

Double-decker trains to ease overcrowding on busy lines

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Double-decker trains could be introduced on some of the UK's busiest railway lines under government-backed plans to ease overcrowding.

The trains are already used in other parts of Europe but have been ruled out in Britain in the past because of the low bridges and tunnels on UK lines. Designers are now working on proposals that would involve train compartments being lowered towards the tracks to create the height needed to accommodate two-deck carriages.

The interior of the carriage would be overhauled, with aisles on both decks positioned to the side rather than up the middle, to create extra space.

The project, led by the Swiss architect Andreas Vogler, is among three at an advanced stage as part of a £3.5 million project to improve conditions on British railways. Another involves a passenger train that can carry freight at off-peak periods.

The [Rail Safety and Standards Board](#)



The Aeroliner 3000, with its lower deck built nearer the track, could be running by 2022

(RSSB), which is running the design competition, said that some of the new concepts could be introduced between 2020 and 2022 to “address the challenges facing the UK rail industry”.

The introduction of double-decker trains is being seen as an attempt to tackle overcrowding at peak times.

Recent figures from the Department for Transport showed that almost 250,000 commuters were being forced to stand on trains into major British cities each morning, with services running at 3.5 per cent overcapacity.

The 4.22am service from Glasgow to Manchester airport, which is run by TransPennine Express, is officially the busiest in the country, running at

186 per cent of capacity at its peak. A small number of double-decker trains were introduced between London and Kent in the 1950s but failed to catch on because of cramped conditions, poor ventilation on the upper deck and technical difficulties.

A demonstration model of the new design — dubbed the Aeroliner 3000 — will be built next year and presented at trade shows.

Trevor Bradbury, from the RSSB, said: “When you walk on to a train nowadays, you step up on to the carriage. There is actually a lot of space that you can use beneath the vehicle, which is what this design does.”

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