

Transport for the North Board Agenda

Date of Meeting	Monday 23 June 2025
Time of Meeting	1.00 pm
Venue	Authority Chamber, 1 Mann Island, Liverpool, L3 1BP

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Item No.	Agenda Item	Page
1.0	Welcome & Apologies The Chair to welcome Members and the public to the meeting. Lead: Chair	
2.0	Declarations of Interest Members are required to declare any personal, prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interest they may have relating to items on the agenda and state the nature of such interest. Lead: Chair	
3.0	Minutes of the Previous Meeting To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 17 March 2025 (including updates on agreed matters as appropriate by the Chief Executive). Lead: Chair	3 - 32
4.0	Presentation from Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Presentation by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. Lead: TBC	To Follow
5.0	Spending Review Update To reflect on the outcome the Spending Review in the context of TfN's Submission.	To Follow

	Lead: Martin Tugwell	
6.0	Transpennine Route Upgrade Update To receive an update on progress with delivery of TRU, and forward look at key activities over the next 12 months Lead: James Richardson (Programme Director: TRU)	33 - 50
7.0	Governance Update To note the Calendar of meeting for the 2025/26 Municipal Year. To approve the appointment of an Interim Section 151 Officer and note the associated interim working arrangements. Lead: Joanne Barclay	51 - 54
8.0	Rail North Committee Update To receive an update on the work of the Committee. Lead: Katie Day	55 - 58
9.0	Date and Time of Next Meeting The next meeting will be held on 15 September 2025 at 1pm. This meeting will be held in Darlington. It will take place a week before the 200 anniversary of the Stockton and Darlington Railway and will give Board Members an opportunity to celebrate the North as the home of rail as well as seeing first hand how the investment in Darlington Station is acting as a catalyst for growth.	

Transport for the North Board Minutes

17 March 2025

Discovery Museum, Blandford Square, Newcastle upon Tyne

Present:

Lord McLoughlin (Chair)

Attendee

Cllr Phil Riley

Cllr Anne McCormack

Mayor Kim McGuinness

Cllr Martin Gannon

Cllr Stephen Harker

Cllr Carl Quartermain

Cllr Hans Mundry

Cllr Jean Flaherty

Cllr Peter Thornton

Mayor Tracy Brabin

Cllr Peter Kilbane

Local Authority

Lancashire Combined County
Authority;

Liverpool City Region Combined
Authority

North East Combined Authority;

North East Combined Authority;

Tees Valley Combined Authority;

Tees Valley Combined Authority;

Warrington;

Warrington;

Westmorland and Furness;

West Yorkshire Combined Authority;

York and North Yorkshire Combined
Authority;

Business Representatives

Mark Rawstron

Natalie Sykes

Lancashire Business Representative

West Yorkshire Business

Representative

Partners in Attendance:

John Hall

Rob McIntosh

Department of Transport

Network Rail

Officers in Attendance:

Name

Martin Tugwell

Gary Rich

Katie Day

Joanne Barclay

Rachel Ford

Lisa Pitt

Gavin Legg

Job Title

Chief Executive

Democratic Services Officer

Deputy Chief Executive

Head of Legal

Interim Strategy Director

Management and Financial Accountant

Senior Solicitor

Also in Attendance

Rachelle Forsyth Ward

North East Combined Authority

Item No: Item**1. Welcome & Apologies**

- 1.1 The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming Members to Newcastle and congratulated Newcastle United on their cup success at Wembley the day before.
- 1.2 The Chair explained that as a result of a number of new Combined Authorities having been created since the December Board, there were a number of changes to the makeup of Board. Whilst not new to the Board, the Chair welcomed Cllr Phil Riley in his new capacity as Member for the Lancashire Combined County Authority. He also expressed his thanks on behalf of the Board to Cllr Rupert Swarbrick (Lancashire County Council and minority group Vice Chair of TfN Board), Cllr Lynn Willaims (Blackpool Council) and Cllr Mark Ieronimo (Hull City Council) – all of whom had now left the Board - for the tremendous amount of work that they have done for TfN over the years.
- 1.3 Apologies for the meeting were received from Mayors Burnham, and Coppard, and Cllrs O'Brien, Hunt, Gittins, Rollo, Handley, Gorman, Mannion, Hill and Mitchell as well as Nick Harris, Stephen Parnaby and Clare Hayward.
- 1.4 Due to the number of apologies, the Chair informed the Board that the meeting was not quorate.
- 1.5 The Chief Executive noted that even with the impending arrivals of Mayor Brabin and Cllr Kilbane, the meeting would still be inquorate. He therefore proposed that the meeting would be conducted as a Chief Executive's consultation meeting as set out in the constitution. He explained that under his powers in the constitution, he would be seeking the Boards view and steer at various agenda items and that this would then be followed up with Members who were not present.
- 1.6 Mayor McGuinness asked whether the meeting being inquorate was a regular occurrence.
- 1.7 The Chief Executive explained that this was not a regular occurrence and that unfortunately several Members had sent their apologies overnight.

2. Declarations of Interest

- 2.1 There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Transport for the North Board held on 9 December 2024 were considered.
- 3.2 Members received the update from the Chief Executive following the last meeting as well as the Quarterly Operating Report.

Resolved:

- 1) That the minutes of the Transport for the North Board held on 9 December 2024 be approved.
- 2) That the Chief Executive's update and the Quarterly Operating report be noted.

4. Presentation from North East Combined Authority

- 4.1 The Chair invited Mayor McGuinness to give her briefing to the Board on her priorities for the North East.
- 4.2 Mayor McGuinness welcomed everyone to the North East. She set out that her focus is to create equal opportunity for all across the North East, a place that is on the map nationally and internationally and somewhere where they are creating great jobs, building great houses and ensuring that things are in place that enable all children in the North East to have the opportunities that they deserve. She then stated that transport is key to these ambitions.
- 4.3 She explained that the North East is just about to submit its Growth Plan and highlighted the key missions set out in it. These include the North East being a place of opportunity, of a growing vibrant economy for everyone, a place they're proud to call home and the home of green energy and global trade. She then emphasised that transport is fundamental to all these things.
- 4.4 She informed Board about the approach the North East had taken with their Local Transport Plan consultation which she described as 'the biggest conversation' that they have ever had with the public about what transport means for them. She highlighted how improved transport unlocks opportunity, and the bold ambitions she has to make it safer, more integrated, more connected and greener. Additionally, she outlined their plans for bringing the buses back under public control, the expansion of the Tyne and Wyre Metro system whilst at the same time renewing the rolling stock. Looking forward a strategic priority for her was re-opening of the Leamside Line. She finished her opening remarks by noting that the Great North is stronger together than the sum of our parts.
- 4.5 Members received the presentation from Ms Rachelle Forsyth Ward who outlined in more detail the Mayors priorities and the work of the North East Combined Authority.
- 4.6 Responding to a question from the Chair, Cllr Gannon stated that it is a challenge introducing new rolling stock on any system and matters were further complicated for the North East by the need to maintain the old trains whilst introducing the new ones. He explained it will take up to two years to introduce the new stock. He stated that the new rolling stock is being rolled out, with more to be introduced this summer.
- 4.7 Mayor McGuinness described the new trains as transformational and set out her ambition for the new trains to be rolled out as quickly as possible given the huge difference to service reliability, comfort and safety and help that comes with them. She highlighted that the expansion of the system to Washington was a key priority. She explained that this would

effectively be an initial step in opening up the Leamside Investment Corridor.

- 4.8 The Chair noted the safety aspects of the new trains and suggested that these will make people feel a lot safer.
- 4.9 Cllr Mundry asked about the buses. He specifically enquired about bus fares and how much NECA will be investing to keep fare prices low in order to get passengers back on the buses.
- 4.10 In response, Cllr Gannon stated that the issue that the North East is facing is one of long term decline in bus usage. He highlighted the funding which the North East requested as part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) to increase usage by approximately 10% over 10 years, and that the £169m received would help in this regard. The funding has been used to support and introduce fare schemes. He stated that the only way to improve air quality, environmental protection and congestion is to provide a world class public transport system which requires funding.
- 4.11 Cllr Mundry thanked TfN Officers who have worked with Warrington to make sure that the interests of authorities who have municipally owned bus companies are protected under the Buses Bill.
- 4.12 Mayor McGuinness informed Board that in order to keep passenger numbers high the NECA had made a decision to continue to cap fares at £2.50, with a £1 fare for young people. She described the low fares as economic interventions and believes that the £1 fares for children will help in tackling child poverty. She believed that this was a key consideration for Government when they make a decision on the current national £3 fare cap.
- 4.13 In relation to the 'Green Book', she stated that she was pleased that the government was setting a clear intention to address the disparities in funding between the North and South. However, she stated that it was more than just about changes to the 'Green Book' but also about fairness, equality and growth across the country.
- 4.14 The Chair reflected on how the TfN offer was helping constituent authorities with their work. He continued by suggesting that it is essential that the North works as one in making the case for changes required to the 'Green Book.'
- 4.15 Mr Rawstron asked how important social and economic value considerations have been whilst devising and implementing the local transport plan.
- 4.16 Mayor McGuinness stated that these were considered in great deal. She explained that she wanted to use social and economic value considerations to help boost the regional economy and this fits with the objectives of a growth plan that puts social value at the heart of everything. She expressed her desire to build on the original model of devolved powers which were focused on economic growth and job creation, to fulfillment of a broader social agenda as well.

- 4.17 Mr John Hall stated that the DfT are keen to use devolution to put transport at the heart of things. He stated that this will enable growth and opportunity in tackling social exclusion.
- 4.18 The Chief Executive stated that as a result of Warrington having flagged the issue with their municipal bus company, TfN were then able to help Blackpool address the same issue.
- 4.19 On the matter of TfN's support for the Leamside line, the Chief Executive advised that the TfN executive had been working in support of Nexus who are putting the business case together on this. Additionally, he noted that TfN is working with Officers from the NECA with regards to the business case for improvements on the A19. He explained that the TfN executive is working with NECA officials to ensure the business case better reflects the opportunities afforded by the investment.
- 4.20 The Chair congratulated Mayor McGuinness on all her achievements over her first 10 months in office.

Resolved:

That the presentation be noted.

5. Budget and Business Planning 2025 - 2026

- 5.1 Members received the report of the Finance Director. In the absence of the Finance Director, the Chief Executive highlighted the key points within the report.
- 5.2 The Chief Executive advised that as the meeting was being held as a consultation call, the main focus was on recommendation 2.1f and he was seeking the Boards support for the proposed budget as set out in the papers. He informed the Board that Mayor Burnham and Cllr Gittins had indicated that they are supportive of the approach to the budget. Additionally, he stated that the view of other Members who were not in attendance would be sought in writing.
- 5.3 Mayor Brabin and Cllr Harker arrived at 13.40.
- 5.4 Mayor Brabin enquired about publication of the gender pay gap for Transport for the North.
- 5.5 The Deputy Chief Executive advised the Board that TfN employs less than 250 people, therefore there is no requirement to report on gender pay gap. However, she explained that the senior leadership team do monitor and discuss TfN's diversity on a monthly basis, with 37% of the TfN staff being female. These officers work across a range of roles within the organisation, including senior leadership roles, Heads of Service positions and Transport Planners. She said that she would take it away and consider if it was something which the executive could report back on in more detail.
- 5.6 Mayor Brabin stated that the percentage of female staff was better than she anticipated it would be and requested that even though it is not a statutory obligation for TfN to report on the gender pay gap she encouraged them to do so.

- 5.7 The Monitoring Officer explained that as the meeting was being held as a consultation meeting formal approval for the Budget would be secured through a combination of the support of the Members present and via e-mail consultation. Both of these actions are being undertaken using the Chief Executive's delegated powers under the Transport for the North constitution.
- 5.8 In terms of Recommendation 2.1f, she stated that officers were seeking the Board's support and explained that this decision would be ratified at the next Board meeting on June 23. Noting that the decision to approve the Budget is specifically reserved to TfN Board, she advised that by getting the Board's support at this meeting, together with confirming the support of those not in attendance via an e-mail consultation, it would allow TfN to operate lawfully within its Budget from the 1 April 2025.
- 5.9 This proposal was moved by Cllr Mundry and seconded by Cllr Riley.
- 5.10 Mayor Brabin asked about the TfN establishment and the direction of travel for roles as rail reform moves forward.
- 5.11 The Chief Executive acknowledged that there are roles within the establishment that will need to evolve and change as a consequence of rail reform and noted that the Rail North Committee is engaged in the rail reform conversation. He reminded the meeting that the Rail North Partnership executive is employed by TfN, and funded by the Department for Transport. Their role is to manage the delivery of the TPE and Northern contracts. As rail reform moves forward there will be a need to work with the DfT to understand in more detail what the implications are for the RNP executive. Additionally, he reassured the meeting that the TfN executive would continue to work with the Mayors over the coming months to identify how the work of Rail North Committee needs to evolve.

Resolved:

That Board:

- 1) Noted and endorsed the draft Business Plan for 2025/26 (included at Appendix 1)
- 2) Delegated the steps required to finalise the Business Plan to the Chair and Chief Executive
- 3) Noted the projected closing core reserves as of 31 March 2025 is £4.5m
- 4) Approved the proposed use of core reserves of £0.75m in 2025/26
- 5) Approved the proposed use of RNP reserves of £0.06m in 2025/26
- 6) Agreed the budget for 2025/26 subject to ratification at the June Board
- 7) Approved the proposed approach to the 2025/26 member contributions for the financial year 2025/2026 and delegated to the Rail North Committee (RNC), in conjunction with TfN officers, to undertake a review of financial contributions of the Rail North Authorities in future years
- 8) Noted the medium-term financial sustainability assessment and reserve strategy.

6. Constitutional Amendments: Attendance Requirements

- 6.1 The Chair explained that changes to the Constitution require a supermajority. He explained that the changes were a consequence of changes due to additional devolution arrangements being put in place.
- 6.2 The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the proposed changes on quorum had been considered and were recommended by the General Purposes Committee.
- 6.3 Mayor McGuinness stated that she believed that there was a more fundamental issue than just meeting quoracy requirements. She viewed the devolution agenda as a significant constitutional change and suggested that there is a need to reflect on the role of Transport for the North in the devolved landscape.
- 6.4 She highlighted a number of wider questions that need addressing including, the shape of TfN as an organisation, its' fitness for purpose, how it will fit with and support the work of the Great North Partnership, and how TfN remains focused on the North's priorities.
- 6.5 The Chair accepted the points raised by Mayor McGuinness and stated that the points raised needed to be part of a conversation that the Mayors have together with what they want to feed in as part of the great Northern debate. He added that the report was dealing with the consequences of the changes that have been brought about and the fact that the funding letter had been received from the Secretary of State for the next 12 months. He stated that there was a need for conversations to be had over the issues raised by Mayor McGuinness over the next 12 months as to the longer term vision for Transport for the North and how Transport for the North could be useful to constituent authorities.
- 6.6 The Deputy Chief Executive acknowledged that the world around TfN has changed significantly with the commitment to further devolution. She continued by noting that the changes proposed to the Board enabled TfN to reflect the changes that have taken place to date but there is also recognition that further work is required as the devolution agenda continues. She noted that rail reform will give elected Mayors a statutory role and that there is a need to consider the implications of this for TfN. She continued by noting that conversations are already taking place with officers from constituent authorities as to how TfN can support and enable authorities in their agendas going forward. This would enable a discussion with Members and the intention was for an initial report to come to the June meeting where ideas can be developed further.
- 6.7 Mayor Brabin supported the comments of Mayor McGuinness. She highlighted the importance of time and that things need to move quicker.
- 6.8 The Chief Executive also acknowledged the comments made by Mayor McGuinness and Mayor Brabin and accepted that TfN needed to work with the Constituent Authorities to shape the future of TfN.
- 6.9 Mr Rawstron highlighted the fact that TfN does not just reflect the Metro Mayor areas. He noted that there are still large areas that aren't

currently represented by Metro Mayors and it is important that these areas do not lose their voice within TfN.

Resolved:

As the proposed constitutional amendments on attendance requirements arise solely from legislative changes that are the result of additional Combined Authorities having been established, the Monitoring Officer, under her delegated authority from the Board, following consultation with the Chief Executive will amend the Constitution in line with the recommendations of the General Purpose Committee.

7. Communications and Engagement Strategy

- 7.1 Members received the report from the Deputy Chief Executive who outlined the key points within her report.
- 7.2 Cllr Thornton asked about the discontinuation of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) and asked if another group would pick up this work.
- 7.3 The Chair stated that there was a lot of effort put into the APPG for Transport for the North with attendance from MPs at the meetings held being variable. He explained that there many examples of where APPGs exist to support specific transport issues in the North. Moving forward, the proposal is that TfN aligns itself with the work of those APPGs.
- 7.4 Mayor Brabin welcomed the change and believes that this is the evidence of the new world. Addressing the issue of the discontinuation of the APPG, she reflected that in the world of devolution things are moving far quicker than a traditional approach through the use of APPGs. She stated more excitement needs to be created about TfN being at the centre of growth.
- 7.5 Whilst recognising that the North needs the support of parliamentary colleagues to get what the North needs, Mayor McGuinness reflected on how a focus on APPGs encouraged debates in London, when in reality the debates need to be in the North.
- 7.6 Mr Rawstron welcomed the approach and was supportive of working collaboratively with partners and business, seeing it as essential. He also highlighted that messaging from TfN needs to be sharper and shorter.

Resolved:

That the report and Board feedback be noted.

8. Northern Appraisal Playbook Briefing

- 8.1 Members received the report of the Senior Policy and Strategy Officer and the Analysis Manager. The Interim Strategy Director then highlighted the key points within the report.
- 8.2 Mayor Brabin was supportive of the work and believed the argument needs to be made that investment in the North's transport is about social inclusion and growing northern economies. She believed that the Chancellor was likely to reflect the need for changes in the 'Green Book' along the lines of TfN's work.

- 8.3 Responding to a question from Mayor Brabin, the Interim Strategy Director confirmed that the letter would be sent following Board approval.
- 8.4 Cllr McCormack provided Liverpool City Region's support for this work believing that it would provide a more level playing field for northern transport schemes.
- 8.5 Cllr Kilbane highlighted that one of the big issues with the 'Green Book' in its current form is that it does not measure social value when evaluating transport schemes.
- 8.6 Cllr Mundry believed that this was the first step to addressing the imbalance in investment across the country.
- 8.7 Mr Rawstron stated that it is economically illiterate for the Treasury to downplay the advantage of economic growth from a very low base in North compared to the South. He believes that the reverse is true and that to increase growth from a low base has a disproportionately bigger beneficial economic impact, whereas spending more in the South just the basis of economic value alone misses the wider benefits of any investment. He suggested that this should be the overriding message that can wrap around the submission.

Resolved:

- 1) That the report and the initial findings be noted
- 2) That Board's feedback on the draft letter to HM Treasury (HMT) on how TfN can support their review of the Green Book be noted.

9. Spending Review Submission

- 9.1 Members received the report of the Chief Executive. He apologised for the report being late and noted the earlier comments from Members about not having had the time to read the report. He invited Members to come back to him by the end of the week with any comments on the draft submission. He said that a revised version of the submission would be circulated to Members prior to its submission.
- 9.2 Mayor Brabin was satisfied with the suggestion. She advised that Constituent Authorities had been asked to submit their transport submission by mid-February and asked whether the TfN submission was going to be a collective northern one and how it relates to those of the constituent authorities.
- 9.3 The Chief Executive clarified that the intention was to amplify messages that individual authorities have already made. He informed the Board that he had reflected on comments made at the Convention for the North and two of the big messages he took away were that transport should be treated as a protected budget and that there should be a commitment to a long-term investment programme.
- 9.4 He advised that this submission was looking to build on the key building blocks already in place. This included projects such as completing work on the Transpennine Route Upgrade, moving forward with Yorkshire Mass Transit, and delivering the A66 improvement.

- 9.5 Mayor Brabin emphasised that this is also an opportunity to reiterate the consistent messaging for long term projects such as the T-shaped station at Leeds.
- 9.6 Cllr Mundry requested that Warrington Bank Quay as a key hub needed to be included in the paper in the Manchester Liverpool corridor.
- 9.7 Cllr Kilbane asked about what process would be used to decide which projects will be included within the submission.
- 9.8 Cllr McCormack highlighted Liverpool City Region's disappointment in the omission of any specific mention of development funding for major enhancements to the rail network. Additionally, there was no mention of Liverpool Central in respect of funding and seeking a commitment from Government to work in partnership with them to deliver transformation to the city and regional connectivity.
- 9.9 Cllr Thornton requested that he would like to see something included about investing in maintaining and fixing failing assets. He specifically highlighted concrete structures that need to be rebuilt.
- 9.10 In response, the Chief Executive noted the Board's comments. In respect of the Leeds to Hull electrification, he reminded Board that this has always been part of the Boards position relating to NPR 'in full' and has previously been seen as a quick win.
- 9.11 In terms of process, he asked for all Members to submit comments by the end of the week, this will then be redrafted and circulated the following week for comment on the final version.

Resolved:

- 1) That Members submit their comments on the draft by the end of the week.
- 2) That a redrafted version of the report to be circulated to Board for final comment before being submitted.

10. TfN Offer

- 10.1 Members received the report of the Principal Policy and Strategy Officer and the Service Manager. The Interim Strategy Director then highlighted the key points in the report.
- 10.2 Mayor Brabin expressed her thanks as they currently use the service a lot and sees this continuing.
- 10.3 The Chair thanked Members for making use of the TfN Offer and he said that this is a practical way in which TfN can help.

Resolved:

That Board noted the key updates regarding the TfN Offer, its value to the Mayoral Combined Authorities and Local Transport Authorities.

11. Corporate Risk Register and Risk Management Strategy Report

- 11.1 Members received the report of the Risk Manager and the Chief Executive highlighted the key elements within the report.

Resolved:

That Board noted TfN's corporate risks and risk management activity over the last 3 months.

12. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Monday 23 June 2025 at 1pm.

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1. Chief Executives Update

- 1.1. To provide the opportunity for the Chief Executive to update the Board on matters arising from the previous meeting, as well as any other significant issues not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

2. Quarterly Operating Report (QoR)

- 2.1. The QoR allows the TfN executive to report progress against the milestones set out in the Business Plan. It is presented to and discussed at the Audit and Governance Committee as part of their regular cycle of meetings. It is also provided to this meeting for information.
- 2.2. The QoR shared with this meeting is the final one for the 2024/25 financial year. It captures how some of the milestones changed over the course of the year following the General Election in July 2024, and in response to steers provided by the TfN Board.
- 2.3. Take-up of the 'TfN Offer' continues to grow as individual authorities move forward with their work, with authorities right across the North (and beyond) drawing on the 'Offer'.
- 2.4. The TfN executive continues to monitor use of the TfN Offer, as well as capturing its added value. Since its introduction (September 2023) there has been a total of 186 requests, and the cumulative saving to the public purse is now estimated to be c£836k.
- 2.5. Work continues to further develop the offering to constituent authorities with work underway to extend it to include application of evidence and tools in support of rail proposals. This is planned for the autumn.

3. Green Book Review/Northern Appraisal Playbook

- 3.1. The March TfN Board meeting supported the work of the TfN executive to develop the Northern Appraisal Playbook, as well as supporting a submission to the Treasury's review of the Green Book.
- 3.2. The Northern Appraisal Playbook was published on 28th May. A practical guide that includes advice and guidance on tools, the playbook provides practical advice to help scheme promoters to strengthen business cases for transport investment across the North.
- 3.3. The submission to the Green Book review led to a meeting with HMT officials on 8th May. In addition to briefing officials on the Northern Appraisal Playbook, it provided the opportunity for three constituent authorities to use examples from across the North to illustrate issues that need to be addressed when it comes to the Green Book: Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe talked about the new Bradford Station; Cllr Martin Gannon about the A19; Tom Moody talked about the Middlewich Eastern Bypass.
- 3.4. HMT officials welcomed the opportunity to understand the work underway in the North in relation to the Green Book, and in particular the three examples served to focus attention on a number of practical issues that

need to be addressed, and which would benefit authorities more widely. Follow-on conversations with HMT officials have also touched on how, through the TfN Offer, the North is actively addressing some of the capacity and capability issues that have been identified during the Green Book review. Further discussions with HMT officials anticipated following the Spending Review.

- 3.5. At the same time the TfN executive continues to work with the Independent Transport Commission on examining the need for change in the approach to the 'value of time': a key consideration for many business cases.

4. Buses Bill

- 4.1. Warrington Council approach TfN for its support in seeking clarification from the Secretary of State in respect of how the Bill might impact on existing municipal bus companies. The Chair of TfN wrote to the Secretary of State on this matter. Her response has been welcomed by Warrington Council as providing the necessary reassurance. This has also been shared with Blackpool Council (the other municipal bus company extant in the North).

5. The Great North Partnership

- 5.1. The Chief Executive attended the launch of The Great North Partnership in Leeds. The TfN executive has had a couple of initial conversations with the NECA Chief Executive and The Great North Partnership Director to explore how to align activities in support of the Partnership: those conversations are on-going.
- 5.2. The launch of The Great North Partnership took place on the eve of the 2025 REiIF (Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum). The TfN executive supported a number of constituent authorities over the course of the 3-day event.

6. Gender Pay Report

- 6.1. In response to a question raised at the March TfN Board meeting the TfN executive has commissioned a short piece of work to examine gender pay equality. A verbal update on the outcome will be given to the Board.

7. 2026/27 Budget and Business Plan

- 7.1. Following the meeting of the TfN Board, which was held as a consultation meeting on 17th March, the Chief Executive wrote to all Board members on 18th March seeking their support for the 2025/2026 Budget. Having received no objections from Board members, the Chief Executive subsequently wrote confirming the adoption and operation of the 2025/26 Budget, including the use of reserves, as detailed in the Board papers of 17th March. The 2025/2026 Business Plan that reflects the agreed Budget was subsequently published on the TfN website.

June 2025



Quarterly Operating Report

January – March 2025



1 Chief Executive's Introduction

- 1.1 The latter part of the 2024/25 financial year has seen the work of TfN continue to evolve to ensure that it reflects the priorities of the TfN Board, and the Government elected on 4th July 2024.
- 1.2 Building on the steer provided by the TfN Board at its December meeting the 2025/26 Business Plan was prepared with input from officers of the constituent authorities. Confirmation of the level of funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) in February allowed the Business Plan to be finalised for consideration by the Board at its March meeting.
- 1.3 The level of funding confirmed for 2025/26 was in line with the planning assumptions used to shape the early stages of business planning, allowing the priorities identified by the Board in December to be included.
- 1.4 The priorities of the new Government meant that a number of activities planned for 2024/25 (and included in the milestones associated with the Business Plan) were either reshaped or deferred following discussions with the TfN Board: where necessary this is picked up in the supporting commentary.
- 1.5 Throughout the year the TfN executive has continually sought to reduce overheads to maximise the funding for work that is targeted in support of the constituent authorities and other partners.
- 1.6 This focus has in turn helped ensure the programme of commissioned work from the DfT in support of Northern Powerhouse Rail (including work on the business case for Bradford Station) has been delivered to time and to budget.
- 1.7 Alongside work to develop the Business Plan for 2025/26, a key focus for this quarter has been the development of the submission to the Spending Review.
- 1.8 The evidence base underpinning the Strategic Transport Plan (STP), including the updated Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review, serves to identify the scale of the prize to be secured by the UK from realising the potential of the North – an additional £118bn GVA per annum.
- 1.9 Making the case for additional investment across the North to improve connectivity between our great cities and towns is central to realising this potential and we continues to work with our constituent authorities to make the case across Whitehall. Our submission to the Spending Review was agreed following the March TfN Board and submitted to the Government for its consideration.
- 1.10 The STP sets out how the limitations of the current Green Book have often served to make the case for additional investment more challenging than it should be. In this quarter we presented the outcomes of our initial work reviewing the Green Book to the TfN Board and following their endorsement, this has been shared with the Chancellor of the Exchequer

as an input into the Treasury's review of the Green Book. This has led to an invitation to meet with Treasury officials.

- 1.11 Meanwhile work on the Northern Appraisal Playbook continues with a view to publishing shortly after the May local/Mayoral elections. Given the importance of Green Book review to all constituent authorities the 2025/26 Business Plan allocates resources to take the next phases of work forward.
- 1.12 On a related issue, we continue to strengthen our relationship with the North's port sector as part of our commitment to improve connectivity for the freight and logistics sector. The foundations laid in this quarter will be built on during 2025/26 with the identification of an investment pipeline that will support expansion of the role of rail as part of the freight and logistics sector.
- 1.13 The Rail North Committee (RNC) has continued to prioritise improving accessibility to the rail system as a focus for its attention, a reflection of the critical importance of addressing inequalities within our transport system that disadvantage some of the most vulnerable within our communities.
- 1.14 The RNC has also spent considerable time holding the leadership of Northern Trains (Northern) to account in order to ensure its Performance Improvement Programme results in material changes that benefit the user. At the same time, the Committee has supported the work of Northern to implement the changes required to enable a seven-day railway, although on this there remains significant work to be done. Fundamentally the Committee has been clear that the goal long-term must be to deliver the rail services the North requires and expects.
- 1.15 The success of the Yorkshire Dales Explorer service – which won silver at the Community Rail Awards – shows the importance of rail services in supporting the rural and visitor economy and the scope for growth in that regard.
- 1.16 Feedback from our constituent authorities consistently highlights the extent to which the expansion of the TfN Offer has been supported and appreciated. Demand for the TfN Offer continues to grow as awareness amongst our partners increases: at a time when public finances remain under severe pressure the savings realised by using the TfN Offer (now in excess of £650k) are increasingly important.
- 1.17 In agreeing the 2025/26 Business Plan the TfN Board identified the need to reflect further on our evolution: devolution has changed the external environment within which we operate, and it is essential that our work continues to evolve in order to ensure that activities add value to and complement the work of the Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs), County Combined Authorities (CCAs) and Local Transport Authorities (LTAs). This will be the focus for a discussion with the TfN Board in the first half of 2025/26 in order to then provide the framework for work to develop the draft Business Plan for 2026/27 and beyond.

2 Progress against Business Plan Key Milestones: RAG key:

R	Failed to meet target date – internal factors
A	Failed to meet target date – external factors
G	Met target date

BP 1 Secure the agreement of the Board to submit statutory advice on the North's Bus Network – June 2024

A

- 2.1 Following the outcome of the July 2024 General Election, and the inclusion of a Better Buses Bill in the King's Speech, the TfN Board concluded that there was no need for us to develop our own statutory advice in support of improvements to local bus services.
- 2.2 Feedback from our constituent authorities has welcomed the TfN Bus Forum as a mechanism for sharing information and best practice across authorities in the North. As part of the support provided to constituent authorities through the TfN Offer, we procured access to a bus network planning tool on their collective behalf for a trial period.
- 2.3 Drawing on feedback from our constituent authorities and using insight from our evidence base (e.g. Transport Related Social Exclusion report), we made a submission to the Transport Select Committee inquiry on 'Buses connecting communities' in January 2025.

BP 2 With partners, identify the North's requirements of national rail reform, building upon existing levels of rail devolution (such as the Rail North Agreement) – June 2024

G

- 2.4 Progress against this milestone has been influenced by the pace of rail reform nationally.
- 2.5 In February 2025 the Government published its consultation document 'A railway fit for the future'. The TfN executive worked with our constituent authorities to prepare a response to the consultation that reflected the ambition of those authorities, building on the current level of rail devolution in the North. This will provide the basis for further input into the rail reform process moving forward.
- 2.6 In addition, the TfN executive continues to work closely with our constituent authorities to identify how our current role needs to evolve to enable that envisaged for the MCAs moving forward.

BP 3 Secure the agreement of the Board to a strategy for improving accessibility to and at rail stations, and to identify key actions for implementation – June 2024

G

- 2.7 The importance of improving accessibility remains a key priority for the RNC, with it the first substantive item at each meeting.
- 2.8 The Accessibility Task and Finish Member Working Group has help drive forward the Committee's work on this key issue, overseeing the development of the evidence base, and agreeing a framework that can be used to assist in the prioritisation of investment opportunities.

- 2.9 In the meantime, we have worked with Northern and Transpennine Trains (TPT), via RNP, to secure the inclusion of some “quick win” accessibility works in the operators’ annual business plans.
- 2.10 We continue to work with officers from the MCAs, CCAs and LTAs to ensure that our partners have access to the accumulated evidence base held within the TfN executive.

BP 4 Secure the agreement of the Board to submit statutory advice to government on implementation of the Strategic Transport Plan (STP) - September 2024

A

- 2.11 Phase 1 of the Northern Appraisal Playbook workstream was shared with the TfN Board in March 2025. A key output was a practical ‘hints and tips’ document, highlighting those areas where it is possible to make greater use of flexibilities that already exist within the Green Book, and where our partners already have access to the tools and data that allows them to do this. The Playbook itself is scheduled to be launched shortly after the local/Mayoral elections held on 1st May 2025.
- 2.12 Potential areas for further research were also presented to the March TfN Board, including the proposal to work with a small number of constituent authorities on live business cases as opportunities to apply the findings of our work to date. This is a priority for resources in the 2025/26 Business Plan.
- 2.13 In March 2025 we convened a roundtable in partnership with the Independent Transport Commission (ITC) that brought together academic and industry experts for a discussion on the use of ‘Value of Time’ in appraisal. This identified further opportunities for research that will be picked up as part of the 2025/26 Business Plan.
- 2.14 The March TfN Board agreed to submit a letter to Chancellor of the Exchequer that set out the areas of appraisal where our evidence indicated there is a need for more fundamental changes to the Green Book approach. The letter set out how we would use our convening powers to reinforce the need for change using examples from our constituent authorities.
- 2.15 A key focus for implementation of the STP is the critical importance of investing in the North’s transport system to improve connectivity for the freight and logistics sector.
- 2.16 As part of the agreed freight and logistics work programme we continue to strengthen our relationships with the major port groups in the North. The priorities of the ports will feed directly into our ‘Rail Freight Investment Plan’ and we continue to scope a future workstream regarding how we make best use of our Northern ports to unlock economic growth in the North.

BP 5 With partners, identify proposals for investment in the Major Road Network for consideration by government – September 2024

A

- 2.17 As previously reported, the TfN executive has undertaken some preliminary work with our constituent authorities to identify potential additions to the Major Road Network (MRN) programme. Further work remains paused until the Government issues information and guidance

on future funding to support delivery of large (e.g. £10m - £100m) investments on local roads, including major structural repairs.

- 2.18 In the last quarter, Leeds City Council received confirmation of £35m funding for the MRN scheme to improve Dawson's Corner and complete maintenance improvements on Stanningley bypass. Four schemes recommended by us in the first MRN programme have now received confirmation of funding for construction: a total of £128m.

BP 6 Secure the agreement of the Board to publish an investment pipeline for the North that forms the basis of input into the next Government Spending Review – September 2024

A

- 2.19 During 2024 the TfN executive worked with our constituent authorities to identify investment proposals of pan-regional significance: this formed an input into the development of our Spending Review submission.
- 2.20 The March TfN Board considered the draft submission. Following comments and further input from the constituent authorities, the submission was sent to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, copied to the Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Transport. Focusing on issues of pan-regional significance and shaped by the outcomes identified in the adopted STP, it complements the individual submissions of our MCAs, CCAs and LTAs.

BP 7 Deliver services commissioned by DfT in support of Northern Powerhouse Rail – Ongoing

G

- 2.21 We are commissioned by DfT to undertake technical work in support of the Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) programme: this work is in addition to our core activities and is undertaken by the TAME team to a work programme set by the DfT.
- 2.22 The value of this work amounts to £5.7m in total: it has been delivered to time and to budget.
- 2.23 As part of the programme of work we have completed work on the Strategic Outline Business Case for Bradford Station, and are in the early stages of evidence production for the next phase of the Business Case.
- 2.24 Work has continued on improving the quality of the rail modelling system underpinning the analysis in support of NPR. This has culminated in a new interim version of the model being released for further NPR corridor testing.
- 2.25 Work has continued to update key components of the Analytical Framework including the completion of a new Land Use and Transport Interaction (LUTI) model database and commencing final model testing. The model will be used on NPR corridor testing to forecast land use and Level 3 benefit impacts of the scheme.

BP 8 Secure the agreement of the Board to publish, for consultation, the draft update of the regional transport decarbonisation strategy – March 2025

A

- 2.26 Following the steer provided by Executive Board the focus for this area of work was switched to a 'stocktake' on progress to date, rather than a full revision of the original decarbonisation strategy.
- 2.27 In February, a draft of the Stocktake document, along with the accompanying Action Plan, was submitted for expert review by specialists in transport decarbonisation and fair transitions at the University of Leeds. The documents are currently being updated in light of that review.
- 2.28 The main findings from the stocktake, along with the Action Plan covering our proposed activities in the area of decarbonisation and climate change resilience, will be taken to Executive Board in July.
- 2.29 Our Carbon Assessment Playbook was successfully launched in January 2025 through two online webinar sessions. The sessions were attended by more than 100.

BP 9 Secure the agreement of the Board to submit statutory advice to delivery partners and regulatory bodies that will support delivery of investment in Electric Vehicle (EV)/alternative fuels infrastructure – March 2025

G

- 2.30 We have continued to engage with the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) and DfT on the implementation of recommendations in the Electric Vehicle (EV) State of Play report. We also provided evidence to the [Public Accounts Committee](#) inquiry on the Government's strategy for public charging for electric vehicles.
- 2.31 We continue to tailor and deliver the EV Charging Infrastructure Framework to equip constituent authorities, local partners and stakeholders with evidence that supports activities across the region. New enhancements to the framework released in December have seen significant uptake via the TfN Offer. Since August 2024, the tool has received around 4,500 self-service visits (48% new users; 52% returning users).
- 2.32 We have initiated a short project, working in collaboration with Northern electricity partners, to explore future opportunities to improve systems planning, application of data and investment decision making. This will shape any future TfN activity, in particular our engagement with new Regional Energy Systems Plans (RESPs).

BP 10 Continue to develop the 'TfN Offer' to partners across the North and nationally, including roll out of the Common Analytical Framework – Ongoing

G

- 2.33 Demand for the TfN Offer continues to grow, and its scope is constantly evolving as additional tools and capabilities are becoming available. Within the last 12 months (April 2024 – March 2025) we received 88 requests, with 84 completed.
- 2.34 A key success factor associated with the TfN Offer is the extent to which its use by constituent authorities (and others) realises savings to public bodies: the most recent estimate is that savings realised to date

amount to over £650k. Future monitoring of the use of the TfN Offer will enable greater insight as to the value to constituent authorities, as well as help shape further development of the TfN Offer.

- 2.35 The TfN Offer brochure has been refreshed to include our full menu of bronze level self-service products and is available for partners on request, via email. An online version of the brochure will be developed in the new financial year.

BP 11 Continue the TfN research programme and thought leadership activity as part of maintaining the evidence base that underpins the work of TfN – Ongoing

G

- 2.36 Our updated Transport Related Social Exclusion (TRSE) evidence and data tool will be released following the pre-election period for local/Mayoral elections. This new evidence will underpin the 'Investing in Social Inclusion' programme of partner support during 2025-2026 which will bring together data, research, policy support for partners' strategies, plans, schemes, and business cases.
- 2.37 We have continued to deliver a series of research exercises with our Northern Transport Voices (NTV) citizens panel. Earlier work exploring transport user attitudes to rural mobility hubs was published in January 2025. This quarter we also launched new NTV research projects, including on attitudes to road safety, linked to our Vision Zero ambitions, and user research on rail passenger service specification, providing new evidence for RNP. We are currently finalising the scope of proposed NTV activity for 2025/26.
- 2.38 During Q4 we completed our review of the vulnerability of the North's MRN and Heavy Rail Network to a number of different climate hazards. Mapping and underlying data is now available for partners on request: we intend to automate the vulnerability assessment for local road application during 2025/26. The full report will be published following review by Executive Board in July 2025.
- 2.39 TfN's 'Consolidation Centre Handbook' was completed at the end of March 2025 and is based upon extensive consultation with both users and freight operators. The handbook is intended to fill a knowledge gap and will provide information to support our partners in determining appropriate solutions for their local geographies.

BP 12 Continue to make the case for investment by government in the North's priorities for the Strategic Road Network and Rail Network

G

- 2.40 Our Spending Review submission, discussed with the Board in March, reflects the key priorities for the North's strategic road and rail networks. It was submitted to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Transport.
- 2.41 The submission will be published on our website following the May local/Mayoral elections and will be shared the North's MPs ahead of the Spending Review outcome, expected to be in the first half of June.

Rail North Partnership (RNP)

- 2.42 The RNP executive are TfN employees, charged by DfT and TfN with overseeing the implementation of the Northern and TPT contracts on behalf of us and DfT.
- 2.43 RNP has completed the Northern and TPT 2025/26 annual business planning round. Engagement with constituent authorities and other stakeholders has been extensive throughout. A key particular focus this year has been the need for the operator business plans to better reflect the ambition of MCAs, CCAs and LTAs set out in their Local Transport Plans.
- 2.44 RNP has also continued to work with Northern and DfT, as well as key stakeholders (including the RNC) on Northern's Performance Improvement Programme (following RNP issuing it with a breach of contract notice in July 2024) and Northern's Passenger Assistance Improvement Plan (required by the Office of Rail and Road). Negotiations between Northern and its trade unions have progressed, and Northern has engaged extensively with its staff on how to establish the flexible workforce needed to deliver a reliable seven-day railway.
- 2.45 RNP has continued work on its outline passenger service specification project to develop a 10-year specification for Northern and TPT, built around stakeholder strategic transport plans overlaying passenger demand and budgets.
- 2.46 TPT has achieved the required driver training to deliver 3 trains per hour across the TransPennine Route upgrade (TRU) diversionary routes from May 2025.
- 2.47 In January, Northern issued its invitation to negotiate to rolling stock manufacturers who are invited to begin negotiations for supplying up to 450 new trains, to be introduced on a phased basis. It is expected the contract will be awarded in 2026, with the first trains delivered to Northern by 2030. This follows TPT's invitation to five manufacturers to put forward proposals for 29 new trains for the TransPennine route once upgraded.
- 2.48 The Yorkshire Dales Explorer service, launched by RNP and its partners in April 2024, won silver in the tourism category of the 2025 Community Rail Awards in Newcastle in March. Judges were particularly impressed with the effective partnership working across rail, bus, tourism and local government.
- 2.49 Looking ahead, RNP will be focused on:
- Continuing to work with operators and stakeholders on delivering Northern and TPT's business plans, Northern's Performance Improvement Programme and Northern's Passenger Assistance improvement Plan
 - Continuing the outline passenger service specification project with ongoing stakeholder conversations
 - Supporting Northern's procurement of replacement rolling stock for the oldest diesel trains in its fleet with a combination of new electric, battery-electric and multi-mode trains

- Working with partners to further develop the Yorkshire Dales Explorer offer, including working with bus operators to provide improved local bus connectivity to nearby attractions and with Yorkshire Dales National Park, local business groups on offers/discounts with local accommodation, food and drink and leisure providers.

3 People and Finance

TRANSPORT FOR THE NORTH					PERIOD	Q4	2024/25	
FINANCE DASHBOARD					BUDGET CYCLE		BASE BUDGET	
YTD ACTUALS VERSUS BUDGET - BY ACTIVITY								
	Actuals £m	Budget £m	Var. £m	Var. %				
Hosted services								
DfT Analytical Support	£5.75	£5.70	-£0.05	-1%				
Rail North Partnership	£1.84	£1.87	£0.03	2%				
	£7.60	£7.57	-£0.02	0%				
Operational areas								
Strategy & Roads	£1.92	£2.23	£0.32	14%				
Rail, Modelling, Legal & Communication	£3.55	£4.22	£0.68	16%				
	£5.47	£6.46	£0.99	15%				
Business support								
	£2.19	£2.43	£0.24	10%				
	£15.25	£16.46	£1.21	7%				
					■ Actuals ■ Budget			
YTD OPERATIONAL & BUSINESS SUPPORT EXPENDITURE - BY COST TYPE								
Actuals	Actuals £m	Budget £m	Var. £m	Var. %				
Staff	£5.46	£5.98	£0.52	9%				
Staff support	£0.23	£0.27	£0.04	16%				
Business infrastructure	£0.75	£0.79	£0.05	6%				
Professional services	£0.82	£1.38	£0.56	41%				
VAT	£0.40	£0.46	£0.06	13%				
	£7.65	£8.89	£1.23	14%				
					■ Staff ■ Staff support ■ Business infrastructure ■ Professional services ■ VAT			
YTD ACTUALS VERSUS BUDGET - BY FUND								
	Actuals £m	Budget £m	Var. £m	Var. %				
Hosted Services								
NPR Analytical Support Grant	£5.75	£5.70	-£0.05	-1%				
Rail North Grant & Contribution	£1.60	£1.65	£0.04	3%				
Trading Income	£0.24	£0.23	-£0.01	-5%				
	£7.60	£7.57	-£0.02	0%				
Operational Areas & Backoff								
Core Grant (inc. reserves)	£7.20	£8.48	£1.28	15%				
Other	£0.46	£0.41	-£0.05	-12%				
	£7.65	£8.89	£1.23	14%				
	£15.25	£16.46	£1.21	7%				
					■ Actuals ■ Budget			
HR DASHBOARD								
Establishment								
Permanent/Fixed Term Posts	Permanent (< 2 Years)	Fixed-Term (< 2 Years)	Total Posts		HR KPI's - Year to Date			
Hosted services								
DfT Analytical Support	26 (25.90 FTE)	-	26 (25.90 FTE)		Corporate Sickness Level: 4.1%			
Rail North Partnership	18 (17.80 FTE)	3 (3.00 FTE)	21 (20.80 FTE)		Employee Turnover: 8.8%			
	44 (43.90 FTE)	3 (3.00 FTE)	47 (46.70 FTE)		% of Employees from an Ethnic Minority Background: 17.0%			
Operational areas								
Strategy and Roads	19 (18.92 FTE)	-	19 (18.92 FTE)		% Employees declaring a Disability: 18.0%			
Rail, Modelling, Legal & Comms	36 (35.86 FTE)	-	36 (35.86 FTE)		Gender Mix - % of Female Employees: 39.0%			
	55 (54.78 FTE)	-	55 (54.78 FTE)		Gender Mix - % of Male Employees: 61.0%			
Business support								
	16 (16.00 FTE)	-	16 (16.00 FTE)					
Total Establishment								
	115 (114.48 FTE)	3 (3.00 FTE)	118 (117.48 FTE)					
Strength (In Post)								
	104 (103.48 FTE)	3 (3.00 FTE)	107 (106.48 FTE)					
Appointed (Start Date Pending)								
	-	-	-					
Pending/Active Recruitment								
	2 (2.00 FTE)	-	2 (2.00 FTE)					
Vacancies On Hold								
	9 (9.00 FTE)	-	9 (9.00 FTE)					

HR DASHBOARD

Establishment

Permanent/Fixed Term Posts	Permanent (≤ 2 Years)	Fixed-Term (≤ 2 Years)	Total Posts
Hosted services			
DFT Analytical Support	26 (25.90 FTE)	-	26 (25.90 FTE)
Rail North Partnership	18 (17.80 FTE)	3 (3.00 FTE)	21 (20.80 FTE)
	44 (43.90 FTE)	3 (3.00 FTE)	47 (46.70 FTE)
Operational areas			
Strategy and Roads	19 (18.92 FTE)	-	19 (18.92 FTE)
Rail, Modelling, Legal & Comms	36 (35.86 FTE)	-	36 (35.86 FTE)
	55 (54.78 FTE)	-	55 (54.78 FTE)
Business support			
	16 (16.00 FTE)	-	16 (16.00 FTE)
Total Establishment	115 (114.48 FTE)	3 (3.00 FTE)	118 (117.48 FTE)
Strength (In Post)	104 (103.48 FTE)	3 (3.00 FTE)	107 (106.48 FTE)
Appointed (Start Date Pending)	-	-	-
Pending/Active Recruitment	2 (2.00 FTE)	-	2 (2.00 FTE)
Vacant - On-hold	9 (9.00 FTE)	-	9 (9.00 FTE)

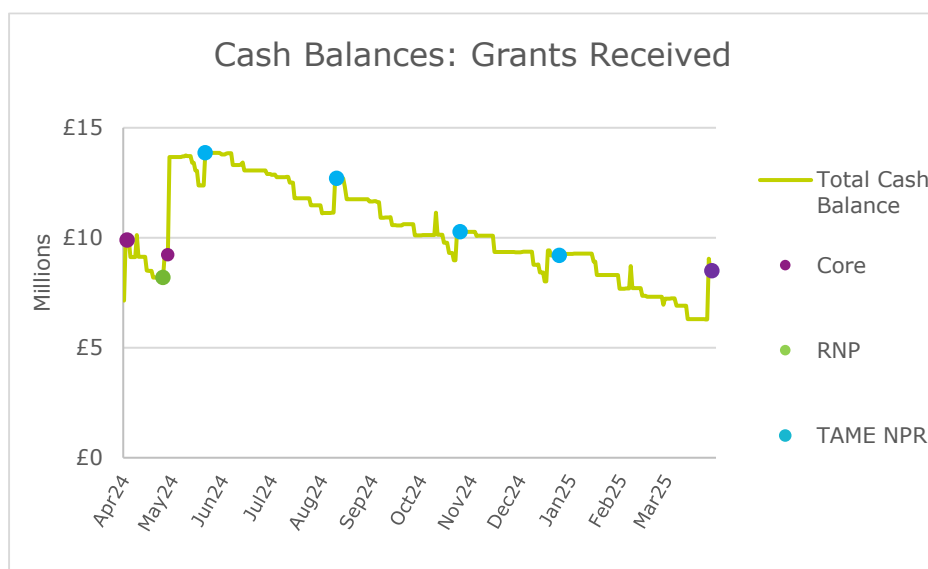
HR KPI's - Year to Date

Corporate Sickness Level:	4.1%
Employee Turnover:	8.8%
% of Employees from an Ethnic Minority Background:	17.0%
% Employees declaring a Disability:	18.0%
Gender Mix - % of Female Employees:	39.0%
Gender Mix - % of Male Employees:	61.0%

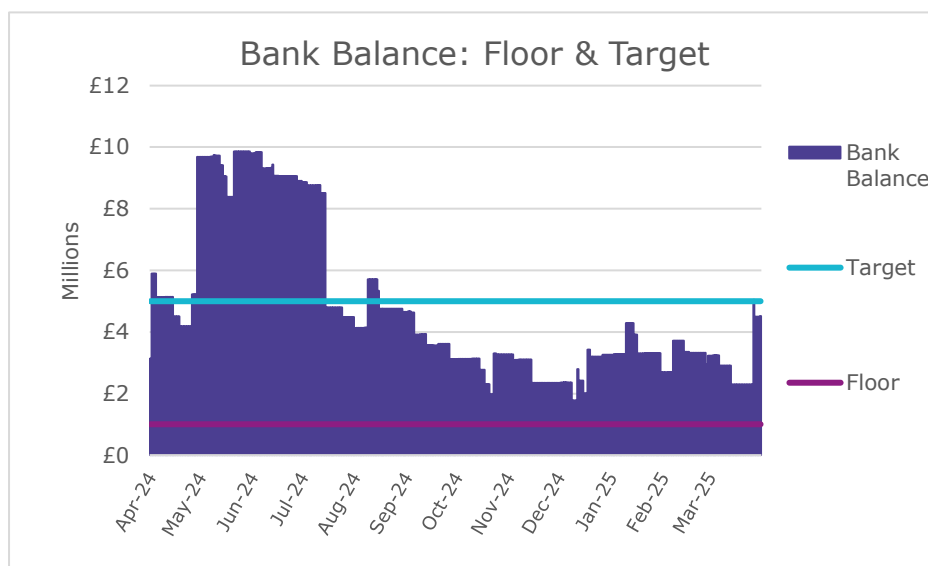
- 3.1 Total expenditure for 2024/25 is £15.25m, £1.21m (7%) below budget.
- 3.2 Staff costs are £0.5m lower than budget of which £0.2m relates to the cost-of-living salary rise within the public sector being lower than expected. The remainder is due to deferred recruitment.
- 3.3 Professional services are £0.6m lower than budgeted (with VAT included). The majority of the variance arose out of the review of work priorities in light of the outcome of the General Election and the priorities of the new Government. This review led to some planned activities being rescoped and/or delayed in their start date.
- 3.4 Business infrastructure is broadly in line with budget.

Treasury Management Update

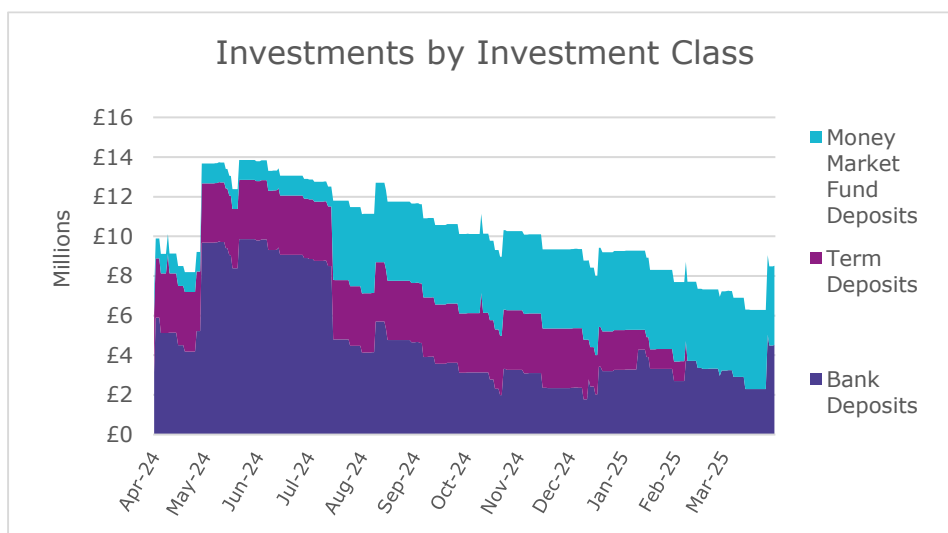
- 3.5 TfN's Constitution identifies a requirement to update the Board on performance against its Treasury Management Strategy (TMS). We have operated within the parameters set out in our TMS.
- 3.6 The following charts show performance against key parameters. It shows that we have managed cash and investments within our counterparty criteria, placing cash deposits with secure bodies and institutions on liquid terms.



- 3.7 The principal source of income is grant from DfT which is received periodically throughout the course of the year, leading to the pattern of cash balances shown above i.e. a peak on receipt of grant followed by a gradual run down of balances until the next grant instalment is received.



- 3.8 We aim to ensure that an adequate but not excessive balance is maintained in the main business bank account. In full compliance with our TMS, at times we have held a balance above £5m. Yields have been similar to the previous year and interest returns have been maximised where possible in term deposits and money market funds.



3.9 During the year we have sustained a suitable balance in our main business bank account. In July 2024, to further divest our portfolio, increase interest returns but remain liquid, an additional £2m was invested in money market funds.

3.10 There is therefore no intention to change the focus of our TMS and its prioritisation on the security and liquidity over yield.

2025/26 Budget funding update

3.11 RNP funding for 2025/26 has been finalised and the agreed value is £0.2m lower than assumed in the 2025/26 budget. Actions have been taken to mitigate the funding reduction. In addition to these mitigating actions, a reserve utilisation of £65,000 is anticipated for 2025/26 (from of a reserve balance of £126,000).

March 2025

TfN Offer statistics by Partners and Classification

Requesting Authority	September 2023 - May 2025						TOTAL
	Bronze	Fulfilled/In Process/Not Fulfilled	Silver	Fulfilled/In Process/Not Fulfilled	Gold	Fulfilled/In Process/Not Fulfilled	
Avanti	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	1
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	2	2/0/0	0	0/0/0	1	0/0/1	3
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	1
Blackpool Council	2	2/0/0	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	3
Bradford Metropolitan District Council	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	1
Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	1
Cheshire East Council	2	2/0/0	3	3/0/0	0	0/0/0	5
Cheshire West and Chester Council	6	6/0/0	5	4/0/1	0	0/0/0	11
Cumberland Council	2	2/0/0	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	2
Department for Transport (DfT)	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	1
City of Doncaster Council	2	2/0/0	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	2
East Riding of Yorkshire Council	2	1/0/1	1	1/0/0	1	0/0/1	4
East Sussex County Council	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	1
Electricity North West	0	0/0/0	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	1
England's Economic Heartland	0	0/0/0	2	0/0/2	0	0/0/0	2
EVCI Request - All LAs	1	1/0/0	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	2
Gateshead Council	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	1

Requesting Authority	September 2023 - May 2025						
	Bronze	Fulfilled/In Process/Not Fulfilled	Silver	Fulfilled/In Process/Not Fulfilled	Gold	Fulfilled/In Process/Not Fulfilled	TOTAL
Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA)	2	2/0/0	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	2
Hull City Council	2	2/0/0	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	2
Key Cities Network	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	1
Lancashire Combined County Authority (LCCA)	2	2/0/0	2	2/0/0	0	0/0/0	4
Lancashire County Council	5	4/0/1	5	4/0/1	0	0/0/0	10
Lancaster City Council	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	1
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA)	5	4/0/1	2	0/1/1	1	0/0/1	8
Manchester Climate Change Agency	0	0/0/0	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	1
Middlesbrough Council	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	1
Midlands Connect	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	1
National Highways	2	2/0/0	3	2/0/1	0	0/0/0	5
Network Rail	1	1/0/0	1	1/0/0	1	0/0/1	3
Newcastle City Council	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	1
North East Lincolnshire Council	2	2/0/0	1	0/0/1	0	0/0/0	3
North East Mayoral Combined Authority (NEMCA)	5	5/0/0	3	3/0/0	1	0/0/1	9

Requesting Authority	September 2023 - May 2025						
	Bronze	Fulfilled/In Process/Not Fulfilled	Silver	Fulfilled/In Process/Not Fulfilled	Gold	Fulfilled/In Process/Not Fulfilled	TOTAL
North Lincolnshire Council	3	3/0/0	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	3
North Tyneside Council	4	4/0/0	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	4
North Yorkshire Council	0	0/0/0	6	4/0/2	0	0/0/0	6
Northern Powergrid	0	0/0/0	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	1
Northumberland County Council	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	1
Oxfordshire County Council	2	2/0/0	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	2
Peninsula Transport	0	0/0/0	1	0/0/1	0	0/0/0	1
Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB)	0	0/0/0	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	1
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	1	1/0/0	1
Scottish Power (England operations)	0	0/0/0	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	1
South Tyneside Council	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	1
South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA)	9	8/0/1	6	5/0/1	0	0/0/0	15
Southeastern Railway	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	1
Sub-national Transport Bodies	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	1	1/0/0	2
Sunderland City Council	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	1
Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA)	2	1/0/1	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	2
Transport East	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	1

Requesting Authority	September 2023 - May 2025						
	Bronze	Fulfilled/In Process/Not Fulfilled	Silver	Fulfilled/In Process/Not Fulfilled	Gold	Fulfilled/In Process/Not Fulfilled	TOTAL
Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM)	13	12/0/1	2	1/0/1	0	0/0/0	15
Transport for the South East	1	1/0/0	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	2
Transport for Wales	0	0/0/0	1	0/0/1	0	0/0/0	1
Wakefield Council	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	1
Warrington Borough Council	3	3/0/0	0	0/0/0	0	0/0/0	3
West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA)	9	6/0/3	7	5/0/2	0	0/0/0	16
Western Gateway	0	0/0/0	1	0/0/1	0	0/0/0	1
Westmorland and Furness Council	6	5/0/1	2	1/0/1	0	0/0/0	8
York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (YNYCA)	0	0/0/0	1	1/0/0	0	0/0/0	1
Grand Total	116	106/0/10	63	45/1/17	7	2/0/5	186

Meeting:	Transport for the North Board
Subject:	Transpennine Route Upgrade Update
Author:	James Syson, Investment Sponsor Manager
Sponsor:	Katie Day, Deputy Chief Executive
Meeting Date:	Monday 23 June 2025

1. Purpose of the Report:

- 1.1 This report provides the background to a presentation on the Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) by James Richardson, Managing Director of TRU. The presentation slides can be found at Appendix 1.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Board:
1. Seeks assurance from the TRU programme that full compliance with accessibility standards is achieved at every station on the TRU core corridor in line with TfN's recent advice to the Secretary of State for Transport.
 2. Notes that the North of England Integration Steering Group (NoEISG) is considering service and/or infrastructure options to facilitate delivery of full benefits of the investment in TRU alongside other major infrastructure investments over the next 10 years.
 3. Notes that NoEISG is considering freight capacity and benefits in relation to TRU.

3. TransPennine Route Upgrade (TRU)

- 3.1 As the largest investment in the North's rail network (circa £11.5bn), employing more than 5,000 people across 70 active work sites, TRU is a transformative, long-term railway infrastructure programme that will support economic growth and deliver long term social and environmental benefits across the North. An update will be provided by Network Rail at the Board meeting and will focus on:
- Programme benefits for the North's rail network (e.g. improved journey times and performance, additional capacity for more passenger and freight services, enhanced and new stations, electrification, and new rolling stock),
 - The social impact and added value of TRU investment,
 - Decisions yet to be made about the scope and remit of the programme, including station investment and the timeline for these, and when further funding commitments can be expected for the remainder of the programme,
 - TRU's relationship and integration with the wider North of England rail investment programme.

4. Considerations

- 4.1 Whilst excellent progress is being made on the development and delivery of TRU, there are three issues which the TfN executive is currently trying to resolve in collaboration with the TRU programme, supported by the TRU Stakeholder Forum.

Station Accessibility

- 4.2 Accessibility for all to the North's rail system and services has become a top priority for the Rail North Committee and is essential to improving social equality and enabling the North's economic growth.
- 4.3 Whilst the majority of stations on the core TRU corridor will receive funding to offer customers step free access from street to platform, there are two stations (Micklefield and East Garforth) where step free access does not comply to modern accessibility standards. Also, there is one station (Church Fenton) where funding is not currently allocated in the programme to provide a step-free solution to all platforms.
- 4.4 The TfN executive chairs the TRU Stakeholder Forum and has formally raised this issue at the TRU Programme Board, reiterating the priority placed on an accessible transport system by Northern leaders. We are currently working with the TRU programme and partner authorities to develop the strategic and economic case to secure the required investment through a TRU Stations Fund.

Delivering train service outcomes in full

- 4.5 Recent concept timetable planning work undertaken by Network Rail has confirmed that whilst the TRU corridor in isolation can perform well, there are a number of significant network constraints both east and west of the TRU core, including the East Coast Mainline (ECML) and central Manchester.
- 4.6 This means the current funded scope of the TRU programme will not be sufficient to enable the intended passenger and freight service outputs to be delivered in full. It is therefore likely that additional infrastructure interventions or timetable compromises will be required to integrate the desired mix of TRU passenger and freight services with wider network ambitions.
- 4.7 The North of England has a growing list of examples where service changes resulting from infrastructure investment has led to the compromise of local services, where additional, facilitating infrastructure has not been provided, or where programme benefits cannot be fully realised.
- 4.8 Ensuring the seamless integration of TRU services into the North's rail network is now being managed through the recently revised North of England Integration Steering Group (NoEISG), which has representation from TfN and partners. The Group's remit includes HS2 Phase 1 and associated service changes on the West Coast Mainline, Manchester and North West Transformation Programme (MNTP) and TRU integration in the early 2030s. This work is being supported by TfN through our work on the 'State of Play and Investment Overview' which alongside Network Rail's Long-Term Strategic Planning activity are collectively providing all the elements needed to formulate "One Plan" for the North's railway; an update on which was presented at the Rail North Committee on 10th June.

Securing TRU freight benefits in full

- 4.9 TRU's Programme Business Case remits TRU to facilitate 15 additional freight paths per day in each direction to enable growth in cross-Pennine intermodal freight traffic. The delivery of these additional freight paths will significantly impact the railway system both within and beyond the TRU corridor.
- 4.10 Whilst work to improve capacity for freight services on the core corridor and enhance gauge clearances of structures to support the movement of container traffic is in very good shape, it is currently unknown whether this capability can be fully utilised by freight operators without further enhancements or changes elsewhere on the network. Ultimately, until additional work is undertaken to explore potential challenges beyond the TRU core corridor, there remains a risk

that end-to-end freight paths serving the North's ports and inland freight terminals cannot be realised.

- 4.10 The NoEISG is currently examining the issue. Given the North's ambition to treble rail freight share by 2050, it is critical that a clear plan is developed to identify and resolve possible capacity constraints and impacts from the extra tonnage beyond the TRU corridor, requirements for engineering access and operational hours, and any level crossing and power supply risks to ensure TRU freight benefits can be delivered in full.

5. Next steps

- 5.1 Regular updates on progress with the delivery of TRU will be provided by Network Rail at future meetings of the Board. The Rail North Committee (and rail officers) will continue to be engaged on the issues identified to inform the work of the NoEISG and TRU programme.
- 5.2 TfN has already offered assistance and data/evidence to support any additional interventions necessary to unlock TRU benefits in full and secure train service outcomes, including freight.

6. Corporate Considerations

Financial Implications

- 6.1 Other than the resource implications, which have been considered as part of the 2025/26 business planning process, there are no direct cost implications to TfN.

Resource Implications

- 6.2 The resourcing implications in relation to supporting TRU are included within TfN's 2025/26 Business Plan.

Legal Implications

- 6.3 Any legal implications are contained within this report.

Risk Management and Key Issues

- 6.4 This paper does not require a risk assessment. TfN's Corporate Risk Register includes risks associated with TRU.

Environmental Implications

- 6.5 All proposed infrastructure developments will be subject to screening for the need for EIA by the TRU programme as part of the design development and consenting process. Both passenger rail and rail freight have an essential part to play in achieving our decarbonisation objectives within TfN's Strategic Transport Plan, particularly around reducing private car vehicle mileage.

Equality and Diversity

- 6.6 Equality Impact Assessments may be required for individual schemes in the programme and, where appropriate, will be undertaken by the relevant delivery partner.

Consultations

- 6.7 None

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – TRU Presentation from Network Rail

Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used

<i>TRU</i>	<i>TransPennine Route Upgrade</i>
<i>TfN</i>	<i>Transport for the North</i>
<i>ECML</i>	<i>East Coast Mainline</i>
<i>NoEISG</i>	<i>North of England Integration Steering Group</i>
<i>MNTP</i>	<i>Manchester and North West Transformation Programme</i>
<i>EIA</i>	<i>Equality Impact Assessment</i>

Transpennine Route Upgrade

Annual Update to Transport for the North

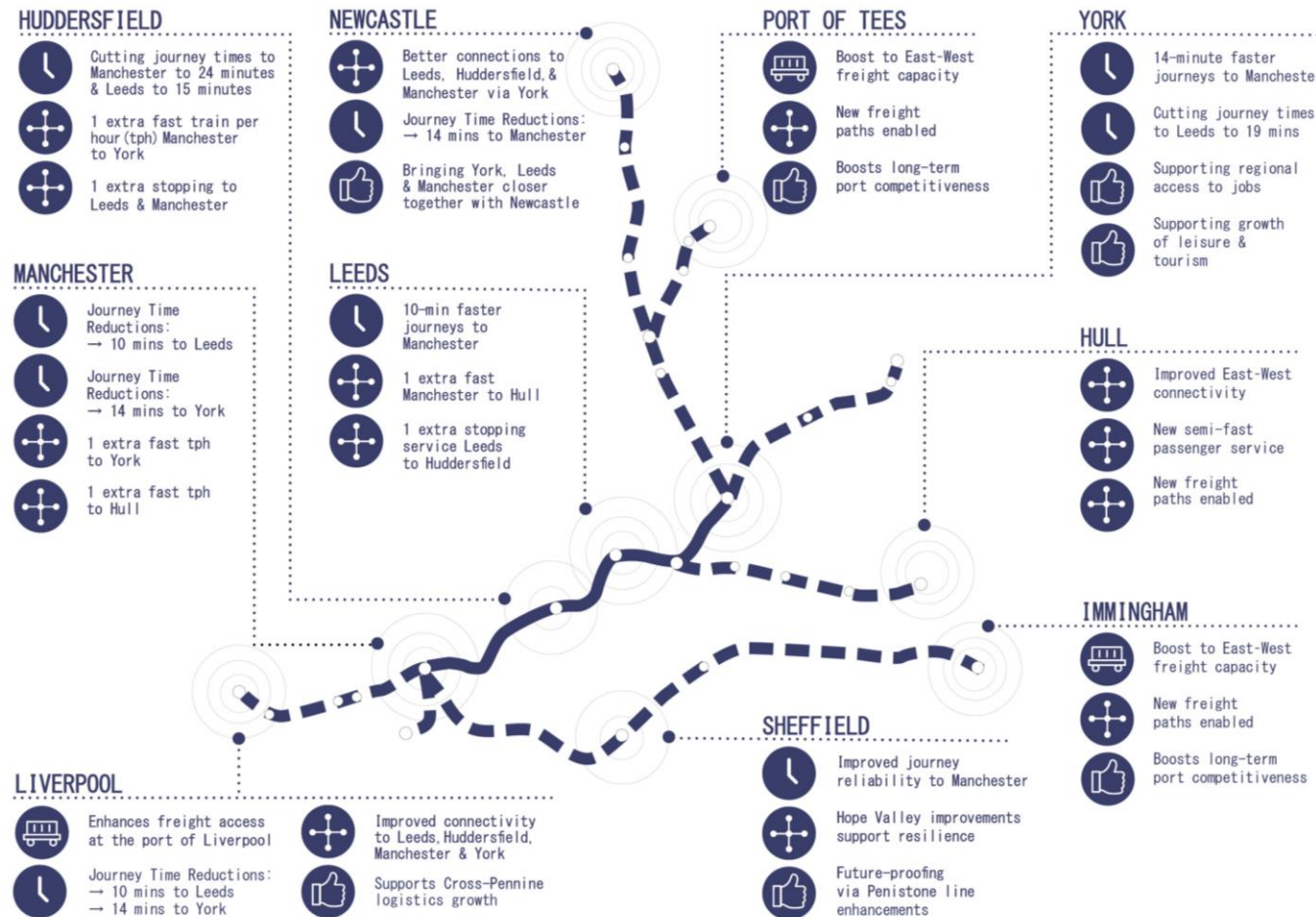
James Richardson, TRU MD, June 23, 2025

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Connecting a growing, resurging North

Rail investment across the North is more than infrastructure — it's a catalyst for growth, connecting towns and cities, unlocking opportunity, regenerating places, and supporting a stronger, resurging North



Driving growth by connecting the north

This is about long-term economic uplift. We're boosting passenger capacity over 30% across the Pennines — every upgraded station, every electrified mile, and every improved, more reliable journey, helps revitalise local economies and strengthen connections between places.

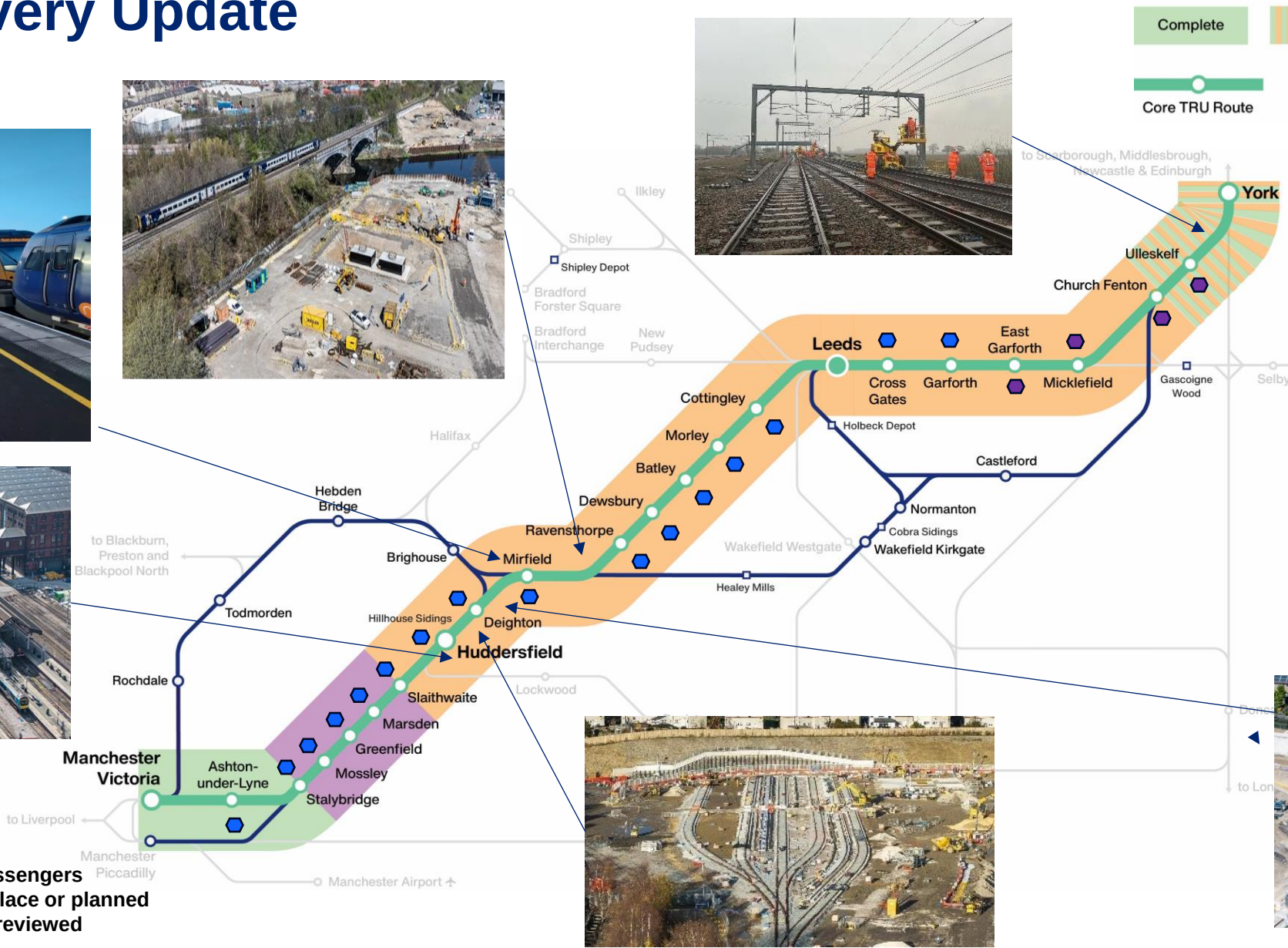
Building skills, pride & a legacy for the future

The investment brings skilled jobs, apprenticeships, and a lasting skills base to match the North's ambition.

TRU brings 8000 jobs at peak, 500+ apprentices, £700m+ local supply chain boost and a long-term skills pipeline, supporting future infrastructure delivery

TRU Delivery Update

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Currently £1bn / year spend with over 5000 people engaged on the programme on 70 sites across the Pennines

Track renewals completed to date

- West 18,300M
- East 17,000M
- Central 4,000M

Works in development

- European Train Control System
- Freight Capacity Encasements
- Huddersfield to Stalybridge

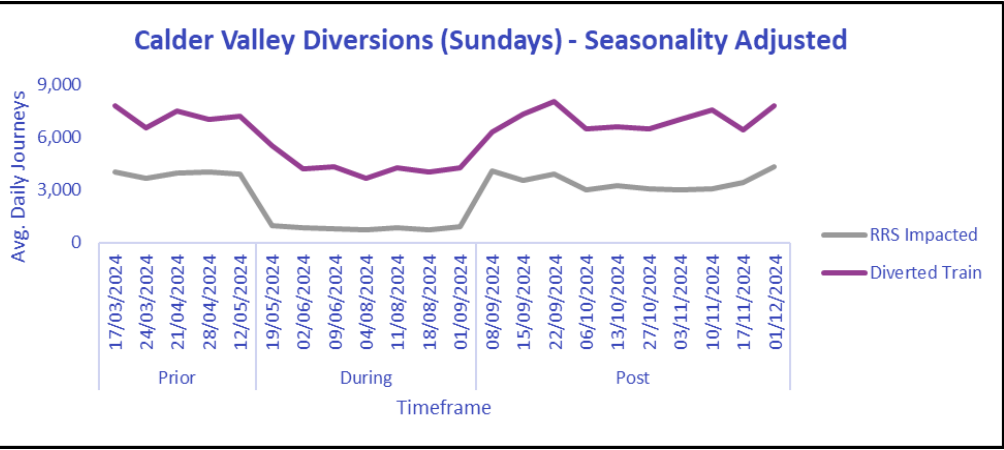
Train Procurement is underway for both TPE and Northern



Step free stations for passengers

- Provision already in place or planned
- Business case being reviewed

Keeping passengers moving during disruption



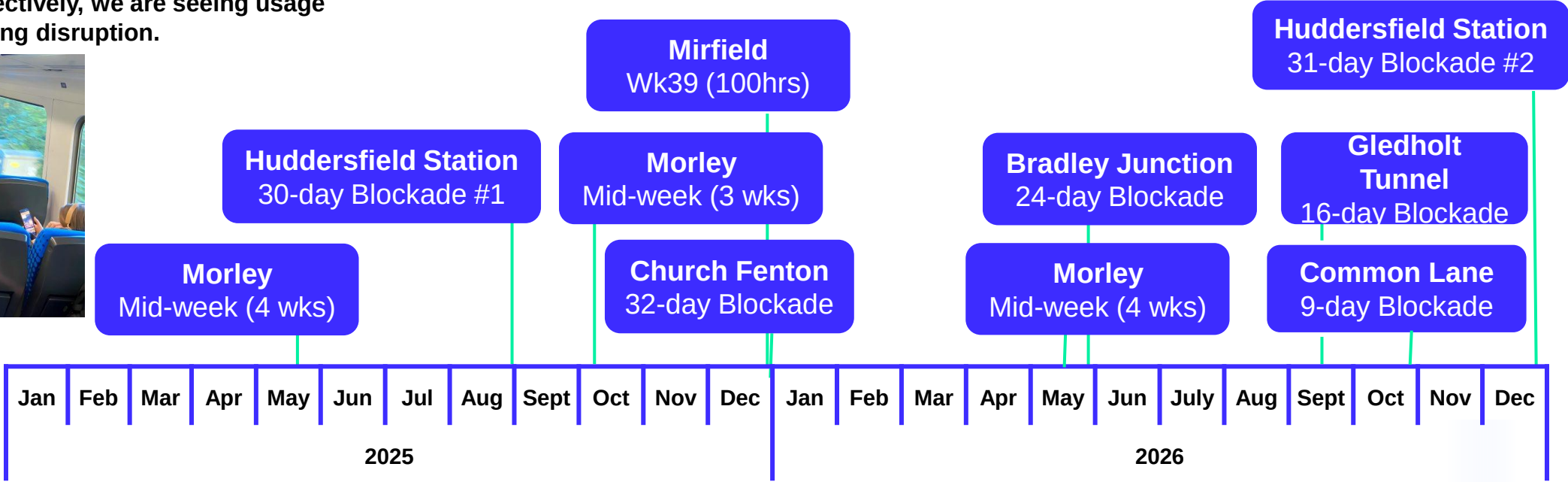
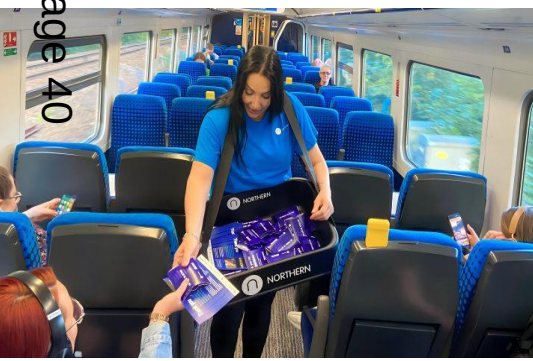
Significant improvement with 68/100 customer satisfaction score over the last 12 months across awareness, informed, communication quality, staff engagement and signage during disruptions

Actions to help the passenger during disruption

- Understanding our passengers, by engaging through multiple formats
- Development of customer handling plans that focus on local needs
- Improving rail replacement transitions, including signage and deploying a dedicated 30-strong team of customer delivery managers, at key locations
- Pre and post disruption communication across physical and digital formats
- Quick wins for passengers – post disruption, ie limited lo-cost improvements

Due to the long-term disruption of TRU, we are focusing on communicating the progressive benefits passenger will experience

By managing disruption effectively, we are seeing usage bounce back quickly following disruption.



Skills and opportunities for the Future

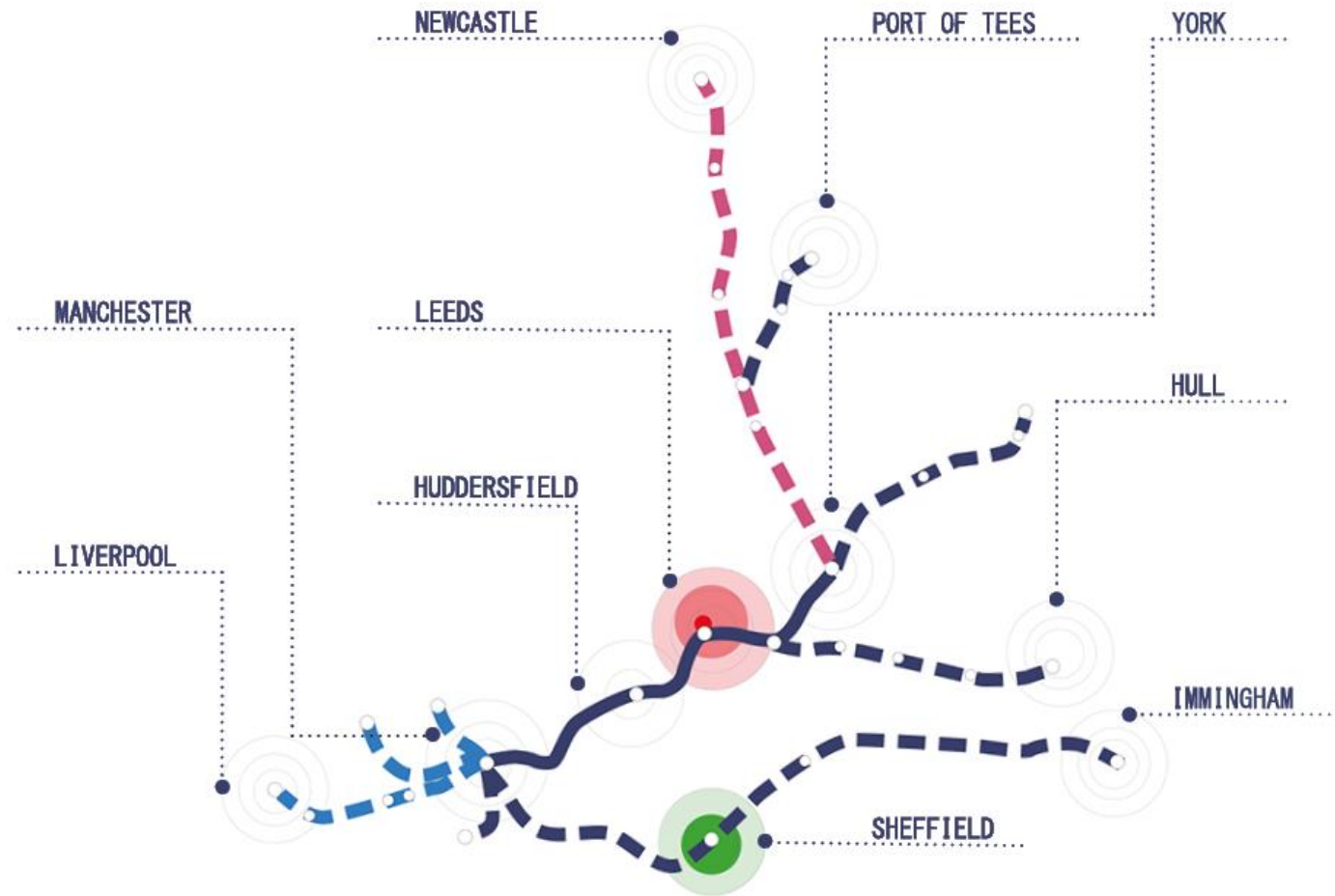
- £3.3bn spend to date, with £724m through local business and £334m with SMEs
- 5000 skilled people employed, including 372 apprentices
- 60,000 children engaged via STEM
- Adults have gained insight into potential careers in construction via 4,601 days on workplace placements
- 7000 people trained in workplace operations at our dedicated TRUST (TRU Safety Training) centre and 30 plant operators a month are being trained at the newly-opened virtual skills hub
- Evidence of the long-term economic social benefits of TRU – a recent study identified a £670M development pipeline in Huddersfield since 2020 when TRU was confirmed

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Rail Investment Integration Across the North

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Rail improvements TRU will interface with across the North

Manchester and North West Transformation Programme (MNTP)

Leeds Area Improvement Plan (LAIP) & Leeds Existing Station Programme (LESP)

Sheffield Area Plan

East Coast Mainline

West Coast Mainline North (Trilink)

Northern Rolling Stock Procurement

Concept Timetable 3

Maximising the Benefits of TRU for the North



1. TRU will improve connectivity, ensure quicker and more reliable journeys and increase capacity across the North of England. This is already bringing economic benefits and attracting private sector investment.
2. There remains strong commitment to the programme and the next funding commitments needed will be:
 - Rolling stock
 - Huddersfield to Stalybridge
 - Freight Capacity Enhancements
 - ETCS Delivery
3. The TRU outcomes need delivery of several adjoining schemes including:
 - Manchester Piccadilly Station platforms
 - Leeds Station Platforms
 - Eccles Loop & Patricroft Loop (tbc)
4. To optimise the outcomes of TRU and wider rail investment across the North of England, it is critical that there is a fully integrated approach to address conflicts in delivery and service outcomes and support increased passenger and freight usage.
5. TRU is building the capability and capacity needed to deliver major programmes, supporting the future infrastructure plans for the North of England.



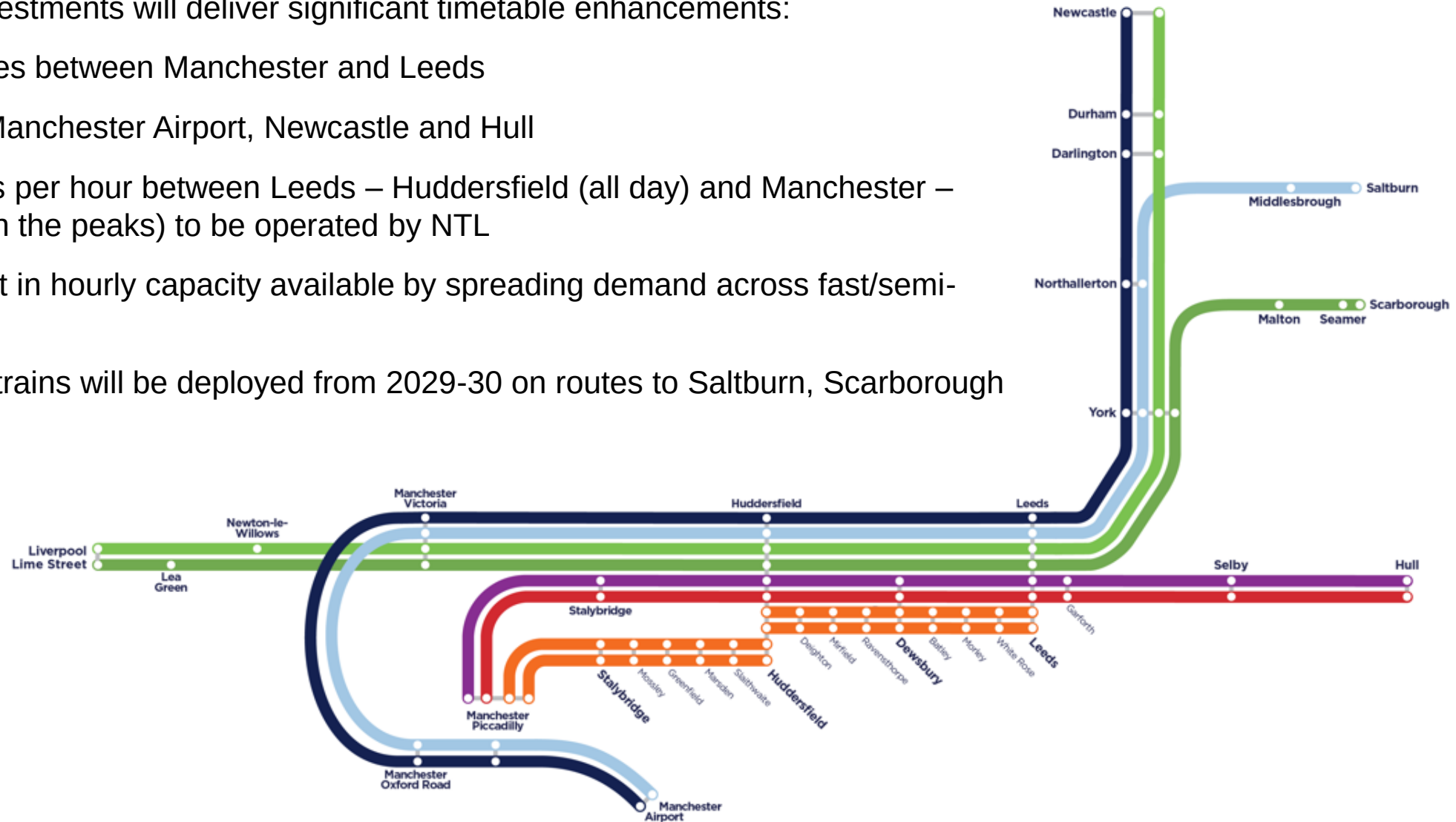
Appendix



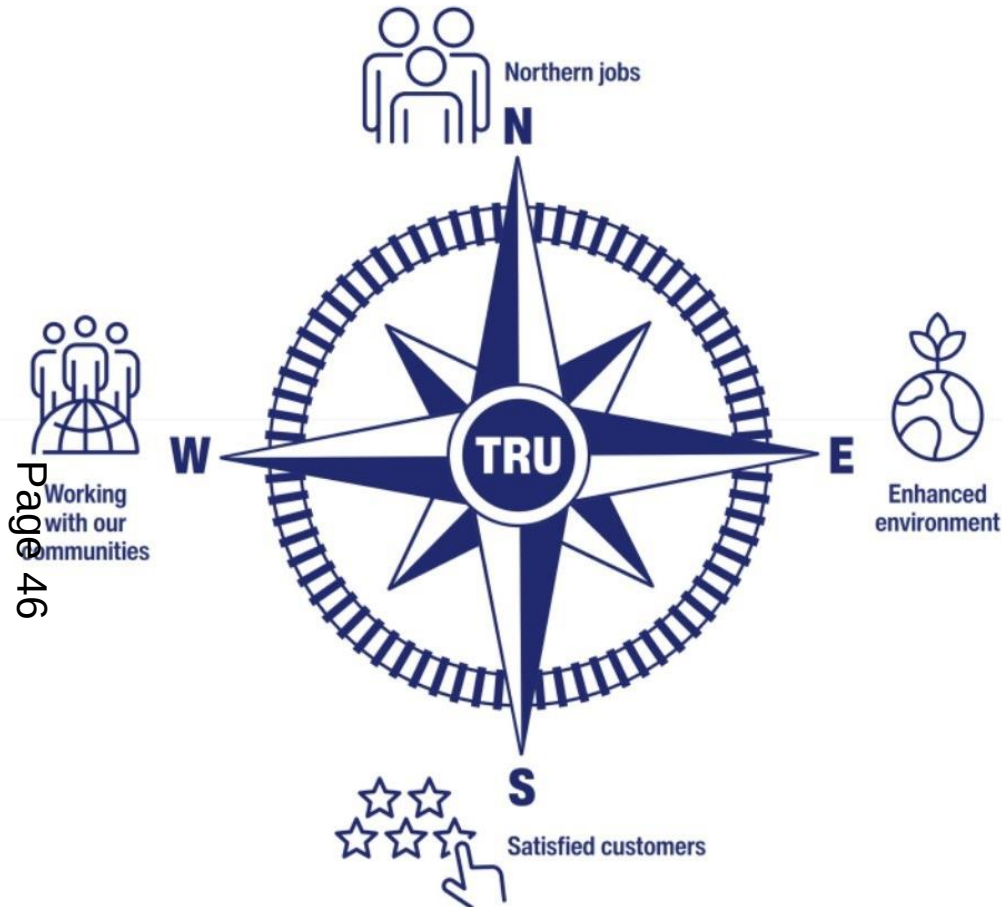
TRU's wider impact across the north

TRU and wider planned investments will deliver significant timetable enhancements:

- Six fast/semi-fast services between Manchester and Leeds
- Improved links to/from Manchester Airport, Newcastle and Hull
- Two local stopping trains per hour between Leeds – Huddersfield (all day) and Manchester – Huddersfield (primarily in the peaks) to be operated by NTL
- Substantial improvement in hourly capacity available by spreading demand across fast/semi-fast/local services
- Assumption is that new trains will be deployed from 2029-30 on routes to Saltburn, Scarborough and Hull



Sustainability & Community Impact - our latest



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£724m spent with
local businesses

197 graduates

4,601 days adult
work experience

£334m spent with
SMEs

77 interns

59,460 children
engaged in
STEAM

1,096 community
and school
engagement
events

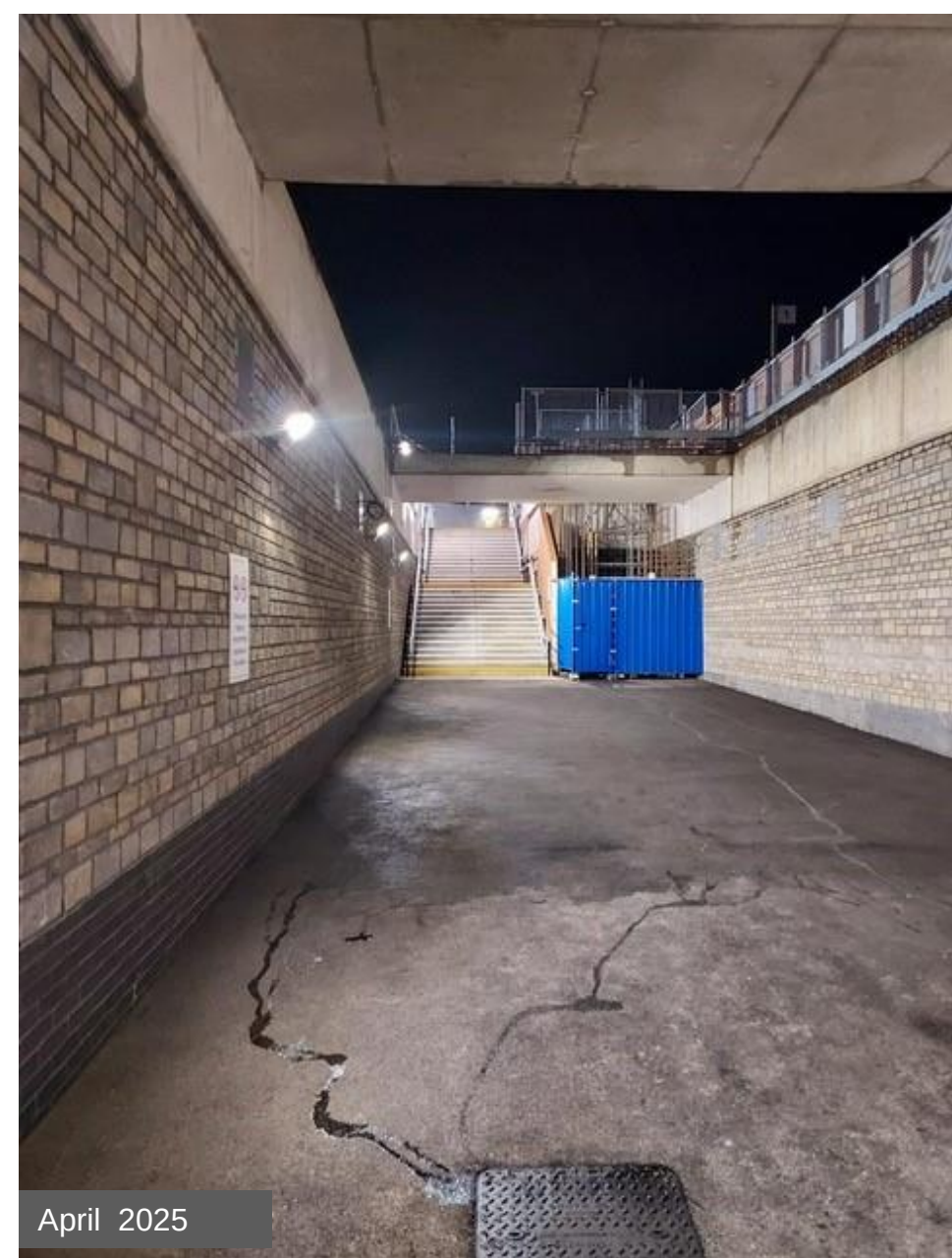
372/590
Apprentices

15,856 days
young person
work experiences

17,632 hours
volunteering

Mirfield Station New Concourse

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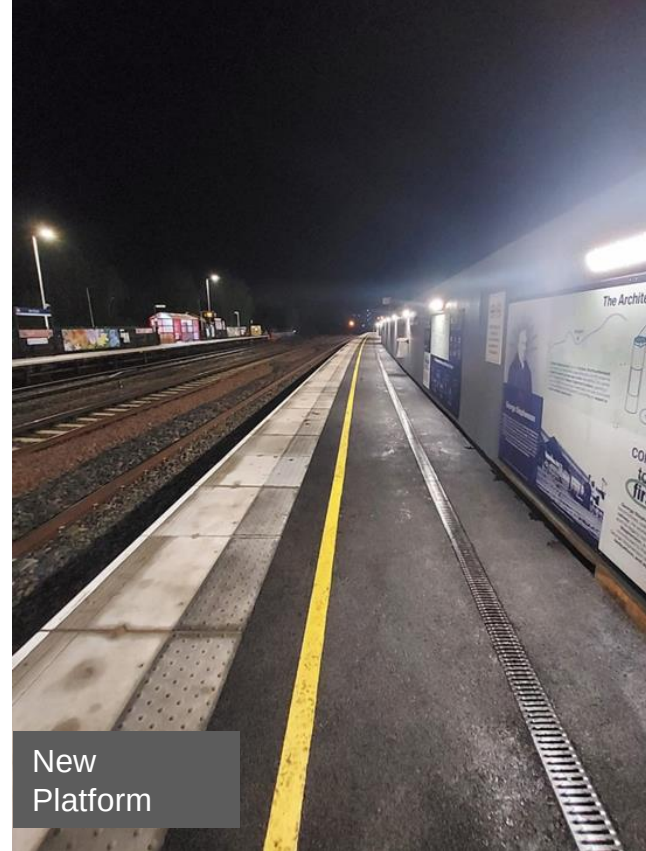


Mirfield Station

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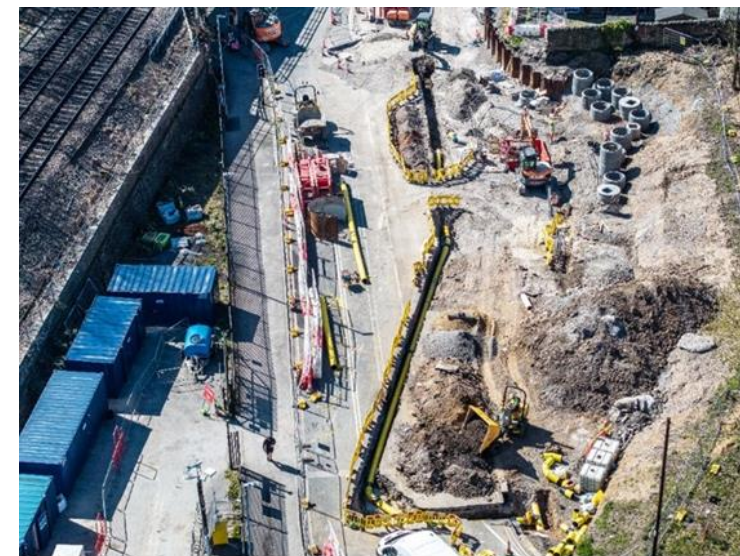
Huddersfield Station - newly revealed Manchester end gable



Uppermill Track Renewal 748m off-line tie-in)



Aerial View of Baker Viaduct Piers 5 to 8



Gas and water service diversions at Weaving Lane

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Meeting:	Transport for the North Board
Subject:	Governance Report
Author:	Joanne Barclay, Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Sponsor:	Martin Tugwell, Chief Executive
Meeting Date:	Monday 23 June 2025

1. Purpose of the Report:

- 1.1 To provide Board with Transport for the North's Calendar of Meetings for the municipal year 2025 /2026.
- 1.2 To approve the appointment of an interim Section 151 Officer and note the associated working arrangements.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 That the Calendar of Meetings set out in Appendix 1 be noted (these may be subject to change where necessary after consultation with the relevant Committee Chairs);
- 2.2 That Board approves the appointment of an interim Section 151 Officer and notes the associated working arrangements.

3. Calendar of Meetings

- 3.1 Board is invited to note the Calendar of Meetings set out at Appendix 1.

4. Appointment of an interim Section 151 Officer and associated working arrangements

- 4.1 Transport for the North's current Section 151 Officer/Finance Director has handed in his resignation and will be leaving on 11 July 2025.
- 4.2 The Chief Executive has consulted and agreed with senior staff interim Section 151 Officer arrangements, which it is proposed will be in place until 31 March 2026. These arrangements will be kept under review and amended if circumstances require.
- 4.3 The reason for putting interim arrangements in place and not undertaking a recruitment exercise for the appointment of a Section 151 Officer/Finance Director is to afford sufficient time for further consideration of the most appropriate senior leadership structure for TfN moving forward. This is consistent with other interim arrangements that are already in place at Director level.
- 4.4 These arrangements build on, and make, the maximum use of existing knowledge and capability within the Finance and other teams to ensure continuity of service and minimise disruption.
- 4.5 During these interim arrangements, it is proposed that Lisa Pitt (Transport for the North's Management and Financial Accountant and Deputy Section 151 Officer) will be appointed as Transport for the North's interim Section 151 Officer. The postholder has the necessary qualifications to undertake this statutory role and has been with Transport for the North since 2016.
- 4.6 The interim Section 151 Officer will be supported by a part-time Interim Finance Director, Keith Mitchell, who is suitably qualified and an experienced finance professional with Section 151 experience. He has been appointed via a services

contract and has already commenced his role to ensure that there is a smooth transition and handover from the existing Section 151 Officer / Finance Director. The currently anticipated utilisation is up to 3 days a week.

4.7 During periods when the interim S151 Officer is on leave, the role and responsibilities of the S151 Officer will reside with the supporting Interim Finance Director.

4.8 On the assumption the utilisation of Interim Finance Director will be 3 days per week, the incremental cost of this solution to 31 March 2026 is c£30,000. This is anticipated to be accommodated within the delegated budget envelope.

5. Corporate Considerations

Financial Implications

5.1 The financial implications are detailed above.

Resource Implications

5.2 The resource implications are as set out in the report above.

Legal Implications

5.3 Legal implications are included within the report.

Risk Management and Key Issues

5.4 There are no specific risk implications arising from this report.

Environmental Implications

5.5 None.

Equality and Diversity

5.6 The nominations process welcomes applications from all persons with the necessary skills and experience. Equality and diversity implications have been considered and addressed through the recruitment process.

Consultations

5.7 None.

6. Background Papers

6.1 None.

7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1 – Calendar of Meetings.

Q1**Executive Board**Thursday 15 May
1pm – 3pm

Chester

Scutiny CommitteeThursday 5 June 2025
11am – 1pm

Leeds

Rail North CommitteeTuesday 10 June 2025
11am – 1pm

Bradford

TfN BoardMonday 23 June 2025
1pm – 3pm

Liverpool

Q2**Executive Board**Thursday 10 July 2025
1pm – 3pm

Virtual

General Purposes CommitteeWednesday 16 July 2025
1pm – 3pm

Virtual

Audit and GovernanceFriday 18 July 2025
11am – 1pm

tbc

Partnership BoardMonday 21 July 2025
1pm – 3pm

Virtual

Rail North CommitteeMonday 1 September 2025
11am – 1pm

tbc

Scutiny CommitteeThursday 4 September 2025
11am – 1pm

tbc

Audit and GovernanceFriday 5 September 2025
11am – 1pm

tbc

Executive BoardThursday 11 September
1pm – 3pm

Virtual

TfN BoardMonday 15 September 2025
1pm – 3pm

Darlington

Q3**General Purposes Committee**Wednesday 22 October 2025
1pm – 3pm

Virtual

Executive BoardThursday 13 November 2025
1pm – 3pm

Virtual

Scutiny CommitteeThursday 20 November 2025
11am – 1pm

Virtual

Rail North CommitteeTuesday 25 November 2025
11am – 1pm

tbc

Audit and GovernanceFriday 5 December 2025
11am – 1pm

tbc

TfN BoardMonday 8 December
1pm – 3pm

Manchester

Q4**Executive Board**Thursday 15 January 2026
1pm – 3pm

Virtual

Partnership BoardMonday 26 January 2026
1pm – 3pm

Virtual

General Purposes CommitteeWednesday 4 February 2026
1pm – 3pm

tbc

Rail North CommitteeTuesday 17 February 2026
11am – 1pm

tbc

Scutiny CommitteeThursday 26 February 2026
11am – 1pm

Manchester

Executive BoardThursday 5 March 2026
1pm – 3pm

tbc

Audit and GovernanceFriday 6 March 2026
1pm – 3pm

tbc

TfN BoardMonday 16 March 2026
1pm – 3pm

Sheffield

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Meeting:	Transport for the North Board
Subject:	Rail North Committee Update
Author:	David Hoggarth, Head of Strategic Rail
Sponsor:	Katie Day, Deputy Chief Executive
Meeting Date:	Monday 23 June 2025

1. Purpose of the Report:

- 1.1 To provide the Board with feedback on the matters discussed at the Rail North Committee meeting on 10 June 2025 held in Bradford.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 For the Board to note the feedback from the Rail North Committee.

3. Overview:

- 3.1 At the meeting, appointments were made for the Chair and the Vice Chair (Mayor Burnham and Cllr Hinchcliffe respectively) for the municipal year. The meeting was focused on current train operator performance and discussed the Committee's priority areas of work for the year ahead, as set out in this report.

4. Statutory Advice: Rail Station Accessibility

- 4.1 The Committee was updated on the recently submitted Statutory Advice on improving rail station accessibility. The advice to the Secretary of State marked the culmination of the first stage of work by the Committee to raise the profile (supported by evidence) of the poor accessibility of the North's railway stations. The advice makes the case for additional funding to enable 'quick wins', as well as seeking the devolution of existing funding streams to the North. It draws on research undertaken by TfN including criteria developed by the Committee for prioritising schemes based on local needs. The work has demonstrated how greater local involvement can enable better outcomes for passengers.
- 4.2 Members noted the scale of the challenge (and timescales) to address in order to deliver their ambition. They have requested further advice on international comparators where innovation has enabled cost effective delivery of accessibility improvements more quickly. In addition, the Committee set out its ambitions for level-boarding, given the procurement of new trains underway for the North.

5. Devolution and Integration of Rail in the North

- 5.1 The Committee discussed the benefits that devolution (via an existing, mature partnership) has already brought to the North (for example, shining a spotlight on accessibility and performance issues) and the further benefits that could be realised with greater devolution to Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) in the future.
- 5.2 Members highlighted the need for a mechanism that enables them to work collectively, where needed, on cross-boundary rail matters in the North. They requested that TfN officers work with partners to map out what a place-based approach to a reformed rail industry in the North could look like, building on the ambitions and proposals of MCAs. We expect to report back at the Committee meeting in September. It is planned to invite the Chair of Shadow Great British Railways (GBR) to a future meeting to discuss the North's priorities.

5.3 Tricia Williams (Managing Director) and Matt Rice (Chief Operating Officer) from Northern Trains (NTL) provided the Committee with an update on progress with their Performance Improvement Programme. They highlighted the focus on Sunday services and ongoing discussions to transform the business and working arrangements into a full 7-day railway. They highlighted the stability that the reduced Sunday timetable had brought but recognised that services needed to be restored as soon as possible. They also highlighted their wider initiatives to deliver 90% of services within 3 minutes of planned arrival time and 2% cancellations. Members highlighted concerns as to whether the industry has the capacity to plan for and accommodate future growth in passengers, citing experience of overcrowding and stressed the need to restore full Sunday services as the key first step to the rail sector supporting the Northern economy.

5.4 Chris Jackson of TransPennine Trains (TPT) provided an update on progress with the recovery programme since the company was brought into public ownership nearly two years ago. Services have been restored, performance stabilised and the last year had seen a 12% growth in passenger journeys and a significant reduction in cancellations. Chris highlighted that there is still more work to do on the transformation but thanked the Committee for their support in enabling the business to put in place the measures that have allowed the recovery to take place. Members raised issues around crowding and stressed the importance of ensuring consistency/quality of replacement buses used during blockades – both of which Chris agreed to share further analysis/data with members on as necessary.

6. Rolling Stock Strategy

6.1 The report highlighted the ongoing procurement of 29 new trains for TPT (as part of the TRU programme) and up to 450 new trains for NTL. Members welcomed the work underway to secure new trains for the North. They requested an ongoing role in the specification of the trains, particularly as MCAs look to create more integrated transport services: ensuring consistency in passenger experiences across all modes, including rail, is seen as part of that ambition. Members also highlighted current rolling stock challenges (capacity and reliability) arising from an aging fleet, noting that advice will be forthcoming on this matter separately.

7. Infrastructure Update

7.1 The Committee received an update on the substantial investment programme in rail infrastructure in the North. TfN had worked with partners and Network Rail to provide, for the first time, a single overview of investment in the North over the next 25 years. The 'one plan' for enhancement of the North's rail network responds to a request from the Committee for a single overview that links service changes to infrastructure upgrades. As such, this provides a starting point for the transition to more joined up arrangements under GBR. Members strongly endorsed the work and welcomed its clarity. They requested that partner aspirations are included as well as known commitments and acknowledged that this work would help inform choices/options as investment plans are shaped and delivered, where needed.

8. Rail North Partnership Operational Update

8.1 The Committee noted the delivery and performance updates from the main operators serving the North. Members were keen to continue engagement with those operators including Avanti West Coast and Cross Country at future meetings.

9. Corporate Considerations

Financial Implications

- 9.1 There are no financial implications for TfN as a result of this report.

Resource Implications

- 9.2 There are no new resourcing implications for TfN as a result of this report.

Legal Implications

- 9.3 There are no legal implications for TfN. The Rail North Partnership manages the agreements with the train operators (NTL and TPT) in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Partnership Agreement between TfN and the Department for Transport.

Risk Management and Key Issues

- 9.4 There are several corporate level risks which relate to the content of this report. These include:
- With significant investment in the North's railway system underway/planned and given the interdependencies, there is a risk that individual programmes are not aligned and expected benefits not realised. This is being managed through the work highlighted at paragraph 7.1 above.
 - There is a risk that the North's role in the rail industry following rail reform could result in a suboptimal outcome in supporting sustainable and inclusive growth. The work agreed by the Committee (as per paragraph 5.1) is a mitigating action against this risk.

Environmental Implications

- 9.5 This report does not constitute or influence a plan or programme which sets the framework for future development consents of projects listed in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive and therefore does not stimulate the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or EIA. Any infrastructure proposals to improve the capacity and reliability of the system will be subject (where appropriate) to EIA Screening, conducted by Network Rail as part of the consenting process for those projects.
- 9.6 Passenger rail has an essential part to play in achieving TfN's decarbonisation objectives within TfN's Strategic Transport Plan, particularly around reducing private car vehicle mileage.

Equality and Diversity

- 9.7 There are no specific implications as a result of this report. Industry and operators are expected to undertake appropriate assessments on individual projects and proposals, where required.

Consultations

- 9.8 There are no specific consultations required as part of this report

10. Background Papers

- 10.1 None.

11. Appendices

- 11.1 None.

Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used

<i>MCA</i>	<i>Mayoral Combined Authority</i>
<i>GBR</i>	<i>Great British Railway</i>
<i>NTL</i>	<i>Northern Trains</i>
<i>TPT</i>	<i>TransPennine Trains</i>
<i>EIA</i>	<i>Equality Impact Assessment</i>
<i>SEA</i>	<i>Strategic Environmental Assessment</i>