

Transport for the North

Rail North Committee

Consultation Call

Agenda

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 01 September 2026
Time of Meeting	11.00 am
Venue	Microsoft Teams

Filming and broadcast of the meeting

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Item No.	Agenda Item	Page
1.0	Appointment of a Chair Members to appoint a Chair for the Meeting Lead: Joanne Barclay	
2.0	Welcome and Apologies The Chair to welcome Members and the public to the meeting. Lead: Chair	
3.0	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.	
4.0	Minutes of the Previous Meeting To note* the minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2026 (including updates on agreed matters as appropriate). Lead: Chair *Minutes will be approved at the next in-person meeting.	P.3-15
5.0	East Midlands Railway Operator Update To receive an update from East Midlands Railway.	P.16-17

	Lead: David Hoggarth	
6.0	Rail Industry Delivery To receive an update on rail industry delivery and Rail North Partnership's work with Northern and TransPennine Trains, and to discuss matters of interest with rail industry representatives. Lead: Gary Bogan	P.18-34
7.0	Date and time of next meeting The next meeting will take place at 11am, Tuesday 24 November 2026.	
8.0	Exclusion of the Press and Public The reports relating to the remaining items on the agenda have been withheld from public circulation and deposit pursuant to Section 100(B)(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended on the grounds that the matters may be determined with the press and public excluded. The Committee may decide that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items pursuant to Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and public interest would not be served in publishing the information.	
9.0	Private Minutes of the Previous Meeting To note* the private minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2026 (including updates on agreed matters as appropriate). Lead: Chair *Minutes will be approved at the next in-person meeting.	P.35
10.0	Autumn 2027 Proposal To consider proposals for Northern Trains Autumn 2027 timetable and provide feedback on the recommended approach. Lead: Gary Bogan	P.36

Rail North Committee Consultation Call Minutes

**Tuesday 17 February 2026
Virtual**

Present:

Attendee	Local Authority
Mayor Oliver Coppard	South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority
Cllr Martin Gannon	North East Combined Authority
Cllr Stephen Harker	Tees Valley Combined Authority
Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe	West Yorkshire Combined Authority
Cllr Peter Kilbane	York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority
Cllr Nick Mannion	Cheshire East Council
Cllr Peter Mason	Staffordshire County Council
Cllr Anthony McKeown	East Midlands Combined County Authority
Cllr John Murray	Westmorland and Furness Council
Mayor Steve Rotheram	Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

Partners in Attendance:

Ellie Burrows	Network Rail
Julien Dehorney	Network Rail
Alex Hynes	Department for Transport Operator
Chris Jackson	TransPennine Express
Maggie Simpson	Rail Freight Group
Tricia Williams	Northern
Carolyn Watson	Northern

Officers in Attendance:

Name	Job Title
Joanne Barclay	Head of Legal
Gary Bogan	Rail North Partnership Director
Helen Davies	Democratic Services Officer
Katie Day	Deputy Chief Executive
Charlie French	Investment Planning Manager
David Hoggarth	Head of Strategic Rail
Gary Rich	Democratic Services Officer
Nicola Spencer	Head of Stakeholder Engagement and Communications
Martin Tugwell	Chief Executive
Alex Woodall	Rail Reform Advisor

**Item
No:**
Item
Welcome and Apologies
1.1 Apologies were received from:

Mayor Andy Burnham	Greater Manchester Combined Authority
Mayor Luke Campbell Authority	Hull and East Yorkshire Combined
Councillor David Tucker Authority	Hull and East Yorkshire Combined
Councillor Phil Riley	Lancashire County Combined Authority
Councillor Denise Rollo	Cumberland

In the absence of the Chair, Mayor Burnham, Councillor Hinchcliffe presided over the meeting.

Declarations of Interest
2.1 There were no new declarations of interest.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting
3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2025 were noted by the Committee as a correct and accurate record; this will be formally approved at the next in-person meeting of the Committee.

4. Rail North Partnership Operational Update
4.1 Alex Hynes, newly appointed Chief Executive of Department for Transport Operator (DfTO), spoke to the Committee and expressed his enthusiasm for engaging with partners across the North of England to understand how the rail network can be improved collectively.

4.2 He outlined DfTO's role as the organisation that owns and oversees train operators in public ownership. Eight of the 14 operators in England were publicly owned, employing around 30,000 staff. Operators were being transferred from private to public ownership at a rate of approximately one every three months, with all DfT-managed operators expected to be publicly owned by the end of 2027. DfTO has been tasked with improving rail performance and working with Network Rail to deliver wider rail reform.

4.3 The Committee noted the substantial programme of rail activity underway in the North of England. This included:

- ongoing work across Network Rail, Northern and TransPennine Express to improve daily services, alongside new fleet and rolling-stock investment.

- the £11.5 billion TransPennine Route Upgrade (TRU) and
- recent government announcements on Northern Powerhouse Rail.

4.4 He emphasised the scale of opportunity in the North and his commitment to working collaboratively on these priorities.

Northern Trains (NTL) Update

4.5 Tricia Williams, NTL's Managing Director, attended the meeting and gave a performance update to the Committee.

4.6 Performance at NTL remained stable, with cancellations down by two thirds year on year and improved punctuality across recent periods. Reduced Sunday services in parts of the North-West and East have provided greater stability, and progress continued with the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) towards long term Sunday working arrangements. Fleet availability challenges persist, and work was ongoing with suppliers to maximise train availability.

4.7 The December 2025 timetable change was delivered successfully, introducing the new Leeds–Sheffield "Yorkshire Flyer" service and increasing services on the Durham Coast route. Growing demand and stable performance underpin NTL's ambition to increase annual journeys by 30 million by 2030, supported by simpler fares, improved customer experience and better alignment of capacity with demand. December 2025 saw the strongest post COVID performance for customer journeys and satisfaction, though January trading has been weaker due to external factors, weather and significant engineering works.

4.8 The Northumberland Line continued to perform well, with Northumberland Park station opening this week and Bedlington due to open on 29 March. NTL remained focused on driving growth, encouraging modal shift from car to rail, and supporting wider economic and subsidy reduction objectives.

4.9 Councillor Hinchcliffe invited questions or comments from the Committee.

4.10 Mayor Rotherham welcomed recent improvements but highlighted that, for people travelling to the new Everton Stadium, services did not yet feel improved. He highlighted ongoing Sunday service issues, overcrowding, delays at Liverpool Lime Street, and unresolved discussions with the RMT on Sunday working. He stressed that even when trains run on time, short forming prevented passengers from boarding or alighting at Newton-le-Willows, and he underlined the need for hope that services will improve.

4.11 Tricia Williams acknowledged the negative impact of reduced Sunday services and confirmed ongoing but sensitive discussions with the RMT to improve performance and increase Sunday capacity, achieving better and more reliable services.

4.12 Chris Jackson (TransPennine Express (TPE)) accepted that TPE had also let passengers down on several weekends. He cited terms and conditions

and engineering works affecting the Liverpool–Manchester corridor, noting that blockades/diversions during infrastructure works across the North had, in some cases, reduced frequency and stated that while the position was not perfect, the team would continue to keep northern mayors updated.

- 4.13 Councillor Kilbane raised a query in respect of services that currently terminated at Filey, when they would resume running through to Scarborough. Tricia Williams agreed to provide an update outside the meeting.
- 4.14 Councillor Gannon praised strong usage of the Northumberland Line and asked about progress on securing additional units; Tricia Williams added that work was ongoing with Northumberland County Council but there were challenges due to limited diesel units (with strengthening undertaken around key events where possible, such as football matches) and funding constraints.
- 4.15 Councillor Kilbane left the meeting.
- 4.16 Councillor Murray raised concern about slow coastal services and short formed trains on the Carlisle–Leeds route. Tricia apologised for the short forming, explaining that it resulted from an unanticipated supplier issue. She confirmed that NTL’s engineering team was focused on resolving the problem and that improved performance was expected by March 2026.
- 4.17 Gary Bogan and Katie Day confirmed that Access for All funding remains centrally controlled, despite the Committee’s request for devolution. Work continued to prioritise stations across the North, though progress was limited by lack of devolved funding.
- 4.18 Councillor McKeown highlighted issues for stations on boundaries of mayoral areas, such as Chinley in Derbyshire, stressing the need to ensure such stations were not overlooked.
- 4.19 Mayor Coppard expressed frustration at the slow pace of accessibility upgrades, noting South Yorkshire’s urgent need. He suggested writing to government again and questioned whether smaller, quicker interventions could be deployed rather than waiting for full step free schemes.
- 4.20 Katie Day confirmed that TfN would share previous work identifying priority interventions (e.g., tactile paving, lighting, CCTV, information points). Chris Jackson agreed to share a programme of minor works (e.g., handrails, kerbs) planned by the operators outside of the meeting.
- 4.21 Councillor Hinchcliffe summarised by noting that Members should continue ensuring accessibility is factored into all rail and infrastructure plans on a station-by-station basis and noted a follow up letter to the government would be considered.

Resolved: That:

- a) the actions that Rail North Partnership (RNP) is taking to ensure operators focus on delivering the services passengers need be noted

b) the updates from train operators in Appendix 1 be noted.

5. Network Resilience

- 5.1 Whilst the Committee considered the version of the report published within the agenda pack, it was subsequently brought to officers' attention after the meeting that the report's reference to the TfN Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment included an incorrect statement suggesting that the Sheffield Supertram network was identified among the top five most vulnerable rail lines. Officers have clarified that this is not the case, and the source report is being updated accordingly. This clarification does not affect the Committee's discussion or any decisions arising from this item.
- 5.2 Ellie Burrows, Managing Director (Eastern Region) for Network Rail, and Julien Dehornoy, Deputy Regional Managing Director (Northwest and Central) for Network Rail, both joined the meeting to present the report on Network Resilience.
- 5.3 Ellie introduced the item by acknowledging the financial pressures facing the rail industry and the need to carefully manage resources while continuing to invest in resilience and reliability.
- 5.4 She noted that the North was experiencing more extreme weather and outlined the industry's approach to climate adaptation, including designing infrastructure to better withstand severe conditions, improving monitoring through drones and sensors, and accelerating recovery after incidents. Ongoing investment includes targeted flood schemes and measures to protect equipment in high risk locations.
- 5.5 Ellie then provided an update on maintenance and renewals and highlighted work to modernise maintenance practices, strengthen workforce capability, and prepare for future technologies such as digital signalling. She confirmed that planning has begun for the next five year control period, with early engagement taking place with officers.
- 5.6 Finally, Ellie addressed congested infrastructure, identifying areas where network capacity is significantly constrained, including the Castlefield Corridor and parts of the East Coast Main Line. She outlined current programmes aimed at improving capacity and performance, alongside longer term options such as potential platform enhancements at Manchester Piccadilly and further consideration of the Leamside Line in the North East. She emphasised ongoing collaboration with operators, Transport for the North and local partners to ensure priorities align with regional ambitions.
- 5.7 Chris Jackson (TPT) added to the points made by highlighted the strong joint working across the rail industry in the North, noting that operators were aligned with wider industry partners to support major investment programmes and maintain a clear focus on passengers. He explained that operators aim was to keep passengers on trains rather than on replacement buses and cited his role in chairing the West Coast North Modernisation Programme Board, on which Tricia Williams and Andy Mellors (Managing Director of Avanti West Coast) also sit, as well as their

- shared involvement in the TransPennine Route upgrade (TRU) Programme Board. This collaborative approach ensures major works are planned and delivered with customer impact at the forefront.
- 5.8 He reported that the industry had a proven record of delivering major engineering works while keeping services operating, referencing recent schemes at Huddersfield, Church Fenton, and Clifton, where diversionary routes were used to minimise disruption. He also noted the continued benefits of the recovery plan supported by this Committee in 2023, which had enabled three trains per hour to operate on diversion between the North-West and West Yorkshire because of progress in driver training.
- 5.9 Chris also highlighted the significant £70 million scheme on the approaches to Manchester Piccadilly, acknowledging some initial customer handling challenges but emphasising that the industry had responded well and that service performance had since improved. He concluded by reiterating the commitment to working collaboratively to deliver major programmes while maintaining the best possible service for passengers.
- 5.10 The Committee was given the opportunity to ask questions.
- 5.11 Councillor Hinchcliffe raised concerns about the industry's ability to manage disruption, noting the limited capacity available when incidents occur and highlighting the significant economic impact of prolonged closures. She asked for further assurance on the resilience measures being put in place to minimise disruption and support faster recovery.
- 5.12 In response, Ellie Burrows explained that resilience work covers a range of activities, including managing environmental impacts such as recent earthworks failures. She outlined how Network Rail works closely with train operators to maintain the best possible service during disruptions, aiming to keep passengers moving and restore the network as quickly as possible. She noted recent improvements, with lines reopening within 24–48 hours in some cases, compared with longer closures in the past. Ellie also described the increasing use of monitoring equipment, drone surveys and early warning systems to identify risks sooner, while acknowledging the challenges posed by sustained heavy rainfall.
- 5.13 Councillor Hinchcliffe expressed particular concern about the long term closures caused by landslips, citing previous incidents on the Baildon line and recent disruption in the Sheffield area. Ellie confirmed that services had since been restored, though with a speed restriction at one site, and reiterated that Network Rail is prioritising early intervention at high risk locations to prevent extended closures where possible. She emphasised the importance of rapid mobilisation and close partnership working to minimise economic and passenger impacts.
- 5.14 Chris Jackson provided a practical example of how resilience has improved, noting that the Committee's support for a temporary timetable had enabled them to clear its backlog of driver training. As a result, competency levels on diversionary routes are now significantly higher.

He explained that, unlike three years ago, when an incident such as the recent Standedge Tunnel closure would have stopped services between Leeds and Manchester, TPT was now able to operate three trains per hour via diversionary routes, ensuring customers remained on the move. He emphasised that this demonstrated a direct and positive impact arising from the Committee's earlier decisions.

- 5.15 Councillor Hinchcliffe welcomed this progress and reflected that the industry must continue adapting to the increasing climate related risks affecting the network. She highlighted the high cost of resilience interventions and the vulnerability of routes with numerous cuttings and embankments, suggesting that more investment may ultimately be required.
- 5.16 The Committee then heard from Mayor Coppard, who raised three additional points. First, he queried whether NTL was procuring new trains that would not fit into Sheffield Station, noting the potential future operational challenges this could create. Secondly, he requested that Network Rail provide members with greater forward visibility of planned rail closures, explaining that a recent Christmas disruption in South Yorkshire appeared to have been known about in advance but communicated to stakeholders at short notice. Finally, he suggested that the Committee might consider adopting the term "climate breakdown" rather than "climate change," reflecting the severity of current impacts.
- 5.17 In response to the Sheffield query, Tricia Williams confirmed he was not aware of any procurement issue, noting that new units may be longer than some existing two car trains but that established operational procedures already manage trains longer than platforms. She undertook to investigate the matter further and report back.
- 5.18 Gary Bogan informed the Committee that his team is currently undertaking a programme of engagement with members' representatives and would be in touch over the coming weeks to gather any issues or concerns. He noted that, like colleagues, he was not aware of any operational problem arising from fitting new train lengths into stations and expected that established procedures would provide a workable solution but confirmed that his team would review the matter in full.
- 5.19 Ellie confirmed that the information point had already been picked up by Jason Hamilton (Route Director, North & East) through a separate discussion and that information would be provided to members. She agreed that consideration should be given to how such forward plans could be shared more widely across the network.
- 5.20 Katie Day noted that the discussion on renewals linked closely with the upcoming item on the agenda. She reminded the Committee of the previously presented "State of Play" work, which set out the major strategic investment planned across the North. She suggested that, with the support of Ellie Burrows and Julian, it would be helpful to overlay renewals activity onto this wider strategic picture, as renewals form an essential part of maintaining performance and resilience. Katie emphasised that integrating this information would contribute to a

clearer overall plan for the North and would also provide greater visibility of when closures associated with renewals are likely to occur. She proposed taking this work forward with Network Rail colleagues, noting the importance of capturing both long term investment and essential renewal works within a single, coherent framework.

Resolved:

That:

- a) the rail network resilience issues with Network Rail be discussed
- b) industry, TfN and partners work together to improve co-ordination of renewals activity and network resilience measures be supported with local investments and enhancements through the State of Play
- c) support from industry for regular reviews of congested infrastructure designations impacting on the North to monitor progress be sought.

6. Infrastructure Update

- 6.1 Councillor McCormack left the meeting.
- 6.2 Charlie French introduced the infrastructure report, noting its close alignment with the earlier discussion on renewals and wider strategic planning. He explained that the report provides an update on major programmes, how they interact, and where continued engagement from the Committee is essential. He emphasised that the short term interventions listed in Appendix 1 were critical, not optional, as they underpin the £20 billion of investment currently being delivered through TRU and other programmes, and form the foundations for future schemes such as Northern Powerhouse Rail and highspeed services connecting into the North.
- 6.3 Charlie highlighted Manchester Piccadilly as a clear example, explaining that platform extensions and additional capacity are required now to enable the enhanced and more reliable timetable planned for the early 2030s. Without these interventions, compromises on service frequencies, journey times or performance may be unavoidable. He noted that work across the North was progressing at different stages and scopes, but interdependencies are becoming clearer through the "State of Play" work and other tools He advised that additional interventions, such as enhanced power supply, depot and stabling capacity, and further platform extensions were likely to be required to support future services.
- 6.4 Charlie reminded the Committee that several schemes, paused during the recent spending review, had previously been flagged to the Secretary of State due to their strategic importance, and that a response was awaited. He highlighted the North of England Integration workstream, which over the next two years will help navigate these interdependencies and ensure the interventions support wider priorities, including reducing inequality, improving connectivity, driving economic growth and safeguarding reliability. He stressed the need for collective backing from the Committee to deliver these short term interventions so that the full

benefits of TRU, Northern Powerhouse Rail and associated programmes can be realised.

- 6.5 In response, Councillor Hinchcliffe welcomed the clarity provided by the detailed list of interventions and reflected on past examples, such as Bradford's lack of platform capacity for London services, emphasising the importance of the integrated approach now being taken. She asked whether there was a prioritisation framework for the listed interventions. Charlie confirmed that the report includes strategic rationale and funding status, but further prioritisation work was being undertaken through a matrix of service choices and the continuing integration workstream.
- 6.6 Councillor Hinchcliffe noted the importance of understanding the most urgent short term interventions so that political leaders could lobby for the necessary funding. She emphasised that although some schemes may appear low profile, they were fundamental to securing the additional capacity required to fully realise the benefits of major programmes such as TRU. Charlie French confirmed that the report highlights the interventions currently considered critical, and that further work with operators may identify additional requirements, particularly in relation to new trains. He reiterated that the schemes should be viewed as a package, each contributing to the service outcomes and benefits expected from wider investment.
- 6.7 Councillor Harker sought clarification on the North of England Integration workstream and whether sufficient pressure was being applied to ensure that all necessary interventions, such as those on the East Coast Main Line north of York, were properly considered to avoid leaving gaps in the network. In response, Charlie explained that the workstream was taking a whole system approach, exploring a broad range of service configuration options and assessing outcomes with and without the identified infrastructure. He stressed the need for collective support behind the interventions listed, including those north of York, to ensure that service outcomes are maximised and that the eventual investment is used to best effect.
- 6.8 Katie Day added that the north of York scheme is among those the Committee previously wrote to the Secretary of State and Rail Minister about after they were paused following the Spending Review, noting that the lack of reply remained a concern. She suggested that the Committee may need to consider further representations once the initial analysis from the integration workstream became available in the coming weeks. She emphasised the importance of maintaining momentum behind all the key interventions that had been paused.
- 6.9 Councillor Hinchcliffe agreed, summarising the need for the North to speak with one voice on the essential smaller scale investments that unlock the success of major programmes and ensure the whole network functions effectively.

Resolved:

That the list of short-term interventions (Appendix 1) and the benefit of engaging with choices in infrastructure and services to realise outcomes from live programmes ahead of the longer-term interventions including NPR be noted.

7. Rail Freight Investment

- 7.1 Councillor Gannon left the meeting.
- 7.2 Councillor McCormack rejoined the meeting.
- 7.3 Maggie Simpson (Director General of the Rail Freight Group) thanked the Committee for the invitation and acknowledged the strong partnership working with TfN on rail freight. She emphasised that effective freight links were essential to the North's economic growth, supporting industrial development, new energy sectors, housebuilding, infrastructure delivery and everyday consumer needs. Maggie highlighted that east-west rail freight capability across the North remained significantly constrained, with poor gauge clearance and limited capacity compared with other parts of the UK. She welcomed the commitment to including freight within TRU, stressing that freight operators were seeking only the basics, gauge clearance and an hourly off peak freight path to enable reliable and productive services.
- 7.4 Maggie explained that the next TRU funding stage gate in early 2027 will be critical and urged continued strong support from the Committee to ensure freight elements progress into delivery. She stressed the need to fund 'off core' gauge clearance schemes required to provide true end to end capability from ports to inland destinations, noting that these schemes were modest in cost and some could be delivered alongside routine engineering work. She raised particular concern about the Northallerton-Eaglescliffe (Yarm Tunnel) gauge scheme, paused following the Spending Review, despite local and regional co-funding, and asked that it remained a priority given its importance for both freight efficiency and passenger performance.
- 7.5 She further noted that several strategic programmes, such as the Manchester Task Force, the North of England Integration workstream and NPR, were currently considering different timetable options. Maggie emphasised the need for a consistent and aligned freight specification across all of them to ensure freight requirements did not risk being overlooked early in planning and timetable development processes. In response, Councillor Hinchcliffe thanked Maggie for her contribution. She sought clarification on the specific scheme referred to, with Maggie confirming that the Northallerton-Eaglescliffe (Yarm Tunnel) gauge clearance scheme is the priority intervention.
- 7.6 David Hoggarth then introduced the paper, noting that it had been developed collaboratively with, regional freight colleagues and officers across the North. He explained that there was strong consensus within the freight community that the immediate priority was to maximise the benefits of the TRU, particularly through ensuring full gauge clearance. While gauge clearance within the core TRU scheme was progressing, David stressed that this alone will not unlock the benefits unless the

associated off route gauge clearance schemes are also delivered. These schemes were essential to realising the full east–west freight potential, enabling a direct, viable corridor parallel to the M62. He noted that around one third of TRU’s overall benefits are attributable to freight, reinforcing the importance of ensuring all related freight paths can be used.

- 7.7 David highlighted that current freight flows between east and west were significantly constrained; operators will not use the existing convoluted routes, but demand exists if the upgraded, gauge cleared route is completed. The paper set out five key recommendations, including the need to reinstate the paused Northallerton–Eaglescliffe gauge clearance scheme and to expand rail freight terminal capacity in the North-West.
- 7.8 Looking beyond TRU, David emphasised the importance of developing a future pipeline of freight schemes to support expected growth in aggregates and construction and to enable the wider shift from road to rail. He added that freight operators require the right commercial conditions, such as access arrangements and pricing incentives, to support that modal shift, and that upcoming rail reform presents an opportunity to strengthen this. He referred to criteria listed in the paper which could form the basis of TfN’s response to expected consultations on freight within rail reform.
- 7.9 Councillor Hinchcliffe welcomed the paper and indicated broad support for preparing statutory advice, noting the importance of prioritising interventions within TRU given the long list of requirements. David responded that officers had significantly refined the list and that all remaining TRU related gauge clearance schemes were considered essential. He added that these represent excellent value for money and were all currently under development.
- 7.10 Councillor Mannion highlighted the significant pressures on freight capacity affecting the North, noting that Crewe was the busiest freight hub in the country and a key gateway to north Wales and the Republic of Ireland. He emphasised that while improvements within the region are welcome, there are major connectivity constraints into and out of the North, particularly on the West Coast Main Line south of Crewe, which is expected to reach full capacity within the next few years. Councillor Mannion stressed the need for a comprehensive freight strategy for the North to coordinate investment, address cross-regional pinch points and ensure the region stays ahead of emerging capacity challenges. He confirmed his support for the proposals discussed, while urging that they be considered within a wider, strategic approach.
- 7.11 In response, David Hoggarth acknowledged the issues raised and noted that TfN had undertaken substantial work with the industry to identify freight constraints across the whole region and that the report advocated the development of a future pipeline.
- 7.12 Julien Dehornoy added further detail on the West Coast Main Line, acknowledging the pressures on both capacity and power supply. He noted that freight growth combined with the shift toward electrified

freight traction required improvements to power provision, particularly north of Crewe. He explained that work was underway to optimise the timetable and develop a long term strategy to increase freight capacity and support greener freight operations.

- 7.13 Councillor Hinchcliffe concluded the discussion by emphasising the importance of proactive political support for freight investment at both local and national levels.

Resolved:

That:

- a) the infrastructure interventions required to unlock the rail freight benefits of TRU and to recommend to the TfN Board the submission of statutory advice to the Secretary of State for Transport be supported
- b) the development, as resources allow, of a credible pipeline of rail freight investment for the North to support existing and emerging markets in the medium/longer term, working with the industry be noted.
- c) (subject to any feedback from Members) the outcomes we are seeking for freight to be used in any consultations on a reformed industry process be noted.

8. Rail North Financial Contributions 2026/27

- 8.1 Katie Day presented the routine update on Rail North financial contributions, noting that the arrangements form part of the Rail North Partnership Agreement and associated Franchise Agreement. She confirmed that the proposed allocations for the coming year had been prepared with full consideration of wider budget pressures, and that contributions had been reduced as far as possible while maintaining the core functions of TfN and the Rail North Partnership Executive. She sought the Committee's support for the proposed contributions ahead of their submission to the TfN Board.

- 8.2 The Committee indicated its approval with no comments raised.

Resolved:

That the Rail North Committee recommend to TfN Board that the approach to approve the Rail North financial contributions for 2026/27, as set out in the report, be approved.

Date and time of next meeting

- 9.1 The next meeting will take place on Tuesday 9 June at 11am, GMCA Boardroom, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Broadhurst House, 1st Floor, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EU.

Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved:

That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Item 10 on the grounds that: It involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as set out in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

11. Rail Reform - Next Steps

- 11.1 The update was received by Members who were invited to ask questions and make comments.

Resolved:

That the report be noted

Meeting:	Rail North Committee Consultation Call
Meeting Date:	Tuesday 1 September 2026
Report Title:	East Midlands Railway – Operator update
Appendices:	None
Author:	Alex Woodall, Rail Planner
Sponsor:	Katie Day, Chief Executive (Interim)

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report provides Rail North Committee (RNC) with an update from East Midlands Railway (EMR) as part of the ongoing series of updates from train operators serving the North of England. EMR will brief members on the recently introduced temporary intercity timetable, the service recovery plan, operational performance, service developments and the progress of key modernisation programmes affecting its routes in the region.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 RNC is recommended to note the update and discuss the actions being taken by EMR to restore the full train service.

3. Feedback

- 3.1 There is no feedback to report. The Committee will have the opportunity to discuss the impact of recent service changes and operational matters on the North, which have been subject to some media coverage and partner commentary in the public domain.

4. Main Issues:

- a) EMR will provide the Committee with a briefing on the factors that led towards the introduction of a temporary reduced intercity timetable on 20 July and the subsequent steps they are taking to recover the service.
- b) The update will also cover performance, operational resilience, customer experience initiatives, and the progress of their fleet modernisation programme.
- c) Neil Grabham, the newly appointed Managing Director of EMR, will present to the Committee, after which there will be an opportunity to ask questions.

5. Background

- 5.1 This report forms part of a continuing series of operator business updates to RNC, ensuring Members can maintain oversight of performance, investment and key challenges across operators serving the North.
- 5.2 EMR is the primary operator of regional and intercity rail services across the East Midlands, with a significant footprint extending into the North of England. EMR plays an important strategic role in connecting northern cities and towns with key destinations including London, the Midlands and East Anglia. It provides intercity services between Sheffield and London via Derby and Leicester. Its network also includes the long-established Liverpool–Manchester–Sheffield–Nottingham–Norwich route, which provides crucial cross-country connectivity for communities along the corridor, as well as regional services serving Lincolnshire, South Yorkshire and parts of the Humber.

- 5.3 Within the North, EMR services support both local and long-distance travel needs. Key stations served include Liverpool Lime Street, Manchester Piccadilly, Manchester Oxford Road, Stockport, Sheffield, and Doncaster, as well as Lincoln, Grimsby Town, and Cleethorpes in the wider 'Rail North' area. Services on the Hope Valley corridor between Manchester and Sheffield contribute to overall capacity and resilience on one of the most strategically important rail links in the North.
- 5.5 A key milestone as part of EMR's modernisation has been the introduction of the new Class 810 Aurora fleet on EMR intercity services (express services to and from London St Pancras). The new Aurora trains are bi-modes that make use of the Midland Main Line electrification between London St Pancras and Wigston just south of Leicester. This means they have reduced carbon and pollutant emissions, and are quieter, than the diesel class 222 Meridians that they are replacing. These trains represent a significant upgrade, providing improved accessibility, modern interiors, enhanced passenger comfort and more efficient traction systems.
- 5.6 However, the introduction of the Aurora trains to service has been significantly delayed and has seen a number of technical issues that have affected service reliability. Meanwhile, EMR's Meridian fleet has also suffered from technical issues and is gradually going off-lease, leading to a deficiency of rolling stock for EMR. This has recently culminated with the introduction of a temporary reduced intercity timetable (on 20 July) intended to stabilise performance. The timetable change was introduced at short notice and has impacted customers in South Yorkshire. Transport for the North (TfN) has been supporting South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority in its response. EMR services have also been impacted by industrial action taken by the RMT union.
- 5.7 EMR is planning the first step to improve the timetable, with an increase in its intercity operation from 87% to 92% of the full planned timetable from Monday 31 August.
- 5.8 EMR will be at the meeting to provide an update on their recovery plan and answer questions from members of the Committee.

6. Corporate Considerations

Monitoring Officer/Legal/Governance

- 6.1 There are no legal implications for TfN arising from this report.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 6.2 There are no financial implications for TfN.

Resource Implications

- 6.3 There are no resource implications for TfN.

Risk Management

- 6.4 There are no new risks associated with this report.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 6.5 It is the responsibility of the operator to undertake impact assessments if required.

Consultations

- 6.6 No consultation was required for this update report.

Background Papers

- 6.7 There are no background papers

Meeting:	Rail North Committee	Consultation Call
Meeting Date:	Tuesday 1 September 2026	
Report Title:	Rail Industry Delivery Report	
Appendices:	Appendix 1: Accessibility Update Appendix 2: Operator updates and performance	
Author:	Steve Mee, Senior Communications Manager, Rail North Partnership	
Sponsor:	Gary Bogan, Rail North Partnership Director	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide an overview of the rail industry's delivery including progress on matters of joint interest that the Committee has prioritised for consideration at the level of the North.
- 1.2 To provide an update in relation to Rail North Partnership's (RNP) role in overseeing the outputs of Northern Trains Limited (NTL) and TransPennine Trains (TPT).
- 1.3 To facilitate a dialogue between Committee Members and rail industry representatives on matters of mutual interest.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1 The Committee is recommended to:
 - a) Note the updates provided by the rail industry and RNP.
 - b) Note the actions being taken by RNP.

3. Rail Delivery Overview

- 3.1 The RNP Management Team oversees Northern and TransPennine Trains services on behalf of the existing partnership between the Department for Transport (DfT) and Northern mayors and leaders (as Transport for the North (TfN)).
- 3.2 This partnership approach is unique in the industry, supporting decision-making and bringing whole-system thinking to the management of rail services across the North.
- 3.3 RNP is currently responsible for service development, operator budget management and service commissioning on behalf of TfN's constituent authorities, including timetable planning, service delivery and performance oversight. It also oversees investment in rolling stock, stations and fares, helping operators deliver better value for money while supporting greater investment in members' service enhancement priorities.
- 3.4 TfN executive, on behalf of the North's mayors/leaders, works with the RNP Management Team on strategic rail infrastructure investment too. Our collective focus is bringing a joined-up benefit-focussed approach to planning and delivery, looking at the strategic questions and helping to shape the railway to meet devolved needs of mayoral strategic authorities (MSAs) in the new Great British Railways (GBR).

Northern Trains Ltd

- 3.5 For punctuality (using the industry 'time to 3', T-3 measure) NTL performance remains a struggle for Q1 2026/27, with two periods (2 & 3) missing the target for

T-3. For reliability (all-stations cancellations), cancellations remain within target. Principal issues were infrastructure failures, extreme weather and fleet performance, exacerbated by the recent hot weather resulting in high numbers of short formations. RNP continues to work closely with NTL to improve performance and customer outcomes. We are currently engaged in discussions on how to extend the Performance Improvement Plan for NTL to include wider work with the North's Railway (comprising senior industry leaders) on better and more consistent passenger performance outcomes across customer, people, operations, stations, fleet and disruption management. We are actively engaging in the delivery of the current business plan and looking at what we collectively may want to do in future years (including supporting MSA priorities).

- 3.6 We will shortly be engaging with partners on a new, more agile service quality standard across Northern stations and trains.
- 3.7 NTL is currently consulting on a proposed change to its Halifax-Hull service. From May 2027 the current Hull-Halifax service would end at Leeds with the current Huddersfield-Bradford Interchange service extended to Leeds. This should improve performance and passenger experience on the busy Leeds-Bradford route, while maintaining the current frequency between Halifax and Leeds and enabling more direct journey opportunities from Brighouse and Huddersfield. The proposition is being consulted with West Yorkshire, York and North Yorkshire, and Hull and East Yorkshire Combined Authorities. The proposed amended pattern of service would be:

Hull-Halifax	1tph	This train will form a Hull-Leeds service (subject to RNP final approval)
Huddersfield-Bradford Interchange	1tph	This service will be extended to form a Huddersfield-Leeds via Bradford Interchange service (subject to RNP final approval)

TransPennine Trains Ltd (TPT)

- 3.8 For punctuality (using T-3) and reliability (all-stations cancellations), apart from a blip in reliability during May, TPT remains within its target range for Q1 2026/27, with principal issues being infrastructure failures, extreme weather and fleet performance. TPT briefly experienced an unusual peak in issues with the diesel train fleet (Class 185s), largely attributed to wheelset supply constraints, which reset with the implementation of an improvement plan.
- 3.9 On service quality/customer satisfaction, TPT broadly met targets in most areas, with the exception of stations. Using more detailed Transport Focus Rail Customer Experience Survey results, TPT has identified areas to improve outcomes, including:
- replacement of outdated Customer Information displays
 - adjustments to newly installed help points
 - updating CCTV signage and car park enforcement information
 - an improved communication plan during incidents
 - increasing staff visibility at key locations during periods of disruption
 - working with industry partners to simplify and speed up the Delay Repay process.
- 3.10 TPT continues to work collaboratively with RNP, partners and across industry to improve operational performance through tactical performance meetings and development of joint performance strategies and improvement plans.

- 3.11 TPT coped comparatively well with the heatwaves experienced so far this year, which added pressure on many aspects of service delivery. Continued engagement with other operators, Network Rail (NR), partners and the wider industry should enable all sides to react more effectively and efficiently to challenging conditions.
- 3.12 In May TPT introduced new all-night rail services between Manchester Piccadilly and Manchester Airport to give a direct boost to Greater Manchester's night-time economy and improve connectivity to the airport.
- 3.13 As part of the December 2026 timetable change, TPT will deliver earlier Sunday journey opportunities between Cumbria, Northwest England and Scotland, with a new earlier northbound service departing Preston at 0919, arriving in Edinburgh at 1151, giving customers from stations including Lancaster, Oxenholme, Penrith, Carlisle and Lockerbie access to Scotland almost two hours earlier than currently.
- 3.14 In addition, a new southbound service will depart Edinburgh at 0827, arriving at Manchester Airport at 1158 providing an earlier direct connection between Scotland, Cumbria and Greater Manchester. The new service will provide significantly earlier arrival opportunities throughout the route, benefiting communities by improving access to employment, tourism, education and onward transport connections. Stations including Carlisle, Penrith, Oxenholme, Lancaster and Preston will all see earlier Sunday services into Manchester and beyond.
- 3.15 These services are scheduled to operate on selected Sundays from 13 December 2026 to 3 January 2027, from 21 February to 28 March 2027, and from 27 June to 5 December 2027. On those Sundays, TPT will also be able to relink the 1813 Edinburgh to Preston service through to Manchester Airport, along with the 2010 Manchester Airport to Preston service through to Edinburgh, further improving journey opportunities for customers travelling across the route, removing the need to change at Preston.

TransPennine Route Upgrade (TRU)

- 3.16 This was the most disruptive quarter of the TRU programme to date, with 70% of days impacted by planned engineering activity (more than 5,200 rail services diverted and over 13,000 rail replacement journeys operated), including Bradley Junction and Dewsbury/Batley blockades. These works delivered significant infrastructure and customer benefits, including bridge renewals to support faster and longer trains, and station enhancements such as new lifts and extended canopies, during which the TRU customer team successfully planned and delivered six customer handling programmes, including three consecutive weekends with highly complex, overlapping arrangements.
- 3.17 The RNP team undertook on-site assurance, customer handling plan reviews, operational oversight, stakeholder engagement and real-time issue resolution across the network. Through this activity, we gained confidence that the TRU customer experience team's strong planning, coordination and delivery arrangements maintained passenger movements throughout the disruption, with no issues requiring escalation. Customer experience performance metrics remained net positive against target; an excellent outcome for passengers given the scale and complexity of the works.

Other Operators

- 3.18 Updates for all operators serving the North are included in Appendix 2. This material is provided by the operators.
- 3.19 Avanti's move to a demand-led timetable for part of the summer is described in Appendix 2 and we have asked the operator to attend the Committee meeting on 1 September to describe the impacts and outcomes of this innovation on passengers and discuss any proposed future changes of a similar nature.

4. Accessibility, Safety and Community

- 4.1 The Committee has prioritised improving accessibility across the North's railway and has taken several actions over the last 12-24 months. This has included building the evidence base for the work required to make all the North's stations accessible, and working with DfT and train operators to identify and bring forward station projects and to ensure new trains are accessible.
- 4.2 With support from NR and the TRU team, we have compiled an updated picture of major accessibility work at stations across the North. A list of where accessibility works are planned in the short to medium term, including Access for All schemes, and a summary of improvements under TRU, is set out in Appendix 1, table 1.
- 4.3 Funding decisions for major accessibility projects have already been taken through Spending Review 2025 or major enhancement programmes, so the ability to influence further accessibility improvements will likely need to focus on lower-cost schemes which can be funded via operator business plans. Through the Committee's earlier work, we do have a list of priorities, underpinned by industry engagement and input from Northern Transport Voices citizens' panel, to push for improvements and monitor progress. A multi-criteria framework ensures that priorities reflect both value for money and local levels of accessibility need, safety considerations and the gaps between current provision and desirable standards. We are promoting measures that maximise day-to-day benefits for passengers including improving staff training and access to live information. Appendix 1, table 2 sets out planned improvements from the train operators in 2026/27 reflecting funding constraints.
- 4.4 We continue to support the development of the Inclusive Station Standard for the North, working with TPT and NTL to shape prioritisation programme for station accessibility. This includes an assessment of legal minimum standards by station category and engagement including with combined authorities and accessibility user groups to establish prioritisation for improvements over and above items mandated. We also include broader accessibility and inclusion considerations linked to public sector equality duty protected characteristics, such as safety of women and girls. This work is also intended to feed into future national-level programmes, such as standards update cycles led by the British Standards Institution and upcoming rail industry design guides for safe stations for women, girls, and vulnerable users.
- 4.5 RNP champions matters of safety of women and girls within rail at a national and international level, as well as sharing good practice with our partners across the North. Our Rail Services Lead has presented RNP's work on violence against women and girls (VAWG) to the then local transport minister Lilian Greenwood and Spanish government officials in June as part of a UK-Spain bi-lateral agreement on closer collaboration.
- 4.6 RNP is also supporting the needs of communities across the North at a national policy level - with our Rail Services Lead acting as the Community Rail Liaison for the Department for Transport Operator (DfTO), ensuring that community rail organisations (CROs) are supported and championed throughout the transition to GBR. This will include input to policy, strategy and future structure recommendations for CROs across all train operators, as well as direct support to CROs in the immediate term.

5. Resilience

- 5.1 The rail industry has been working to stabilise and build performance and reliability across the region. However, during recent months extreme weather periods and some significant operational incidents demonstrated that stability can be fragile. These events highlight the need for increased focus on resilience to ensure rail consistently delivers for customers and local economies.

- 5.2 While individual operators and NR have traditionally had plans to support improved resilience, through The North's Railway (which is senior leaders in NR, NTL and TPT working together, ahead of GBR), a joint performance strategy has been prepared (JPS), providing a holistic approach to improving performance and resilience and with a number of workstreams to address areas that can pose a risk to service:
- External events (such as weather, trespass and third-party incidents)
 - infrastructure
 - fleet
 - service recovery (as well as work to develop single customer-handling plans to better reflect and address customer needs during disruption)
 - people and resourcing
 - operating plan.
- 5.3 Each workstream has a dedicated executive sponsor, with involvement of teams across all organisations. The North's Railway has undertaken external engagement through the development of the strategy and some of the activities that support it and aligned with other operators' JPS where the network is shared. The strategy adopts industry best practices from across the country and is endorsed by the Network Performance Board, which is independently chaired by Steve Murphy of the Rail Delivery Group, with membership including Alex Hynes, Chief Executive of DfTO and Jeremy Westlake, Chief Executive of NR. Progress against the strategy is reviewed with them on a quarterly basis. The Performance Board has oversight of all operators' JPS ensuring they reflect the realities of a shared network and are aligned in outcomes.
- 5.4 The strategy addresses many areas to improve the resilience of the rail network, though some aspects of improved resilience will be dependent on significant investment, including renewal of assets like infrastructure and fleet. The North's Railway is also for the first time developing a joint plan for the financial period 2029–2034 in which resilience initiatives will feature. This is a significant step towards an integrated railway, though the industry recognises it is an approach that will need to mature over time.
- 5.5 Alongside industry plans to build further resilience, the events mentioned at the start of this section also highlight the needs for strong, consistent and timely passenger messaging and information. Through The North's Railway and wider programmes, the industry is working hard to drive improvements in this area including greater consistency of messaging for passengers using multiple operators and exploring new ways to reach passengers for more timely and tailored communication.
- 5.6 Members will be aware that a power failure in Manchester on Thursday 6 August caused severe disruption to services across multiple operators until the end of that day, with a level of delay and cancellation continuing into Friday. We have asked Network Rail to attend the Committee meeting on 1 September to provide an explanation of the incident and the industry's response, and any review/early lessons learned.

6. Corporate Considerations

Monitoring Officer/Legal/Governance

- 6.1 There are no legal implications arising as a result of this report.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 6.2 There are no financial implications for TfN arising from this report. The contents of the report are consistent with the agreed Budget/Business Plan.

Resource Implications

- 6.3 There are no resource implications for TfN or RNP arising as a result of this report. The work highlighted is being undertaken in line with agreed business plans.

Risk Management

- 6.4 There are no new risk implications as a result of this report.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 6.5 The work outlined in this report is expected to support positive equality, diversity and inclusion outcomes by improving the accessibility, safety and inclusivity of rail services across the North. Accessibility need, safety considerations and gaps in current provision have informed the prioritisation of improvements, supported by engagement with accessibility user groups, combined authorities, CROs and the Northern Transport Voices citizens' panel. Particular consideration has been given to disabled and older passengers, women and girls, and others who may face barriers to rail travel. The existing Equality Impact Assessment will be reviewed as the scope of the accessibility work develops, ensuring that impacts on people with protected characteristics continue to be identified, addressed and monitored.

Consultations

- 6.6 None in respect of this paper specifically, noting NTL's ongoing consultation around Halifax- Hull services (para 3.7).

Background Papers

- 6.7 None

Meeting: Rail North Committee Consultation Call**Meeting Date:** Tuesday 1 September 2026**Report Title:** Rail Industry Delivery Report**Appendices:** Appendix 1: Accessibility Update**Appendix 1: Accessibility Update****Table 1 – Scope of Current Network Rail “Access for All” Work**

Fund	Station	New lifts to be installed		New stairs	Status	Notes
		Number	Structure to which they will be attached			
CP6	Broad Green	2	Existing subway	✓	Design stage	
CP6	Chorley	2	Existing subway		On site	
CP6	Handforth	2	Existing other structure		Design stage	
CP6	Todmorden	2	Existing subway		Design stage	
CP6	Walkden	1	Existing other structure		Design stage	The new lift links to the existing ticket office.
SR25	Thirsk	A scope review is underway, with the intention to provide step-free access throughout the station and remove the barrow crossing.				
SR25	Aigburth	2	Existing footbridge		On site	
SR25	Bredbury	A scope review is underway.			TfGM assisting development	
SR25	Chinley	2	Existing footbridge		Substantial 3 rd -party funding is required.	
SR25	Church & Oswaldtwistle	2	Existing other structure	✓	Substantial third party funding is required.	
SR25	Flowery Field	2	Existing other structure		TfGM assisting development	
SR25	Newton for Hyde	2	Existing subway		TfGM assisting development	
SR25	Port Sunlight	2	Existing subway		Liverpool City Region assisting development	

SR25	Rock Ferry	2	Existing footbridge		On site	Power upgrade required
SR25	Ulverston	2	New footbridge		Cumbria Combined Authority assisting development	
SR25	Walton, Merseyside	A scope review is underway.			Liverpool City Region assisting development	

Additionally, the TransPennine Route Upgrade (TRU) programme will enhance station facilities at 21 stations on its route. This includes improved accessibility at 12 stations, new or improved bridges at five stations, platform upgrades at 11 stations, and safety enhancements at four stations. Further details can be found on the TRU website.

Table 2 – Planned accessibility improvements by train operators

Organisation	Location	Type of work
TransPennine Trains	Cleethorpes	Adjustments to station forecourt
	Middlesbrough	Installation of new accessible seating (with displaced older seating moved to platforms to provide an increase in total provision)
	To be decided (as per Middlesbrough previously)	Installation of tactile RNIB 'Maps for All'
	Thirsk	Provision of step-free access throughout the station and removal of the barrow crossing
Northern Trains	Network-wide staffing	25 passenger assistance roles + 9 assisted travel team members
	Reddish North, Seaton Carew, Blaydon	Reduced stepping distances/platform overlays

Meeting:	Rail North Committee
Meeting Date:	Tuesday 1 September 2026
Report Title:	Rail Industry Delivery Report
Appendices:	Appendix 2: Operator updates and performance

Appendix 2: Operator updates and performance

T-3 (T3) = Trains arriving at a station within three minutes of the scheduled time

T-15 (T15) = Trains arriving at a station within 15 minutes of the scheduled time

Operator performance – TransPennine Trains (TPT)

Rail period	T-3	T-15	All cancellations	TOC-on-self cancellations
P1 (01/04/26 – 02/05/26)	72.6%	95.5%	2.6%	1.85%
P2 (03/05/26 – 30/05/26)	70.4%	93.2%	3.8%	1.90%
P3 (31/05/26 – 27/06/26)	72.6%	95.2%	2.8%	1.13%

Operational update

Earlier West Coast Main Line (WCML) Sunday morning departures – As part of the December 2026 timetable change, TPT will deliver earlier Sunday journey opportunities for customers travelling on the WCML. The changes will introduce a new, earlier northbound service departing Preston at 09:19, calling at Lancaster, Oxenholme, Penrith, Carlisle and Lockerbie, and arriving at Edinburgh at 11:51, almost two hours earlier than is currently possible on a Sunday. In addition, in December a new earlier Sunday southbound service will depart Edinburgh at 08:27 on the WCML, arriving at Manchester Airport at 11:58.

Events and initiatives

Refurbishment of Class 802 seat covers – Businesses from across the North are helping transform TPT's 19 Class 802 trains with new distinctive seat covers. The trains are receiving new seating from July until the end of the year. Sheffield-based Diamond Group is supplying the new seat covers and cushions, while Mirfield textile manufacturer Camira has been involved with the colour selection and sampling process. Delivered in partnership with Hitachi Rail, the seating was designed by Derby-based industrial designers David Gordon and Andy Sykes.

Edinburgh Festival services – During August, TPT is running two extra services a day for festivalgoers travelling to and from the Edinburgh Festival. The services provide later evening connectivity between Edinburgh Waverley, East Linton, Dunbar, Reston, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Alnmouth, Morpeth and Newcastle in both directions.

Operator performance – Northern Trains (NTL)

Rail period	T-3	T-15	All cancellations	TOC-on-self cancellations
P1 (01/04/26 – 02/05/26)	82.0%	98.2%	3.0%	1.5%
P2 (03/05/26 – 30/05/26)	78.9%	97.6%	3.3%	2.2%
P3 (31/05/26 – 27/06/26)	79.0%	97.4%	3.5%	2.0%

Operational update

The new rail year started with some operational challenges, including a number of significant incidents, infrastructure issues and the impact of hot weather, particularly over the May bank holiday and during the second half of June, when amended timetables were implemented in line with industry key route strategies. NTL continues to work closely with industry partners to review the response to these events and strengthen resilience for the future.

Despite these challenges, Period 3 cancellations remained better than target at 3.5%, while the new all-stations cancellations measure closed the period at 2.82%, also outperforming plan and reflecting the significant efforts of colleagues across NTL to maintain a resilient service for customers.

NTL has also continued engagement with Mayoral Strategic Authorities and Transport Focus regarding proposals designed to improve reliability for customers during the autumn leaf-fall period. Feedback from stakeholders is being considered as part of the ongoing consultation process.

NTL was among the most improved operators in the latest independent industry customer satisfaction results, achieving 88% overall satisfaction. Progress also continues to be made on Passenger Assistance, with the proportion of customers requiring assistance but not receiving it falling to 5%, the strongest result NTL has achieved since improvement work started in this area.

While the summer hot weather affected travel patterns in some areas, underlying passenger growth remains ahead of last year (1.9% journeys growth in period 3). Growth has been supported by fares changes, improved revenue protection activity and commercial initiatives, with Family Fare products having now generated 70,000 journeys.

Progress is also continuing on fleet renewal. Manufacturer bids for NTL's new rolling stock programme have been received and are currently being evaluated. Alongside this, work is progressing to introduce 37 Class 350 electric trains from late 2027, bringing forward the replacement of the Class 323 fleet by several years and delivering improvements in reliability, capacity and customer experience for passengers in South Manchester. NTL continues to work with partners and stakeholders to build understanding and support for its long-term fleet investment plans.

Further negotiation has been ongoing with RMT on Conductor terms and conditions.

Events and initiatives

New products including the Northern Explorer and Cumbria Travel Pass have helped make rail travel more accessible and affordable for different customer groups, supporting leisure travel and regional tourism.

NTL, TPT, Network Rail and the Transpennine Route Upgrade team hosted a joint MP drop-in event at Westminster on 22 April, helping to build understanding of rail investment priorities and strengthen engagement with parliamentarians from across the North.

NTL was ranked 24th in The Times Top 100 Apprenticeship Employers league table, recognising the contribution of colleagues who support apprentices in developing skills and careers in rail. The business also marked Pride Month, celebrating the importance of inclusion, diversity and allyship, with colleagues representing NTL at Pride events across the North during the summer.

West Yorkshire Combined Authority and the rail industry signed the first Memorandum of Understanding with a mayoral partnership on 19 June, with NTL's Managing Director announced as West Yorkshire's nominated Railway Leader on behalf of the North's Railway. Similar partnership arrangements continue to be explored and progressed with other Mayoral Strategic Authorities.

NTL continued to support celebrations marking the 150th anniversary of the Settle-Carlisle line, including a train naming ceremony and a £1.50 anniversary flash sale, helping to celebrate the route's heritage and encourage leisure travel across the region. The business also supported Better Transport Week, hosting Campaign for Better Transport visits on the Settle-Carlisle and Northumberland lines.

Operator performance – WM Trains (London Northwestern Railway)

Rail period	T-3	T-15	All cancellations	TOC-on-self cancellations
P1 (01/04/26 – 02/05/26)	84.6%	98.6%	3.5%	2.0%
P2 (03/05/26 – 30/05/26)	80.9%	97.3%	6.2%	2.5%
P3 (31/05/26 – 27/06/26)	81.3%	98.1%	4.1%	2.3%

Operational update

London Northwestern Railway (LNR) continues to work with industry partners on the proposed introduction of a new passenger service between Manchester Airport and Birmingham.

Events and initiatives

In July 2026, LNR unveiled a specially liveried train named "The Spirit of Invictus" to mark one year to go until the Birmingham Invictus Games 2027. The unit is now in service across the LNR network, including the Liverpool-Birmingham route.

Operator performance – East Midlands Railway (EMR)

Rail period	T-3	T-15	All cancellations	TOC-on-self cancellations
P2 (03/05/26 – 30/05/26)	75.10%	95.20%	5.96%	4.48%
P3 (31/05/26 – 27/06/26)	71.50%	94.51%	6.68%	6.04%
P4 (28/06/26 – 25/07/26)	72.80%	95.10%	6.70%	5.60%

Operational update

Engineering works on the Mainline south of Bedford over the weekend of 20 June, together with a major incident on 19 June, meant that the intercity lines were closed between Bedford and London St Pancras and a reduced service was in operation on the intercity and Connect services from 19 to 28 June.

During recent periods, following UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and Met Office advice, EMR advised essential travel only on various dates in May and June. EMR introduced a temporary amended timetable across some routes to provide greater resilience across the rest of the network and advised customers to check before travelling.

Fleet summer readiness activities were brought forward due to hot weather occurring earlier in the year than expected.

A platform zoning soft launch began on 20 July at key stations to support customers in identifying the most appropriate area of the platform to wait, aligned with their seat reservations.

The May 2026 timetable change brought new Sunday services and improved connections. These included new Sunday services on the Robin Hood Line, two new Sunday services for Beeston, and an additional stop to improve access to the Peak District. An additional call at Netherfield was also introduced on the 10:03 Nottingham to Skegness service on weekdays and Saturdays. Customers on the Connect route will also benefit from additional Sunday capacity, with 8-car Class 360 services operating to mirror weekdays and Saturdays.

Events and initiatives

From 20 July, EMR introduced a temporary intercity timetable following fleet performance and reliability issues in service. EMR apologises to customers who have been affected by the recent disruption and is committed to restoring a reliable service.

Planned engineering work took place on the Mainline south of Bedford on 20, 21 and 22 June.

Operator performance – CrossCountry

Rail period	T-3	T-15	All cancellations	TOC-on-self cancellations
P2 (03/05/26 – 30/05/26)	62.2%	88.3%	9.7%	8.6%
P3 (31/05/26 – 27/06/26)	61.4%	89.2%	8.8%	7.9%
P4 (28/06/26 – 25/07/26)	56.5%	87.0%	9.0%	5.8%

Operational Update

The new rail year began positively for CrossCountry; however, since the middle of Period 1, external failures and infrastructure issues have impacted the T3 performance metrics, which have continued to decline. This has been exacerbated by the hot weather events in June and July, along with ongoing challenges relating to train crew availability.

T3 performance has fallen 5% below the MAA target and is 3% worse year-on-year. This remains within expectations following the introduction of the December 2025 timetable, which forecast a potential 6% reduction in some areas for CrossCountry.

The most significant challenges are currently seen on the East Coast route, which sits second from bottom for CrossCountry in both T3 measures and assurance targets. The route has missed its target in each of the first three periods of the rail year and is currently 55% behind target. In contrast, the North & East route shows a different trend, performing 17% ahead of target for the year. However, its T3 achievement level remains 10 percentage points below desired levels. Fixed infrastructure issues and external factors, including both animal-related and human-related incidents, continue to dominate root causes. Off-route service management also plays a significant role in poorer T3 performance for CrossCountry, with a year-on-year trend differential of a 36% reduction in T3 following the May 2026 timetable change across several geographical locations.

Period 4 was also highly challenging, with multiple T3 failures and only three days meeting metric targets. Infrastructure failures and poor route service management drove performance down and cancellations up.

Fleet performance has also been challenging. Voyager fleet levels were below required targets between March and July, with additional short-forms arising from fatalities, maintenance issues, and wider operational pressures. A recovery plan for the Voyager fleet has been developed with the rolling stock company and the maintainer to reduce failures. Since the start of July, Voyager fleet levels have been consistently above expected targets.

Events and Initiatives

CrossCountry is leading the development of a 'sub-threshold' strategy group to establish a collaborative industry approach to reducing reactionary delays—one of the most difficult categories of delay to quantify. This work involves NTL, TPT, EMR, Network Rail routes, and the Network Rail System Operator.

Trespass and fatalities continue to be major drivers of delay and cancellation across the industry. CrossCountry is working collaboratively with Network Rail and British Transport Police (BTP) on initiatives relating to persons in vulnerable positions, including funding for patrols and hotspot visibility to reduce incidents.

Internal focus on continuous improvement remains ongoing, particularly around reducing TOC-on-self delay minutes. This work is driven by non-technical skills, behaviours, planning and utilisation across the core business. Combined with targeted performance initiatives and forums, CrossCountry expects consolidated performance metrics to improve.

Challenges and papers have been issued to the East Coast route outlining required improvements to T3 performance. These include improvement plans and timelines for targeted areas of infrastructure and service-management planning.

CrossCountry has also shared a journey story timeline of root causes of delays and failures, supporting a collaborative approach to achieving required targets and metrics. This work has informed the development of six problem statements aligned to the route, enabling project development to support resolution and improve customer experience and performance outcomes.

Internally, recruitment continues for traincrew drivers at both Newcastle and Edinburgh, as well as for Train Managers. This will remain an ongoing process over the next year.

Operator performance – Grand Central (GC)

Rail period	T-3	T-15	All cancellations	TOC-on-self cancellations
P1 (01/04/26 – 02/05/26)	62.26%	90.28%	2.75%	0.87%
P2 (03/05/26 – 30/05/26)	57.45%	85.56%	4.26%	1.54%
P3 (31/05/26 – 27/06/26)	60.13%	89.29%	4.17%	1.90%

Operational update

Fleet reliability continues to improve following fitment of Remote Condition Monitoring on our Class 180 units.

GC is currently awaiting a decision on its 35th Supplemental Agreement, which would see the introduction of two additional Bradford to London return services and one additional Wakefield to London service via York.

GC also has other live applications for services between Newcastle and Brighton and for Cleethorpes to London.

Events and initiatives

In the first half of 2026, GC rolled out new body-worn cameras to all customer-facing staff.

Operator performance – Hull Trains

Rail period	T-3	T-15	All cancellations	TOC-on-self cancellations
P1 (01/04/26 – 02/05/26)	73.63%	92.43%	1.3%	0.3%
P2 (03/05/26 – 30/05/26)	68.13%	91.40%	1.0%	0.0%
P3 (31/05/26 – 27/06/26)	67.62%	93.88%	1.2%	0.0%

Operational update

Hull Trains has continued to perform strongly over the period, with the vast majority of cancellations due to external infrastructure or trespass issues affecting the company. The operator's fleet also continues to outperform most other operators in terms of reliability.

Events and initiatives

Hull Trains was named Britain's favourite rail operator by the Great British Railways Customer Experience Satisfaction Survey, scoring 94% for the six months to 31 March 2026. This accolade has seen the company consistently leading the country and builds on recent successes, including being named 'Rail Operator of the Year' at the Spotlight Rail Awards and winning two Gold Awards and two Silver Awards at the Corporate Content Awards for recent content campaigns. These achievements demonstrate the work the operator does across the communities it serves. Hull Trains has also supported sporting fixtures involving Hull teams, carrying over 8,500 fans to the Championship play-offs and the Challenge Cup final. It recently gave free rail travel to attendees of Humber Street Sesh and Hull Pride, allowing more people to get to these events and helping reduce carbon emissions in the region.

Operator performance – Lumo East Coast

Rail period	T-3	T-15	All cancellations	TOC-on-self cancellations
P2 (03/05/26 – 30/05/26)	65.2%	87.9%	4.0%	0.3%
P3 (31/05/26 – 27/06/26)	66.4%	90.2%	2.9%	0.0%
P4 (28/06/26 – 25/07/26)	63.2%	88.7%	2.1%	0.2%

Operational update

Lumo East Coast's performance has continued to be affected by infrastructure and external trespass issues. Its fleet is also one of the most reliable train fleets in the country.

Events and initiatives

Lumo was also named Britain's best-value-for-money rail operator in the Great British Railways Rail Customer Experience Survey for the six months to 31 March 2026. It was also named 'Best Small Employer' at the Proud Scotland Awards. In July, the company achieved a

UK first, running the highest-capacity domestic intercity train in the UK, carrying 772 passengers in each direction and saving approximately 189 tonnes of CO₂e compared with domestic air travel. The trial was intended to showcase what can be done to position rail ahead of other forms of transport in reducing the impact of climate change, as well as highlighting the need for investment in overhead line power supplies and capacity improvements on the East Coast Main Line.

Lumo's West Coast operations successfully began in May and will be reported on in the next reporting period.

Operator performance – LNER

Rail period	T-3	T-15	All cancellations	TOC-on-self cancellations
P2 (03/05/26 – 30/05/26)	66.2%	87.5%	4.5%	0.8%
P3 (31/05/26 – 27/06/26)	65.0%	91.0%	3.2%	0.6%
P4 (28/06/26 – 25/07/26)	64.8%	90.0%	2.8%	0.6%

Operational update

Hot weather affected LNER's operations, although not to the extent experienced during previous heatwaves. Immediate action was taken to minimise disruption, including temporarily withdrawing the ageing InterCity 225 fleet, whose older Mark 4 air-conditioning systems can overheat when temperatures exceed their original 28°C design threshold; reducing Leeds services by one train per hour; suspending Lincoln services; and allowing customers to defer their journeys, enabling LNER to operate a robust timetable throughout the hottest days.

Events and initiatives

Customer and Community Investment Fund

Charities across the East Coast Main Line are being encouraged to apply for funding through LNER's 2027 Customer and Community Investment Fund (CCIF).

LNER is offering grants of up to £10,000 to small and medium-sized charities based within 15 miles of the East Coast Main Line for projects supporting its three key priorities: better for the planet, better for people and better for places.

Interest in the fund continues to grow, with LNER receiving more than 400 applications in the latest funding round. Seventeen projects were selected, helping to deliver tangible benefits for local people and communities.

Digital signalling

LNER reached a significant milestone in its journey towards digital signalling by completing the first live operation of an Azuma train under European Train Control System (ETCS) Level 2 supervision on the East Coast Main Line.

The overnight testing, conducted on 15 and 16 July, brought together technicians, engineers and drivers from across the rail industry. The achievement was made possible through collaboration between LNER, Network Rail, Agility Trains, Hitachi Rail and test train operator RailAdventure UK, demonstrating how an integrated railway can deliver digital innovation.

Defence Employer Recognition

LNER has achieved Gold status in the 2026 Defence Employer Recognition Scheme for its continued support of Armed Forces personnel and their families. The company has been a longstanding signatory of the Armed Forces Covenant, which includes a commitment to helping serving personnel and veterans move into civilian employment.

The Gold Award recognises LNER as an exemplar within its sector for championing the Covenant, supporting the wider Armed Forces community and creating a positive working environment for active reservists.

Seat-y of Culture

A young artist from Bradford has seen their winning train seat design brought to life onboard an LNER train after winning a competition celebrating Bradford's year as the UK City of Culture.

Khyreece, aged 13, from Oastlers School, impressed the judges with a bold and colourful design inspired by Bradford Live. Reopened in 2025, the iconic venue has quickly become a landmark addition to the city's cultural landscape. The winning artwork has now been transformed into a bespoke moquette – the distinctive patterned fabric traditionally used on train seats.

Operator performance – Avanti West Coast

Rail period	T-3	T-15	All cancellations	TOC-on-self cancellations
P2 (03/05/26 – 30/05/26)	55.4%	84.1%	8.7%	1.7%
P3 (31/05/26 – 27/06/26)	54.4%	85.4%	5.8%	2.3%
P4 (28/06/26 – 25/07/26)	44.8%	76.4%	14.9%	6.9%

Operational update

Following a period of stabilisation at the start of the year, recent performance has fallen below the standard that passengers rightly expect and that Avanti expects of itself. P2 and P3 results were driven principally by extreme heat and asset failures, including a significant overhead line incident that lasted several days, as well as major external incidents including trespass and a lorry striking a bridge.

The primary cause of P4 short-notice cancellations was a shortage of train crew availability. While Avanti employs more drivers and train managers than when it inherited the franchise, its Driver Rest Day Working agreement expired in late June. Rest Day Working has historically been used across the industry to provide important resilience in covering temporary staffing gaps and maintaining service levels. The absence of such an agreement reduced Avanti's ability to manage short-term fluctuations in resource availability. Avanti is pleased to report that the Rest Day Working issue was resolved in August and is expected to support a rapid improvement in performance.

Avanti introduced an amended timetable between 20 July and 28 August, with the temporary removal of a small number of services, driven by reduced seasonal demand levels and value-for-money considerations for taxpayers. This temporary adjustment was agreed in April, before the position on the loss of Rest Day Working crystallised. Avanti kept performance under review throughout the period and added services back in, such as for The Open, or

operated additional services, such as for the Commonwealth Games, where demand levels increased and risks of overcrowding were identified.

Events and initiatives

In June this year, Avanti's Class 805 Evero fleet, which replaced the Voyager trains and serves the North Wales and Chester route, reached a major milestone by notching up five million miles on the network. Entering passenger service in June 2024, the Class 805s were part of a £350m investment in sustainable travel, supporting the goal of achieving net zero carbon by 2031.

In July, Avanti partnered with the Family Holiday Charity in a rail industry first to help vulnerable families access much-needed summer breaks, providing rail travel to holiday destinations along the West Coast Main Line. The pilot scheme will support six families facing challenges such as financial hardship, bereavement, disability, or mental health issues, helping remove barriers to travel and create opportunities for quality time together.

West Coast Partnership's annual Stakeholder Conference 2026 will take place on 8 September at Manchester's Midland Hotel, bringing together leaders from the rail industry, government and regional partners to discuss the key challenges and opportunities facing the sector. Under the theme *"Keeping on Track: Delivering Better Journeys Together"*, the event will focus on improving railway performance and reliability, strengthening partnerships, and delivering a more integrated rail network that supports economic growth and connectivity.

