



# Chief Executive's Report

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April to August 2026



## Introduction

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# A new Transport for the North, focused on delivering for our members



**Katie Day**  
Chief Executive (interim)

**We are changing to become a strategic transport body that is more responsive, trusted and transparent, delivery-focused and led by the North's mayors and leaders.**

This new report — intended to show clearly what we are working on and how we are supporting our members — is an important step on our change journey. We are reforming our functions, form and funding arrangements, to become more efficient and with a sharper focus on pan-northern transport priorities that help unlock good growth. And we hope this report gives our elected members, partners and stakeholders greater transparency of and insight into, our activities and impact, as well as acting as a catalyst for feedback so we can work even better together.

Our change journey began last year. Already, we have restructured, reduced costs, reviewed our ways of working and begun building a leaner, more sustainable organisation. I want to recognise the professionalism, resilience and commitment Transport for the North (TfN) colleagues continue to show every day; as well as the direction and support given by our Board members and the collaboration with their officers to shape our plan for change. While we make that plan a reality for our organisation, we remain firmly focused on the priorities our Board have set for us in our annual business plan for pan-northern transport.

We are helping our partners deliver Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR), integrate major rail investment and services across the Pennines, and secure investment in our Strategic Road Network to achieve better connectivity outcomes for the people and places across the North. Alongside this, we are developing our technical and analytical service offer to our members and partners. Our work on the NPR Programme Business Case has enabled us to build a comprehensive analytical framework, with a range of tools and case-making expertise that we are increasingly making available to our elected members and their teams to help progress investment in their regions.

Our September Board agenda shows our priorities in action. We have invited senior leaders from National Highways, as well as Network Rail's Transpennine Route Upgrade programme to join the meeting. Our members have asked us to help convene partners across the North to work on multi-boundary transport and connectivity supporting informed discussion and so, together, ensuring that national programmes reflect the North's priorities and ambitions.

We are excited to be changing and evolving to support and add value to, our mayors and leaders as they drive forward the benefits of greater devolution across the North. With the Northern Growth Strategy setting the national ambition for our region, NPR moving forward and The Great North driving inward investment, this is a great time to be in the North of England.

# At a glance

We have made good progress between April and August against the deliverables in our 2026/27 business plan, with most activity on track. Highlights include:

- We are making our data, tools and technical support easier for members to access and use, including via a refreshed website
- Engaging with the North’s combined authorities to better understand their technical needs, especially for business cases and local evidence, so we can put the right support in place
- Continuing to work with the Rail North Committee (RNC), including welcoming new elected members to the Committee and ensuring members can collectively influence pan-northern rail services and performance – especially in light of recent disruptions that have impacted customers using the network
- Stepping up our work, with the Department for Transport and the North’s combined authorities on the NPR Programme Business Case to help secure investment.

| Deliverable area                                 | RAG                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Enabling delivery: TfN Offer                     |    |
| Working collectively on pan-northern rail issues |    |
| Securing pan-northern investment                 |    |
| Organisational development                       |  |

| 10 deliverables                                                                             |                                                                                               |                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  0 Red |  4 Amber |  6 Green |

RAG: project status indicator (Red, Amber, Green).

| Deliverable                                                                                                                 | RAG | Progress                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Key risks and issues                                                                                                      | Next steps                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Enabling delivery: TfN Offer                                                                                                |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 1. Maintain access to the TfN Offer self-service data and tools                                                             | ✔   | Soft launch of refreshed TfN website and Northern Insights and Intelligence Hub giving members easier access to data, insight, tools, dashboards, reports, meeting papers and governance information. Published resources have been reduced from 226 to 42, creating a more focused, up-to-date set of clearer resources shaped around what members need.                                                               | No immediate risks identified. Feedback from the soft launch will need to be reviewed and acted on.                       | Continue reviewing the Hub and website content, gather member and partner feedback, and use this to shape future improvements.                                                                                                                                      |
| 2. Deliver data and evidence to support business case development and plan making                                           | ✔   | Completed 51 partner requests between 1 April and 31 July, including 22 self-service and 29 bespoke requests. Support included Key Route Network analysis, carbon and climate monitoring, EV policy modelling and accessibility analysis for several combined authority members. Partner interest in TfN's digital services offer is also growing, with further work needed on our operating model to support delivery. | Demand for TfN support is increasing and may exceed available capacity if not prioritised.                                | Continue practical member support, strengthen technical capability and build a future pipeline, with a suitable operating model, focused on highest value add for members.                                                                                          |
| 3. Support place-based business case pilots and disseminate best practice across the North                                  | ✔   | Agreement secured to work with HM Treasury and National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority (NISTA) on place-based business case guidance, giving members an early route to influence national guidance.                                                                                                                                                                                                | Engagement with HM Treasury and NISTA may not progress quickly enough to influence the guidance.                          | Maintain regular engagement with HM Treasury and NISTA, share priorities with combined authorities and include opportunities in the future member support pipeline.                                                                                                 |
| Working collectively on pan-northern rail issues                                                                            |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 4. Through the Rail North Committee (RNC), continue to hold national bodies and operators to account on behalf of the North | ●   | RNC has continued to challenge on Northern and TransPennine Express (TPE) performance, Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) works and proposed East Midlands Railways (EMR) timetable changes affecting South Yorkshire. TRU customer satisfaction remained above target for the fifth consecutive period.                                                                                                                  | Operator performance, rolling stock, industrial relations, weather impacts and EMR service reductions remain live issues. | Secure support where needed for performance improvement initiatives, maintain focus on passenger impacts during TRU works and support EMR recovery plans.                                                                                                           |
| 5. Define new arrangements for pan-northern collaboration that complement Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA) partnerships    | ●   | Ongoing work, including a new rail information portal, to ensure members have access to rail data and TfN technical support as needed to help deliver local priorities. Discussions are ongoing with TfN Board members, DfT and rail industry on future arrangements to support pan-northern rail services and infrastructure.                                                                                          | Evolving rail reform policy, with clarity needed on GBR arrangements for the North.                                       | Develop options with members, refine the rail portal and agree priorities for partner-led delivery support.                                                                                                                                                         |
| 6. Support RNC in championing issues of pan-northern significance                                                           | ●   | Progress made on TPE's Full Business Case for 29 new TRU trains, Northern interim fleet improvements, accessibility reporting, the TRU Stakeholder Forum and North of England Integration planning/analysis with Network Rail.                                                                                                                                                                                          | Funding constraints mean improvements require strong evidence, scrutiny and justification.                                | Complete the rail services plan, launch the revised TRU Stakeholder Forum, begin inclusive station standards engagement and progress TPE and Northern fleet activity. Begin engagement on North of England integration work to support delivery of scheme benefits. |

| Deliverable                                                                                                      | RAG                                           | Progress                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Key risks and issues                                                                                                                                                          | Next steps                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Securing pan-northern investment                                                                                 |                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                   |
| 7. Deliver technical services commissioned by DfT in support of the Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) business case | <div><div></div><div></div><div>✓</div></div> | Provided modelling and analytical input to support the NPR Programme Business Case and Bradford New Station appraisal. Work progressed on updating the Northern Transport Modelling System and BRONTE, our land use model, which helps show the wider place and economic impacts of transport investment. We are also supporting the Manchester Piccadilly joint review with analytical input. | Limited early input created late alignment issues with northern strategic aims. National forecasting assumptions may not fully reflect long-term northern economic ambitions. | Strengthen the NPR business case, plan the next analytical framework and continue member engagement to test assumptions, evidence and priorities. |
| 8. Support delivery of strategic road proposals in nationally managed investment programmes                      | <div><div></div><div></div><div>✓</div></div> | Reviewed Road Investment Strategy (RIS) changes and continued engagement with National Highways and DfT on northern strategic road priorities including A19 Moor Farm and the A66.                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Changes to national spending could affect future road investment commitments.                                                                                                 | National Highways will attend the September Board meeting to update members and support discussion on road investment priorities.                 |
| 9. Provide pan-northern input to rail integration and long-term planning workstreams                             | <div><div></div><div></div><div>✓</div></div> | TfN has brought members into the North of England Integration work to help shape priorities and co-ordinate views from the North. Cheshire & Warrington Combined Authority is now included in the North West & Central long-term planning process.                                                                                                                                             | Work with industry on options for Manchester and East Coast Mainline (ECML) analysis to secure scheme benefits.                                                               | Continue work with partners and industry on integration this autumn and feed into North West and Central long-term planning from October.         |
| Organisational development                                                                                       |                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                   |
| 10. Develop and secure approval for a new business and funding model from April 2027                             | <div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>  | Work continues with members and DfT on our new operating and funding models.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Funding beyond March 2027 remains unconfirmed. Clear and transparent arrangements are needed quickly to ensure readiness for 2027/28 delivery.                                | Test funding options, confirm the decision pathway and prepare the contractual and governance documents needed for December 2026 and April 2027.  |

# Corporate support updates

Our corporate support functions are essential to delivering our business plan and managing our organisation effectively, including any risks.

We received substantial assurance from our IT cyber security audit, with no management actions required. This was shared with the TfN Audit & Governance Committee in June, who noted the positive outcome and encouraged continued vigilance.

We have refreshed our staff laptops, improving device performance, security and user experience. We’ve moved to direct purchase, as part of our ‘plan for change’ to be more efficient; this new arrangement has achieved significant cost savings while maintaining service standards.

## Our people

| Area                               | Permanent      | Fixed-Term   | Total Posts    |
|------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| NPR analytical services            | 26 (25.70 FTE) | -            | 26 (25.70 FTE) |
| Rail North Partnership             | 13 (12.80 FTE) | 3 (3.00 FTE) | 16 (15.80 FTE) |
| Pan-northern strategy and delivery | 24 (23.86 FTE) | -            | 24 (23.86 FTE) |
| Corporate Support                  | 15 (15.00 FTE) | -            | 15 (15.00 FTE) |
| Total Establishment                | 78 (77.36 FTE) | 3 (3.00 FTE) | 81 (80.36 FTE) |
|                                    |                |              |                |
| Strength (In Post)                 | 76 (77.36 FTE) | 3 (3.00 FTE) | 79 (78.36 FTE) |
| Appointed - Start Date Pending     | -              | -            | -              |
| Active/Pending Recruitment         | 2 (2.00 FTE)   | -            | 2 (2.00 FTE)   |
| Vacant – on-hold                   | -              | -            | -              |

|                                  |         |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| Ethnicity (Minority Background)  | 22%     |
| Disability (Long-term Condition) | 21%     |
| Male/Female Split                | 59%/41% |

Year to date finances

At the end of June 2026, our expenditure was £2.94m, which is £0.26m below budget. Most of the underspend is due to staff vacancies and some analytical activities starting a little slower than anticipated. These are mainly timing differences and are expected to be recovered later in the year.

Full-year forecast

Full-year expenditure is forecast at £11.97m, £0.27m above budget, reflecting the additional work we are doing for the Manchester Piccadilly Joint Review. Additional funding is being provided to us via DfT for this work.

Reserves

Core reserves are forecast to reduce from £2.5m to £2.1m by year end, reflecting the restructuring costs incurred in April and May this year as part of our change programme.

Our finances

| Income & Expenditure Costs   | Year To Date<br>April to June 2026 |           |             |            | 26/27 Forecast Outturn<br>12 months |           |             |            |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|------------|
| By activity                  | Actual £m                          | Budget £m | Variance £m | Variance % | Forecast £m                         | Budget £m | Variance £m | Variance % |
| Total Hosted Services Costs* | 1.68                               | 1.84      | 0.16        | 9%         | 7.36                                | 7.09      | -0.27       | -4%        |
| Total Core Funded Costs**    | 1.26                               | 1.36      | 0.10        | 7%         | 4.61                                | 4.61      | 0.0         | 0%         |
| Total costs                  | 2.94                               | 3.20      | 0.26        | 8%         | 11.97                               | 11.70     | -0.27       | -2%        |

\*This includes NPR analytical services and Rail North Partnership (RNP)

\*\*This includes Strategy & Delivery and Corporate Support

# Working together for the North

