

Long Term Rail Strategy Key Messages

Based on updated draft
strategy | January 2018





The North of England plays a vital role in powering the UK economy. It is home to 16 million people and 7.2 million jobs and contributes around a fifth of the UK's Gross Value Added (GVA). A strong North matters for the whole country – however, its economic performance is currently constrained by poor connectivity and decades of under-investment in infrastructure and services.

The Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review shows that by 2050 a transformed North could have an additional 850,000 jobs and generate almost £100 billion additional GVA, over and above 'business as usual'

trends. Investment in the North's rail network will play a significant part in this.

The Long Term Rail Strategy sets out an ambitious vision for the transformation of the North's railway with new major investment projects and services complemented by major upgrades of the existing network. This will create a railway that is world-class and that the North can be proud of. The strategy explores the network improvements required to support a growing economy, environmental sustainability and improved quality of life, considering both passenger and freight needs across the region.

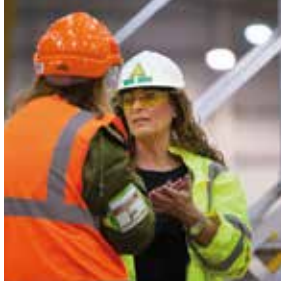
Background

Rail North published the first Long Term Rail Strategy in 2015, setting out how connectivity, the customer experience and efficiency could all be improved to support economic growth, and representing Local Transport Authorities across the North of England. For the first time this provided a clear direction for the development of railways within the North of England and helped guide the specification of the new Northern and TransPennine Express franchises. Commencing in April 2016, these franchises are providing over £1 billion of investment.

The update of the strategy, released in 2018, takes into account the unique opportunities of proposed national infrastructure schemes, including HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail. It ensures that the future railway makes the most of these opportunities and that benefits are felt across the North, including enhancements to the capacity and capability of the entire network and improved train and station facilities.

In 2018 Rail North will be joining with Transport for the North as the organisation gains Statutory Transport Body status. Transport for the North will use the Long Term Rail Strategy as their primary rail document and will retain the devolved franchise management powers that Rail North currently hold.





Vision and objectives

The Long Term Rail Strategy sets out why change is needed, what that change should be and how that change will be delivered. The strategy forms a key element of Transport for the North's Strategic Transport Plan and will be used to develop future work programmes and inform wider industry processes. It will take full advantage of the opportunities that emerging technology presents and encourage continual innovation. It will be used to influence future rail investment strategies, policies and programmes.

Our vision is to achieve:

'A thriving North of England, where modern transport connections drive economic growth and support an excellent quality of life.'

Aligning with our pan-northern transport objectives, set out in the Strategic Transport Plan, we will deliver:

- A step-change in connectivity
- Provision of capacity within the infrastructure and the train services needed for growth
- A rail network which customers find easy to access and use
- A railway which supports the communities it serves
- Enhanced cost-effectiveness of running the railway.



Why is change needed?

The Long Term Rail Strategy is based on the North of England's rail network in 2017. It identifies the network's potential economic, social and environmental benefits, as well as its weaknesses and opportunities. The strategy sets out these weaknesses as a series of 'strategic gaps' – the gaps between the capabilities of the current network and what must be delivered to achieve our vision.

The North of England's rail network is composed of a complex series of routes connecting population centres, international gateways, rural communities, leisure destinations and logistics centres. There are almost 600 stations, a diverse range of major city centre hubs, suburban commuter interchanges and rural areas, each serving as a gateway to their communities.

It is a mixed-use, mostly two-track railway, with passenger and freight services using the same track in many places, all travelling at different speeds and stopping at different locations. This characteristic acts as a key limiting factor to the planning, delivery and growth of rail services in the North.

The main gaps identified include:

- Poor journey times and low service frequency
- Inadequate integration with other modes of travel
- Poor service reliability and punctuality
- Weekend and public holiday services which fall short of customer expectations
- Services for rural and economically deprived areas which do not always meet local needs
- Lack of on-train capacity
- Capacity and capability constraints for rail freight services
- Restricted uptake of rail freight as a mode of transportation
- Infrastructure constraints limiting growth
- Inconsistent quality of train services, stations, security and information provision
- Trains which contribute to poor air quality in many centres
- Complex fares and ticketing
- Operating and infrastructure inefficiencies, and lack of revenue collection
- Poor attractiveness of rail to passengers, businesses, and freight.



What needs to be done?

The Long Term Rail Strategy identifies opportunities to close gaps in order to achieve our vision, known as 'conditional outputs'. These outputs are defined as conditional as they are dependent upon an affordable and deliverable solution being identified.

Connectivity

Improvement in train services to link places people want to travel, and provide better connections and service frequency.

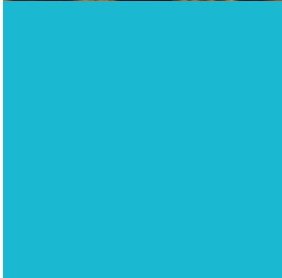
Capacity

Providing more space for passengers and more rail track to allow more trains.



- Reduce journey times between the North's main economic and freight centres, international gateways and tourist destinations
- Increase the number of people able to access major northern cities and economic centres
- Increase the number of rail services operating on Sundays and public holidays
- Extend first and last service times to and from economic centres.

- Increase passenger satisfaction relating to crowding
- Enable all passengers to expect a seat on off-peak services, and within 20- minutes of boarding a peak service
- Provide infrastructure that will support future growth for rail freight.



For the connectivity outputs to be achieved a set of desirable minimum standards has been identified. These set out the targets which form the starting point for designing interventions and initiatives, dependent on the development of a solid business case. Joint working with stakeholders through development of plans will ensure the ability to align with local needs.



Customers

Meeting the needs and expectations of customers (freight and passengers).

- Increase passenger satisfaction relating to station facilities and on-train conditions
- Increase punctuality of freight and passenger services
- Decrease the percentage of cancelled passenger and freight services
- Increase personal safety satisfaction
- Increase in number of passengers satisfied with information provision.

Communities

Involve and integrate with local communities.

- All stations should meet our minimum standards
- Increase in passenger station satisfaction
- Improve air quality and reduce CO2 and other harmful emissions on and around railway owned land and in wider society, by encouraging use of the rail network.

Cost-effectiveness

Support better ways of working and continue improving financial returns through train operators.

- Reduce the cost per passenger mile, and per freight tonne kilometre, of services in the North
- Grow the 'net revenue' (total money generated) while delivering high quality and inclusive services.

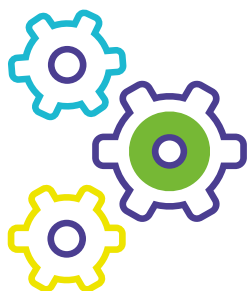
Desirable minimum standards:

1. All passenger routes to be served by a minimum two trains per hour
2. Long-distance services to achieve average journey speeds of at least 80mph
3. Inter-urban services to achieve average journey speeds of at least 60mph
4. Local and suburban services to achieve average journey speeds of at least 40mph
5. The North's rail network to accommodate the evolving needs of the freight market - supporting longer, heavier trains, increased path availability and enhanced infrastructure, ensuring additional room between freight trains and clearance of structures on the network (also known as gauge clearance)
6. Direct connectivity between economic centres and Manchester Airport
7. Rail to directly serve each of the North's airports, with direct services to economic centres within the airport's catchments
8. Direct connectivity between tourist destinations and economic centres in their catchments
9. Infrastructure to be available to enable a weekday inter-peak level service on Sundays and public holidays
10. Capacity provision aligned to demand patterns during holidays and for events
11. Major ports in the North to be served by a railway that will support movement and future growth of rail freight
12. A 50% improvement in the average speed of freight services by 2028.

How will change be delivered?

Transport for the North will work with our northern partners and the rail industry to examine best practice and deliver a range of improvements to support passenger and freight growth, across the whole of the rail network in the North. Together, we will develop a series of delivery plans to turn the strategy into a set of costed and viable proposals. These proposals will be submitted to the Department for Transport and other funding opportunities as they arise.

We will seek to maximise the benefits of ongoing investment through the franchises we jointly manage, looking for opportunities to deliver elements of the strategy in the next few years. In addition we will seek to influence other franchises that serve the North to provide a single consistent network.





Short-term (2018 - 2025)

maximising ongoing investment and getting ready for HS2 phases 1 and 2a

We will ensure full delivery of franchise commitments, completion of the Northern Hub and TransPennine Route Upgrade schemes, and development of interventions to address known network challenges. This will include preparing the conventional network for the introduction of high-speed rail services.

Transport for the North will work to secure funding necessary to deliver a firm pipeline of schemes.



Medium-term (2020-2035)

planning for future growth

The capacity improvements being delivered over the next eight years will help address peak time train overcrowding. However, additional capacity investment must keep pace with northern economic growth and increasing rail demand. The needs of the North's logistics sector will continue to change, with increased demand for freight paths. Providing sufficient rail capacity to cater for ongoing growth will be prioritised, alongside addressing capacity and connectivity gaps across the North.

Transport for the North will ensure that the benefits of economic growth are experienced across the North and more widely. The benefits of both the eastern and western sides of HS2 phase 2b will be secured.



Long-term (2026-2050)

maximising HS2 phase 2b and Northern Powerhouse Rail investment

The strategy considers projects that can support and stimulate economic development in the years prior to the proposed introduction of HS2 phase 2b and Northern Powerhouse Rail, identifying projects for further examination. We will develop the best arrangements for HS2 phase 2b's implementation, delivering further journey time savings and enhancing connectivity. The introduction of this high-speed infrastructure will also enable us to optimise the use of capacity on the current network. Investment projects identified will complement HS2 phase 2b and Northern Powerhouse Rail but will not be dependent on it.



Throughout delivery, the following aspects will be explored and developed:

- Service quality and customer facing matters, including fares structure and development of a consistent set of higher standards for rail services and stations
- Wider industrial development strategies, including examining the benefits of integration between the North's energy strategy and rail investment, and the need to strengthen the skills in the North to upgrade and modernise the railway
- Potential new and re-opened lines and stations, working in partnership with local transport authorities and the rail industry to examine business case requirements
- Renewal as an opportunity for enhancement, working in partnership with Network Rail to identify value-for-money infrastructure solutions
- Identifying opportunities for alternative sources of funding.

Download the full draft updated Long Term Rail Strategy
transportforthenorth.com/reports





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