Levelling Up Fund bid will see £20m invested into the development of Bolton College of Medical Sciences (BCMS). Work is already underway with the facility planned for completion 2024. BCMS is projected to create over 20,000 apprenticeships over its lifetime

and help train 60,000 medical professionals. The project is led by the University of Bolton alongside the council, Bolton College and Bolton NHS Foundation Trust. When open, the facility is expected to bring £150m to the local economy, an outcome making Bolton fit for the future, by helping to drive innovation and grow businesses. A further two levelling up bids are expected to be submitted for the second round of Levelling Up Funding.

Bringing the headquarters to Bolton will build on and compliment the investment already being made in the town centre. It will transform a piece of land that is currently used for storage in a key gateway to the town centre, into a welcoming and attractive business use. This will also drive footfall into the town centre, helping to sustain current businesses and create wider economic growth through the provision of new jobs. These jobs are likely to be wide ranging in skills requirements, which again will benefit the town and residents.

Creating opportunities for Bolton

Bringing the GBR headquarters to Bolton will contribute to addressing these challenges and help to ‘level up’ Bolton with its neighbours to ensure it can realise its full potential in the region and nationally. The headquarters would bring market and commercial confidence to Bolton, putting it on the map as an investment location. The life cycle of such a development, will through the recognition of Bolton as a location, see the delivery of a development on an underused site and provide employment and training opportunities, in addition to the real long-term benefits as described.

As a leading employer, GBR locating into the town centre will provide the opportunity to bring new jobs into the area and boost our local economy by creating additional demand for retail, hospitality and leisure services. Working with our education providers, (including the Construction college) we will be able to ensure that our residents have the appropriate skills and qualifications that will open up future job opportunities and respond to the needs of GBR. This will include supply chains as well as direct employment opportunities.

Connected and easy to get to

The proposed site for the National Headquarters is adjacent to Bolton's Transport Interchange, which has direct access to trains and buses. Bolton has the rail connectivity to rival many major UK cities.

- Bolton boasts excellent road and rail connectivity within the north west's transport network which identify as key gateways to and from the M6, M60, M61 and M62.
- Bolton has the rail connectivity to rival many major UK cities. It has direct routes to Manchester, Preston, Wigan, Southport and Blackburn. A direct train from Bolton to Manchester takes around 20 minutes and Bolton station is the busiest in Greater Manchester outside of the city centre.
- There are around 170 trains a day through Bolton. From these stations, there are direct routes to London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, Birmingham, Carlisle, Lancaster and all other major towns and cities. The number of direct trains from Bolton is projected to increase in December 2022.
- Bolton is also only around 30 minutes by road and rail to both Manchester Airport (the busiest airport in the UK outside London) and Liverpool John Lennon Airport.
- Bolton has direct routes to both Manchester Victoria and Manchester Piccadilly train stations, connecting Bolton to the south and east of the country.
- There are also direct bus routes to Preston and Manchester and National Express operate routes from Bolton across the country.

For those employees who may be travelling locally, new active travel routes have been introduced across the town centre to provide safe cycling and pedestrian routes. EV charging points are available in all multi-storey car parks.

Bolton is accessible

Accessibility is at the heart of our approach to create inclusive and responsible developments for all.

- Access to all parts of the development, its facilities and services for people who are residents, visitors and members of staff, regardless of ability or mobility, will be maximised and as required by local, regional and national policy.
- We will design inclusively, meaning beyond the minimum requirements of the Building Regulations Part M to ensure that all people, regardless of age, sex or ability can use and enjoy the built environment.
- We will ensure that appropriate standards for accessibility are met at the outset and as part of mainstream inclusive design wherever possible.
- We will meet the aims of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (2005 as amended) and the Equality Act (2010), where applicable.
- We will follow design guidance given in relevant British Standards and other currently published good practice guidance about meeting the needs of disabled people.
- The common parts of the development, including the exterior approaches and routes between car parking spaces and offices, are designed to be as inclusive as possible.

Opportunities for Great British Railways

Our success so far has been achieved by working in partnership with Government, the private sector and stakeholders in Greater Manchester.

We can demonstrate our ability to work in partnership to deliver major schemes through a long list of varied projects.

- **Transport Interchange** – A £50m transport hub combining the town centre train and bus stations. It also features a new office development and skylink bridge. This was delivered in partnership with Transport for Greater Manchester, Network Rail and the University.
- **Octagon Theatre** - recently underwent a £11m redevelopment, mostly funded by Bolton Council and The Arts Council. This improved the performance spaces and backstage facilities.
- **Logistics North** - hugely successful delivery of 4 million sq. ft and 550-acre country park attracting major players including Amazon, Whistle, MBDA, delivering thousands of jobs. The development was delivered in partnership with Salford and Wigan Councils as well as Haworth Estates.
- **Events** - Bolton hosts an extensive range of world class events throughout the year; including Bolton Food and Drink Festival which attracted over 400,000 visitors in 2019; the IRONMAN UK triathlon, hosted here for 12 years, attracting 2,500 competitors from 42 countries in an epic swim, cycle and run and Ironkids – the world's largest fun run with over 3,500 children taking Part. The RLWC2021 is also making an appearance in Bolton as The University of Bolton Stadium is hosting two Rugby League World Cup 2021 games, a significant England game and a Quarter Final.

Engagement opportunities

There are already fantastic engagement systems set up in Bolton and Greater Manchester. The Greater Manchester Combined Authority has responsibility for transport issues across the region, delivered by TFGM. We regularly bring together the private sector, transport industry, police, NHS and LA's to develop policies, initiatives and engagement activity with customers on transport issues.

We have a very active Bolton Station Community Partnership, which promotes creative and community-based events and activities, rail travel and heritage across the borough. They also work closely with the Southeast Lancashire Community Rail Partnership, University of Bolton and Bolton Hindu Forum.

Bolton is very well placed in relation to rail supply chain, manufacturing hubs and institutes. As well as having a strong manufacturing sector and University in Bolton, it is also within twenty minutes of central Manchester which is home to the University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University.

- The University of Bolton has a growing reputation across many fields, including:
- Civil, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering
 - Business Management
 - Construction
 - Community Development
 - Film and Digital Media
 - Graphic Design

The University is strongly committed to working with industry partners and is a part of the Bolton Station Community Partnership.

Bolton is close to the new Alstom rolling stock manufacturing plant at Widnes and is home to the constructional engineering company Severfield, which supplied bridgework for the Ordsall Chord in central Manchester and has expertise in high-speed rail engineering. Companies such as Amey Rail, helping to deliver the TransPennine Rail Upgrade, have a base within fifteen minutes of Bolton. Bolton-based Booth Industries recently won a £36m contract to supply doors for trains to be used on HS2 services.

Major railway offices (Northern, TransPennine Express, Network Rail) in central Manchester and Preston are within 15-30 minutes travel of Bolton.

Collaborative working

We have a number of active forums in Bolton that can help to support GBR to collaborate in these areas. We have an Economic Prosperity Group, which has members drawn from across business, social, public and private sectors, that is responsible for driving forward economic activity in the borough.

They also run Bolton Business Connect, an online facility for businesses in the borough to share tender opportunities, find supply chain providers and share job opportunities. We also have a Town Centre Partnership Group, which brings together retailers, hospitality etc to ensure engagement in any plans for the town centre and pick up any issues they may have.

We are also committed to the need for net-zero carbon development and the need to address climate change and our work in this area is being led by a wide cross-sectoral group of Bolton stakeholders.

GBR would be welcome to join any of these forums, as a major employer in the borough, and will be able to benefit from the wealth of knowledge and expertise that is available from our wide range of partners. These connections could help identify contractors, engagement with businesses about their transport needs, training and development opportunities for example.

The Opportunity for GBR

The site is owned by Network Rail and should therefore be more easily deliverable than any non-Network owned site. Recent planning consent for a new office, residential and car-park development scheme, on the adjacent development site owned by Bolton Council, means that obtaining planning consent should be non-problematic.

The site will offer a convenient location for both the organisation and its employees, as it is centrally located, a short walk into the town centre and fantastic access to road and rail networks that link to the wider region and nationally. There are a number of other potential development sites for further growth if required.

The proposed building, will offer a flexible, modern workspace with onsite parking and cycle storage, meeting rooms and wellbeing facilities. It will be built with sustainable materials. The site represents an opportunity to demonstrate the regeneration capability of GBR, Bolton is actively working with LCR to identify and bring forward sites across the Borough and the headquarters opportunity itself would evidence the regeneration benefits to a Town like Bolton, which would be transformational unlike many of the competing locations that already have significant growth happening.

Railway heritage and links to the network

Bolton has a strong railway heritage.

The Bolton and Leigh Railway, opened in 1828, was the first public railway in Lancashire, and the second public railway in the world after Stockton to Darlington. The first engine used on the Bolton and Leigh line was called 'Lancashire Witch', was manufactured by Robert Stephenson of Newcastle, and was the first engine in world that has steel springs.

Bolton has been instrumental in seeking to secure the Scheduling of one of the first railway embankments on the Bolton & Leigh Railway to secure this for the future and in recognition of the past. The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway's Horwich Locomotive Works, opened in 1886 and closed in 1983, was one of the greatest railway engineering factories in the UK and trained outstanding railway engineers including Sir Nigel Gresley, Richard Maunsell and George Hughes. The railway built an entire railway community in Horwich, with hundreds of houses, social and educational centres, health care and sporting facilities. Much of this 'railway town' remains.

Bolton station opened in 1838, when the Manchester and Bolton railway completed its route through to Salford. This was expanded fairly quickly to provide routes to Preston, Blackburn and Wigan. These routes have remained largely unchanged and remain as popular as ever for commuters. The expansion of the line to Manchester Airport, has also ensured passengers can connect easily and quickly internationally.

As previously mentioned, Bolton has played a role in shaping England's railway network and, until recently, in ensuring that rolling stock that was running on these railways was manufactured here.

Bolton is only two stops from Manchester Oxford Road railway station and three stops from Piccadilly railway station. As such we have ready access to existing Network rail offices and their existing connections to nearby local suppliers, sector bodies and centres of innovation.

How could you use the headquarters to preserve and enhance your railway heritage?

Bolton station was rebuilt by the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway in 1904 and has recently benefitted from major improvement works which have strong 'heritage' aspects. The Platform 5 Gallery, managed by Bolton Station Community Partnership, displays aspects of local railway heritage and there are proposals to use currently vacant space for a rail heritage centre on the station. Having GBR based in the town would be a huge boost to these plans.

The Bolton-based South-east Lancashire Community Rail Partnership is strongly committed to promoting Bolton's great railway heritage and provides a link between the railway industry, heritage organisations and historical groups.

If GBR's headquarters was located in Bolton, the community rail partnership would be keen to work with GBR to develop a number of projects which celebrate Britain's railway heritage, include work with schools and academia, the National Railway Museum and nearby heritage railways including the East Lancashire Railway, Ribble Steam Railway and Manchester-based Museum of Science and Industry.

Value for money

The land is already in the ownership of Network Rail and the proposed building would provide an under one roof facility. A “bespoke” highly sustainable, modern building could therefore be delivered and funded in a number of different ways, to suit network Rail.

Locating the GBR headquarters in Bolton will increase Bolton's Gross Value Added and provide the taxpayer with a high cost-benefit ratio. By investing in Bolton's town centre, GBR will be supporting an investment lifecycle from design and construction together with the cultural and night-life activity within Bolton town centre and make Bolton an even better place for people to work, live, visit and invest in.

This investment will encourage and support business growth and will position Bolton as one of the best place and most supportive locations in Greater Manchester for growing businesses.

It will:

- Facilitate excellent quality working and living environments
- Stimulate post-COVID growth, attracting new businesses to Bolton
- Retain a higher proportion of graduates from the University of Bolton.

Public support

Railways are hugely important to the local community and the North-West region.

The completion of electrification of the Manchester – Bolton – Preston corridor was a major boost to making rail more attractive, and the planned electrification of Bolton – Wigan has been warmly welcomed.

Many people in Bolton depend on railway travel to work in Manchester and Preston.

By 2030, Bolton's Vision is to be an attractive, well connected and a distinctive place to be, where the opportunities and benefits of sustainable economic growth are enjoyed by everyone and supported by reformed public services.

We have a number of highly successful, businesses based in Bolton, but need to attract more nationally significant businesses to Bolton to help level up our economy and retain educated people and skilled workers within the local economy.