

2025-26 Business Plan



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What we do

We prepare the **North's long-term transport strategy** to unlock sustainable and inclusive growth, and monitor and evaluate progress against its ambitions and metrics

We **advise government** to ensure decisions on pan-regional and national connectivity are informed by the North's evidence and priorities

We provide capacity and capability to **support local transport and growth plans**

In partnership, we specify, procure and **monitor the North's rail contracts**

We broker and **convene public and private partners together** to advocate for and accelerate delivery of pan-regional infrastructure and services

With our partners, we have...



Made the case, including insight from our Northern Transport Voices Panel of 1000+ residents, to **prevent closure of rail station ticket offices**

Championed to secure rail **freight as part of the TransPennine Route Upgrade**, maximising economic and environmental benefits

Created a **regional electric vehicle charging infrastructure framework (EVCI)**, to inform public planning and commercial opportunities enabling a step change in EVCI roll-out

Produced award-winning **research that has shone a light on those being socially excluded due to transport**, which is now informing better transport options and investment decisions

Delivered essential evidence, with regional knowledge and expertise, that contributed to the A66 upgrade business case success

Developed a Northern Appraisal Playbook

and Analytical Framework that enables stronger case making for the region



TRANSPORT FOR THE

NORTH

Bringing the North together



Benefits of our work include...

Helping our political leaders work in partnership to **advocate for and deliver pan-Northern priorities**, where they choose to do so

Delivering **trusted data and evidence** for our Mayoral Combined Authorities, County Combined Authorities, Local Transport Authorities and national partners, to **advocate** for investment in growth

Providing **technical services and advice**, including analysis, modelling and planning tools to develop business cases more cost effectively – delivering more than £500k in savings and c£5m value for partners in 12 months

Enabling the North to **improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its rail services and shape pan-regional strategic infrastructure** outcomes needed for growth

To unlock inclusive and sustainable growth, we work on...



Delivering better pan-Northern connectivity on our **strategic road and strategic rail networks**, including energy and digital requirements

Securing improved connectivity to our **international gateways**

Identifying and enabling cross-boundary planning and collaboration to deliver infrastructure priorities, such as **EVCI and alternative fuels**

Unblocking regulatory inefficiencies and infrastructure constraints to **promote rail freight growth and more efficient logistics movements**

Opportunities and challenges faced by the North, such as rural connectivity, transport-related social exclusion, new technology options and climate change resilience/adaptation

1. Foreword:

Chief Executive, Martin Tugwell



The Government has placed transport's role as an enabler of sustainable economic growth at the heart of its agenda. We know that an efficient, high quality, safe, integrated and decarbonised transport system that connects people and places is fundamental to everyday life.

The evidence base assembled by TfN in support of its Strategic Transport Plan (STP) sets out the scale of the opportunity that exists across the North but also the challenges our communities and businesses face.

Investing in infrastructure and services in the North to improve connectivity will enable our economy to grow by an additional £118bn per year. It will help improve social inclusion and it will reduce the environmental impact of our transport system. In this regard the North's ambition complements that of the Government as set out in its missions.

The size of the prize is huge and one that the North's leaders are committed to realising. Devolution is empowering the North's politicians to make a difference for their communities and businesses: coming together as TfN they make a difference for the North.

In adopting the STP in March 2024 the TfN Board set out the scale of its ambition for the North. Improving connectivity between the great cities and towns across the North and beyond to the rest of the country, is critical to realising that ambition.

And it is with this in mind that our focus in the short-medium term is on how, working with our partners across the North and nationally, we enable delivery of the outcomes we seek for our communities and businesses.

With the fiscal environment continuing to be challenging in the short term our role in advising on the effectiveness and efficiency of infrastructure and service delivery is more necessary than ever.

TfN's work with our partners on delivery reinforces the need for system reform. It's why we are using our accumulated knowledge and expertise to develop practical advice on how to ensure the appraisal system better reflects circumstances and opportunities that exist across the North.

There is also a need to improve the alignment of investment across strategically important infrastructure networks.

Investment in energy generation and distribution is critical to enabling electrification of our transport system. Improving digital connectivity not only supports a better user experience of our transport system, it enables our businesses to operate in different ways, which in turn changes the nature of future travel demand. Our approach to investment must therefore be underpinned by a systems approach.

TfN welcomes the government's commitment to set out its vision for the future of transport, through its Integrated National Transport Strategy. It is a unique opportunity to achieve the shift in mindset required if we are to embed the place-based, outcome focused, user-centred approach at the heart of decision-making. Such thinking is already at the heart of our STP, and we will continue to work closely with the government, sharing our evidence and expertise to support its work.

The strength of TfN remains the way it brings political leaders and business representatives together in a shared endeavour to unleash the North's potential. The accumulated knowledge and expertise within the TfN executive, a publicly owned asset, is one that TfN's partners are drawing on through the 'TfN Offer' in ever increasing numbers.

The evidence is clear: the analytical, policy and research capability held within TfN is highly valued by our partners, providing as it does access to capability that complements their own. Evidence shows that this approach saves the public sector money overall.

In 2024 TfN was included in the Sunday Times Top100 Best Places to Work: such an accolade is the result of our continuing commitment to invest in our single biggest asset – each and every member of Team TfN.

The knowledge and accumulated experience within the TfN executive extends far wider than just the transport sector: it is an asset that continues to evolve and develop to complement the work of our constituent authorities and our partners in government.

This Business Plan sets out how that capability will be used over the coming year to support our partners and in the process set out a direction of travel for TfN for the years to follow.

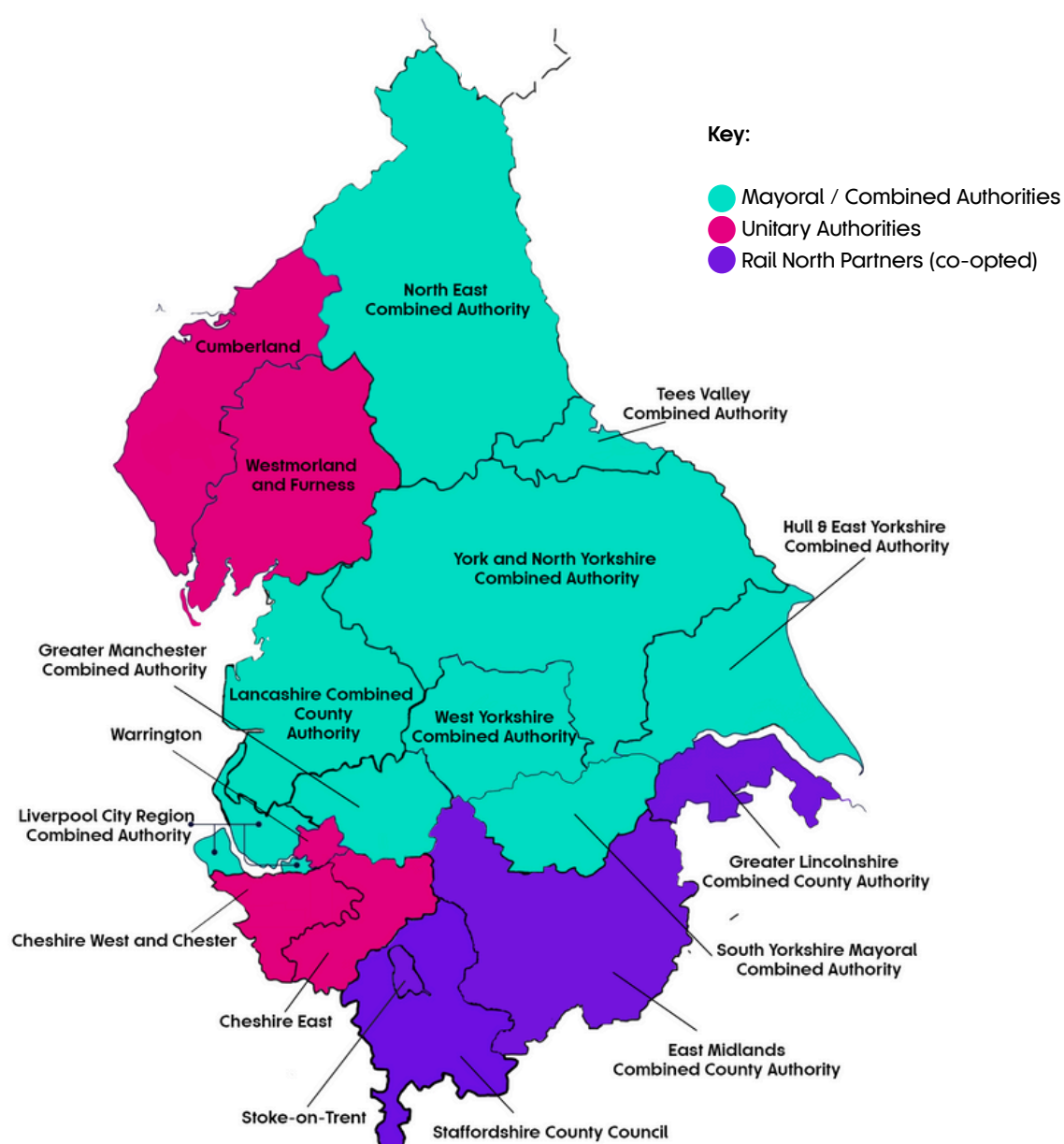
Together we can – and we will – transform the North.

2. About Transport for the North

In 2018, Parliament devolved powers and responsibilities from the Department for Transport (DfT) to the North's political leaders, with TfN established as a statutory body.

TfN works on behalf of the North's 16 million citizens and 1.1 million businesses, complementing the work of our Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) and Local Transport Authorities (LTAs), and supporting the work of the government nationally.

The TfN Board comprises the elected political leaders from those authorities, who work with representatives from our business community, as well as our national partners, to discharge the statutory duties and other responsibilities held by TfN.



Statutory Sub-national Transport Body

As a statutory partner to the DfT, TfN has the following general functions agreed by Parliament:

- To prepare a transport strategy for its area
- To provide advice to the Secretary of State about the exercise of transport functions in its area
- To co-ordinate the carrying out of transport functions in relation to its area that are exercisable by different constituent authorities with a view to improving the effectiveness and efficiency in the carrying out of those functions
- If TfN considers that a transport function in relation to its area would more effectively and efficiently be carried out by TfN to make proposals to the Secretary of State for the transfer of that function to TfN
- To make other proposals to the Secretary of State about the role and functions of TfN

In addition, Parliament agreed to devolve additional powers to:

- + Coordinate and deliver smart ticketing systems across the North
- + Become a statutory partner in road and rail investment decisions
- + Oversee franchised rail services covering Northern and TransPennine Express (TPE) contracts.

Several of the additional powers held by TfN are exercisable concurrently with our constituent authorities and were devolved specifically to make it easier for those authorities to deliver schemes.

The updated STP was adopted by the TfN Board in March 2024. As the North's regional transport strategy, TfN uses the vision-led, outcome focused framework therein to frame our statutory advice to government. It is also used by TfN to identify interdependencies with investment in other strategic infrastructure (such as energy systems and digital connectivity) where this is necessary to enable transport outcomes.

Rail North Agreement/Partnership

There is a well-established track record of rail devolution to the North's political leaders.

Set out in the Rail North Agreement, the current level of devolution allows the North's political leaders to have a direct say in the specification, procurement and management of the North's rail services. This covers matters such as timetabling, fares, train deployment, ticketing and passenger environment, and facilities at stations and on services in relation to the contracts operated by Northern and TPE.

The Rail North Partnership team, employed by TfN and with dual reporting lines to TfN and DfT, is the means by which the North's political leaders exercise their devolved responsibilities.



Co-sponsorship – Northern Powerhouse Rail

Central to realising the economic potential of the North is improving the connectivity between the North's great cities and towns. Transformation of the North's rail system has been consistently identified as the central means of realising this outcome: it is why Northern Powerhouse Rail 'in full' remains at the heart of the updated STP.

TfN's role as co-client for the programme was amended by the previous government's Integrated Rail Plan, since when TfN has been co-sponsor, with terms agreed by the TfN Board and the Rail Minister. Work on reviewing the co-sponsorship agreement has begun with DfT officials with a view to concluding this later in 2025.

In addition to our role as co-sponsor, TfN continues to provide advanced analytical services to DfT in support of the development of the NPR business case, as well as specific schemes such as the new station for Bradford.



Highways North

With terms of reference agreed as part TfN's constitution, Highways North provides a statutory role for TfN in the work of National Highways, including in the development of each 5-year Road Investment Strategy, and in the prioritisation of investment for delivery.



Wider Linkages

Our stakeholder engagement is extensive given our pan-Northern role. We use our convening power in support of our partners to enable implementation of the STP, including with the business community and through our guardianship of the Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review (NPIER).

The NPIER demonstrates the need to align relevant policies in places for people. It is why we continue to work closely with bodies such as the Northern Gas Network, other energy providers and with industry and academia through the Northern Evidence Network, and other government departments such as Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), Department for Business and Trade (DBT) and Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT). This helps ensure connectivity policy comes together.

Nationally, we work with Transport Scotland, Transport for Wales and the other STBs across England. We have close links with the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC), Rail Industry Association, Logistics UK, Rail Freight Group and other industry and business representative bodies. In addition, we continue to strengthen our engagement directly with transport providers – including nationally significant assets such as ports and airports and we ensure that the voice of transport users is heard, and used to shape and inform our work.



3. Our Approach to Business Planning for 2025/26

TfN continues to evolve in response to the changing political and policy context. In 2024 following the Mayoral elections held on 2 May, and the General Election held on 4 July, we actively engaged with our constituent authorities as to their priorities for the year ahead.

Feedback from the TfN Board and our partners was clear: our focus must be on the pan-regional journeys, on connections to/from the North, and in providing support to our constituent authorities, so that together we deliver the economic, social and environmental outcomes set out in the STP.

We will do that through:

- ✓ Providing strategic evidence and statutory advice to make the case for investment to deliver the North's STP
- ✓ Acting as a broker/convenor of partners to accelerate delivery of pan-regional significant and/or cross border schemes and policy priorities
- ✓ Providing technical support, through our specialist capability, analytical framework and tools, to our partners for local/city-region/national planning and business cases

This focus represents a further evolution of TfN and sets the foundations not just for 2025/26 but for the rest of the next Spending Review period.

In keeping with our commitment to embed delivery of outcomes at the heart of our work, activities are presented in terms, of themes with resources allocated from across Team TfN accordingly.

The focus provided by this approach means that, compared with previous years, there are some activities that we will no longer undertake.

4. Our Business Priorities for 2025/26



Making the case for investment



Joining up Rail Services and Infrastructure



Northern Appraisal Playbook



Northern Powerhouse Rail:
TAME Commissioned Work



Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Infrastructure



Rail North Partnership



Carbon Baseline Dashboard and
Carbon Assessment Playbook



Rail Reform:
The North's Proposition



Freight and Logistics



Buses





Making the Case for Investment

Improving the connectivity (including the capacity) between the North's great cities and towns is central to realising the economic, social and environmental outcomes set out in the STP.

We will continue to work with our partners to support the delivery of investment that forms part of nationally managed investment programmes, including:

- TransPennine Route Upgrade (TRU) – including working with the rail sector to manage the impact of blockades required to enable its construction
- A66 Route Upgrade – continuing to work with in support of National Highways to secure the funding required to enable a start on site
- Major Road Network (MRN) – continuing to support our partners with the delivery of schemes that have been previously prioritised as part of this programme

We will work with partners to use the evidence, knowledge and technical capability held by TfN to support the case for transformational investment in the North's transport system, including:

- Northern Powerhouse Rail – continuing to work with government to develop the strategic business case in support of NPR
- Bradford New Station – continuing to work with our partners and government to reach agreement on the business case for this investment
- RIS3 (Road Investment Strategy 3) – working with our partners to ensure that the North's investment priorities for the Strategic Road Network are included in the investment programme

We will also work with our partners to make the case for, and shape investment programmes that support the delivery of the STP strategic outcomes, including:

- Placed Based Rail Task Forces – working with our partners and the rail sector, to ensure that the future needs of key hubs and interchanges are identified in the industry delivery pipeline
- Decarbonisation of Transport – building on our work with the energy sector to ensure future requirements are identified in industry pipelines, as well as supporting related investment that enables advantage to be taken of infrastructure investment being made
- Resilience and Reliability – we will continue our work appraising the vulnerability of our transport system to the effect of different climate hazards, as well as extending our analysis to elements of local networks with the intention of supporting partners in making the case for additional investment in maintenance and renewals



Northern Appraisal Playbook

We have published our Northern Appraisal playbook to support our partners in maximising the flexibilities within the current Green Book to better reflect the circumstances and opportunities that exist in the North.

In 2025/26 we work with our constituent authorities to apply the playbook to some live business cases, including the A19 north of Newcastle and Bradford Station.

We will use our work on the playbook to inform and shape subsequent reform of the appraisal system to give greater emphasis to realisation of placed based outcomes in the development of business cases, such as more jobs, improved access to education and healthier communities, and other key community amenities. We will engage both HMT and DfT in discussions to that effect.

As part of this focus, we will work with the Independent Transport Commission to consider the need for a more fundamental review of key inputs into appraisals particularly the value of travel time, to better reflect the circumstances of the North.



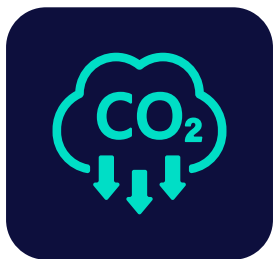
Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Infrastructure

Our EV State of Play report (December 2024) provided an update on progress with the transition to electric vehicles and set out actions required to meet our 2030 requirements. We will publish an annual update on progress as part of our reporting on the Strategic Transport Plan.

We will continue to share, and develop further, our evidence base on future EV requirements, including implications for the energy system. We will continue to enhance our easy-to-use online visualiser tool so that it remains a cost-effective means by which our partners can gain easy access to our work. We will also continue to work with the other Subnational Transport Bodies to support its wider use across England as a consistent and publicly operated source of intelligence for partners.

We will continue to use our EV Forum to work with our partners in support of the delivery of their EV Charging Infrastructure programmes. As part of this we will continue to strengthen links with the Office for Zero Emissions Vehicles (OZEV) and Electricity Distribution Network Operators

(DNOs), facilitating dialogue on ensuring that the OZEV and wider government departments and agencies are made aware of and encouraged to respond to the key EVCI delivery challenges and issues faced by our partners.



Carbon Baseline Dashboard and Carbon Assessment Playbook

The development and subsequent launch of our Carbon Baseline Dashboard (CBD) and Carbon Assessment Playbook (CAP) is a significant step forward in supporting the work of our partners to decarbonise their local transport system.

All our carbon tools are designed in such a way as to be easily updated to accommodate new evidence and evaluation data as that becomes available. Planned enhancements in the next 12 months will upgrade our CBD, adding additional attributes, including:

- A 'top down' policy testing function allowing partners to understand the level of commitment needed against key decarbonisation levers to achieve different levels of decarbonisation ambition for their area
- Updating the data so it is presented by Combined Authority geography where appropriate
- Increasing alignment between CBD and CAP outputs.

At the same time, we will work with other STBs to incorporate new evaluation evidence into our CAP, as well as adding new interventions where feasible. We will work with the other STBs and DfT to identify and implement the best option for hosting of the CAP in the longer term.





Freight and Logistics

If we are to realise the economic potential of the North, there is a need to give greater priority to meeting the needs of the freight and logistics sector.

Building on the significant amount of engagement undertaken in 2024 with our partners and industry, we will continue to work with them:

- To develop a Northern Freight Network Investment Plan – including identification of infrastructure requirements to uplift capacity on the rail network, and improvements in east-west road connectivity
- To continue to build the evidence base so as to better understand the actions required to meet our STP ‘right share’ metric to triple the share of freight (measured by tonne km) carried by rail to 25.5% by 2050
- To assess what is required to facilitate greater use of the capacity of northern ports to handle containerised freight currently transiting through southern ports. Working with the major port operators we will understand their expectations, identify consequential implications for landward connections, and agree as to what actions are to be taken forward collaboratively
- Continue our programme of stakeholder engagement with industry partners, including a series of roundtables which may include major ports, freight operating companies, express logistics firms and major Northern airports.
- We will work with our partners in Liverpool, and with other key partners to take forward the work required to identify alternative options for improved access to the port complex.

Our strategic modelling capability offers an opportunity for us to partner with DfT in the development of a new national freight model. Building on our established technical capability, TfN could undertake this work at a reduced cost to the public sector and provide on-going easy access for public bodies without them needing to seek access via a third party.



Joining up Rail Services and Infrastructure

The STP sets out how transformation of the rail system is central to realising the economic potential of the North and enabling sustainable growth. Central to this is ensuring that investment in infrastructure new rolling stock are aligned with each other, and that both are aligned with planning for new timetables.

Our experience supporting the East Coast Main Line Task Force, together with work associated with the TRU, have reinforced the importance of a single overview of planned investment across the North.

Responding to requests from our partners, in 2024 we developed a 'State of Play': the first time such an overview had been prepared for the North – from the near term 'on the ground' schemes such as TRU through to NPR. As well as identifying where timetable changes are required to take advantage of infrastructure investment, it also identifies where there is a need for further investment to maximise the benefit of that investment.

We will continue to work with our partners and the rail sector to develop the State of Play overview. As part of this we will establish Task Forces for key hubs including Leeds, Sheffield and Liverpool City Region areas. These will be complemented by place-based interchange groups focused on ensuring stations are fit for the future and properly integrate passenger facilities with local development opportunities. TfN will support local partners in the implementation of these groups with data and evidence to help support the case for change.

TfN will work with Network Rail and the operators in the development of the timetable changes required to realise the full benefit of the infrastructure investment in TRU and we support the operators in their procurement of new rolling stock that also forms part of that package.

Through the Rail North Partnership, TfN will work with partners to set out how Northern and TransPennine Trains should develop their services over the next decade in support of the investment programme and TfN's STP – for example reducing Transport Related Social Exclusion.

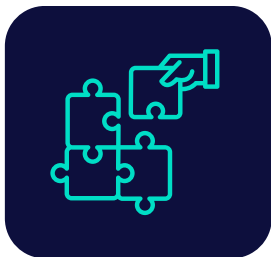


Northern Powerhouse Rail: TAME Commissioned Work

TfN will continue to provide specialist technical capability and capacity to DfT in support of the work to develop the strategic business case for the long-term programme of works required to deliver NPR.

We will continue to work with DfT on NPR through the co-sponsorship agreement and will use our NPR Stakeholder Forum to continue to work closely with our constituent authorities to ensure the programme is shaped and informed by their input.

And we will continue to ensure that the benefits of the investment in tools and analysis required in support of NPR are available more widely to our partners through the TfN Offer.



Rail North Partnership

Through the Rail North Agreement, we will continue to work with DfT on the specification, management and oversight of the Northern and TPT rail contracts. Working through the Rail North committee, our constituent authorities will identify priorities for consideration as part of the Annual Business Plan process for each business, in addition providing input into the development of the next 10-year Outline Service specification. The latter provides the Committee with the opportunity to ensure member priorities linked to supporting economic growth are reflected in the Specification.

A key focus for the committee remains the need to improve accessibility of the rail system. We will use the committee's role under the Rail North Agreement to work with the operators and Network Rail to accelerate progress on this critical issue.



Rail Reform: The North's Proposition

Under the terms of the Rail North Agreement the North has benefitted from a degree of rail devolution; work that is supported by the RNP executive team that is part of the wider TfN executive.

We will continue to support the role of the North's elected Mayors and Leaders to hold rail operators to account through the Rail North Committee. And we will continue to work with the rail industry to ensure that proposals brought forward – both for infrastructure and service changes – are subject to scrutiny by the Rail North Committee.

Building on work undertaken with our partners in 2024/25, we will work with them to develop a proposition that shows how it is possible to build on the existing level of rail devolution in a practical and cost-effective way. Central to this will be the importance of strengthening the role of MCAs when it comes to the North's rail system to enable better integration of rail services with their wider public transport offering.

In parallel we will continue to work with our operators to improve performance to the level expected by the user; this will include Northern's remediation plan and maintaining progress with TPTs on-going recovery. Through the Rail North Partnership we will ensure that the priorities identified by the Rail North Committee shape the work of our operators. TfN will also step-up its engagement with the North's other train operators including Avanti, East Midlands Railway and Cross Country Trains.

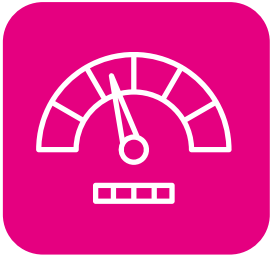


Buses

TfN supports plans within the Better Buses Bill to empower MCAs/LTAs to choose the most appropriate delivery model for improving bus services in their area.

Through our Bus Forum we continue to work with our partners to facilitate sharing of knowledge, evidence of good practice and where appropriate support a coordinated approach to communication with government on common challenges for the bus sector. We will also provide access to bus network planning software and plan to publish data on bus network accessibility and reliability.

5. Ongoing activities in 2025/26



Monitoring and Evaluation

We published a monitoring and evaluation strategy alongside our STP, accompanied by a monitoring and evaluation dashboard, covering the headline metrics from the STP. Regular monitoring of these helps to indicate whether we're heading in the right direction to achieve our ambitions and to ensure that our strategy is being implemented.

We continue to develop the dashboard, drawing on comments received from our partners, as well as the availability of more local data and additional metrics. We'll provide further information on our progress through our Annual Report.

We use the insight provided through the dashboard to identify blockages and then target the need for change, including where collective action might be needed across the North.

We are also embedding monitoring and evaluation across our wider activities in TfN, including on the TfN Offer and within our project management framework.





Maintaining/Expanding the Evidence Base

Our STP is built on evidence, so maintaining and enhancing that evidence base is central to our strategy, policy and research activities every year. We have recently completed further research into Transport Related Social Exclusion (TRSE), including a refreshed dashboard that provides more granular data, and will work with partners to embed this in their wider work on LTPs and business cases.

We have worked with the Convention of the North to take forward next steps on the Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review (NPIER). In the coming months, we will continue to engage with business and academic networks on how the economic potential of the NPIER can be delivered.



Diversity of Thinking

A key focus for our work is to consciously seek out views and perspectives from those parts of our communities whose voice in the past has not been as well represented.

We established our Northern Transport Voices panel as part of this commitment. To date the panel has supported critical research on rail station accessibility, rural mobility and safety on public transport. We have expanded the panel to 2,000 residents to strengthen our ability to gain the insight of our on key topics.

We are working towards establishing a 'Community Forum', or similar, to strengthen our engagement with underrepresented groups and broaden the diversity of thought and perspective in our work.

6. Technical Assurance

Modelling and Economics (TAME)

Our core technical capacity and capability, provided through our TAME function, continues to evolve to benefit TfN's own work, and that of our partners and government.

The function is central to our delivery of the 'TfN Offer' (see below) to support local transport planning, and interest from our national partners and other government departments in how our capability and extensive Analytical Framework can inform their work.

As a publicly funded and owned resource, the 'TfN Offer' provides all our partners with access to accumulated knowledge and expertise that can be shared easily to support efficient delivery.

We have undertaken essential re-baselining and updating of the Analytical Framework to ensure our transport modelling system fully reflects post COVID travel patterns. We will also continue to support DfT's work to develop the business case for NPR, including Bradford new station appraisal.

Our work on a Common Analytical Framework (CAF) has progressed at pace over the last year, bringing a set of modelling tools (such as EVCI) and products together for other partners to use, including other STBs. The CAF development will continue through 2025/26, ensuring we have the systems, consistent platforms, and governance in place for effective use. Alongside this, we will use it to provide increasingly granular data and analysis outputs for the North's MCAs/LTAs under the 'TfN offer'.



7.Enabling Delivery: the 'TfN Offer'

An underlying principle of TfN is that as a publicly funded body our partners can draw on the knowledge and experience held within the TfN executive team: this includes providing access to the tools, models and frameworks that have been developed by TfN in preparing the STP to assist in its implementation.

The TfN Offer was launched in September 2023 with the primary aim of supporting Local Transport Plan development and delivery. This included technical and analytical support through the tools and databases developed by our TAME team, as well as policy and strategy support.

Since its launch the TfN Offer has responded to over 155 requests. And whilst it remains early days, it is estimated that the public sector has realised savings in excess of £500k by undertaking technical/analytical work through the Offer. Moreover, it is conservatively estimated that the tools and capabilities produced by TfN have an added value of c£3m.

Although the initial focus of the TfN Offer was in support of MCAs and LTAs, it is available to all our partners, including government, its agencies and arm's length bodies: as a publicly owned and managed asset TfN is committed to ensuring that the benefits of the investment made in the Offer are made widely available.



The scope of the TfN Offer is consistently evolving as additional tools and capabilities are becoming available. The TfN Offer brochure was updated at the start of 2025 and shared with our partners.

Demand for the TfN Offer from our partners continues to grow; in part a reflection of the wider financial pressures across the public sector but also a demonstration of the added value of having a publicly owned regional centre of excellence which holds specialist and highly valued technical knowledge upon which partners can draw.

Resource constraints within TfN mean that, at present we are not always able to respond to every request for support. Where possible we continue to develop means of enabling requests for support to be self-serviced, but if we are to realise the full potential of the TfN Offer there will be a need to secure additional resources for the medium term.

We continue to work closely with our partners to identify opportunities to develop the TfN Offer further in response to their needs and requirements. Doing so within the framework provided by the Offer ensures that enhancements developed to assist one partner can be made more widely available quickly and cost effectively.

Areas of opportunity already identified include:

- Work with energy providers that continues to align our evidence on EVCI and alternative fuels, with their data and systems to map future demand and solutions.
- Work to develop the rail aspect of the TfN Offer, building on our accumulated experience (and models) associated with work on NPR, as well as experience gained through the Rail North Partnership



8. Our People, Resources and Management

In 2024 TfN was included in the Sunday Times Top100 Best Places to Work: such an accolade is the result of our continuing commitment to invest in our single biggest asset – our people.

We are proud of the bright minds we have attracted, and continue to attract, to our workforce. It is our skills, knowledge and technical expertise that enable us to deliver the priorities set out in this plan.

We will only use externally procured services to support our work where appropriate, where it presents good value for money and the expertise and/or capacity is not available within our team.

We have a framework which requires that the procurement of goods or services includes a competitive process that is appropriate to the value and complexity of the services/products and minimises barriers for suppliers to participate in such exercises.

Our values



We make a difference



We collaborate



We are driven to succeed



We do the right thing

Our core behaviours

→ Cultivate innovation

Creating new and better ways for the organisation to be successful.

→ Ensure accountability

Holding self and others accountable to achieve results, even under challenging circumstances

→ Collaborate

Building partnerships and working collaboratively with others to meet shared objectives

→ Instil trust

Gaining the confidence and trust of others through honesty, integrity and authenticity

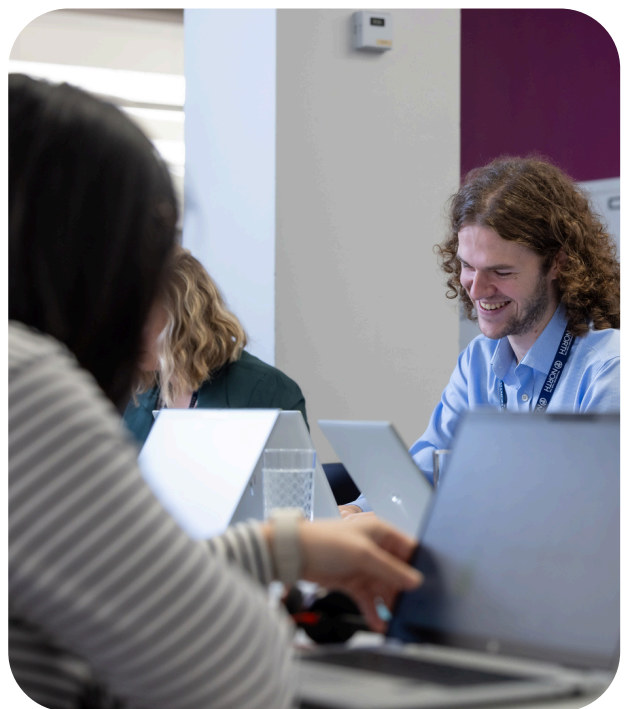
→ Financial acumen

Interpreting and applying understanding of key financial indicators to make better business decisions.

Our values and behaviours underpin TfN's culture and ways of working, helping us create an agile and dynamic working environment where employees are trusted, valued, and invested in. We strive to be a best practice employer, ensuring we enable learning and development, empower, and support our managers, and have a strong employee voice. Our Employee Forum continues to meet regularly, and we work closely with UNISON, as our recognised Trade Union.

We are committed to providing equal opportunities and diversity in all our employment practices and through our work. We are signatories to the Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation Diversity and Inclusion Charter Statement, the Mindful Employers Charter and have an active internal diversity action group. We remain an accredited Living Wage Employer, are recognised as a Disability Confident Employer (stage two), and invest in the health, safety and wellbeing of our employees through various support programmes and activities.

We were delighted to achieve positive staff engagement survey results in late 2024, with an overall engagement score of 75%. Our focus for the year ahead is maintaining the good practices identified in those results, such as job satisfaction, reward, recognition, and staff empowerment. We want to go further in some areas too, for example further expanding our health and well-being programme of support.



2025/26 funding and budget

Through our annual budget and business planning processes we have reviewed our activities to ensure that they are focused on TfN's statutory role and responsibilities, align with member priorities and are affordable.

We have worked closely with our constituent authorities to ensure that our activities complement their work as MCAs and LTAs, and that they are consistent with the Government's Missions.

TfN is funded almost wholly by government. This plan is based on an establishment for 2025/26 of 122 roles; of which 51 are to provide hosted activities (comprising 21 posts in the Rail North Partnership team and 30 posts within NPR TAME).

This business plan sets out how we will deliver our statutory duties and TfN 'offer' to our partners. In addition, we have been provided with funding to support our 'hosted' activities described above, which are the rail operations delivered through the RNP, and the analytical support we provide to the NPR programme.

We have forecast a closing reserve balance on 31 March 2025 of £4.5m. We will draw from our reserves over the coming year (£0.7m) to maintain our current capacity and capability.

Our funding breakdown for 2025/26:

Activity	£'m
Core Duties	
→ Core Grant	7.2
→ Rail North Grant/Local Contributions and other income	0.4
→ Use of reserves	0.7
	8.3
Hosted Services	
→ NPR Analytical Support	5.7
→ Rail North Partnership Grant	1.3
→ Rail North Grant/Local Contributions and other income	0.7
→ Use of RNP ringfenced reserves	0.1
	7.8
Total Resource	16.1

As part of the spending review, we will work with DfT to secure a future multi-year funding settlement. Any settlement will include the cost of maintaining TfN's capacity and capability in support of our partners.

We are subject to the same regulatory environment as combined/local authorities, we must discharge our responsibilities as an autonomous body and act in accordance with our Memorandum of Understanding with DfT.

Expenditure consists of those costs incurred in delivering upon its programmes of activity, its broader aspirations and the infrastructure required and supporting functions of a public body.

To deliver the priorities set out in this plan, we forecast expenditure for 2025/26 of £16.1m. This includes VAT, as we are unable to recover this on the purchase of goods and services, as a statutory sub-national body.

Expenditure is anticipated to be incurred against the following activities:

Activity	£'m
Operational Costs	6.0
Business Support Costs	2.3
	8.3
Hosted Services	
Rail North Partnership	2.1
NPR TAME	5.7
	7.8
Total expenditure	16.1

Risk management

Our Risk Management Strategy continues to provide an effective framework within which risks are identified, evaluated and mitigated. Project and corporate risks are monitored regularly with senior managers and reviewed quarterly by senior leaders. It remains a standing item for the Audit and Governance Committee, and the Corporate Risk Register is provided twice each year to the TfN Board.

9. Our corporate milestones

Our corporate milestones reflect the priorities set out in this business plan and allow us to track progress on a regular basis. We will report via the TfN Quarterly Operating Report (which is shared with our partners), and capture achievements and deliverables across the year through our Annual Report and Accounts.

Milestone	Due date
Use the assembled evidence base, and agreed policy framework set out in the Strategic Transport Plan to continue to make the case for additional investment in the North’s transport system, including:	
• Ensuring the North’s priorities for investment in the Strategic Road Network are properly reflected in National Highway’s Road Investment Strategy 3 (RIS3), and that TfN provides input into the business case development for RIS schemes	Q2/Q3
• Working with the rail sector to develop the ‘one view’ of investment (infrastructure and rolling stock) required in the North’s rail system, and aligning that with the development of future timetable changes	Q2/Q3
• Establish a minimum of 2 place-based rail task forces, working with partners and the rail sector	Q3
• Working with partners in support of their work to deliver the existing Large Local Major/Major Road Network programme of highway schemes	On-going
Deliver the programme of work focused on addressing issues with the traditional approach to appraisal, to include:	
• Publication of the TfN Northern Appraisal Playbook	Q1
• Deliver the final research report on Phase 2 of the agreed programme of work, including recommendations to Government for further reform of the appraisal system	Q4
• Work with partners to identify two proposals to showcase how the current appraisal system might better reflect the challenges and opportunities across the North	Q2
• Work with partners to identify at least three projects to which we will apply our investing for Social Inclusion offer in support of the implementation of local transport plans and/or projects	Q2
Continue to develop the scope of the TfN Offer to partners, and nationally to include:	
• To increase the value delivered to partners above that achieved in 2024/25	Q4
• Delivering a minimum of 4 in-person bespoke TfN Offer Showcase Sessions to Combined Authorities/Local Authorities	Q2
• To develop the rail offering available through the TfN Offer by opening up access to rail data and models for use by partners	Q3

Make the case for investment that enables more efficient and effective freight and logistic operations across the North, to include:

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| • Working with partners, the freight and logistics sector and the rail sector to publish a pipeline of enabling investments to increase rail freight across the North's rail network. | Q3 |
| • Working with the ports owners/operators, the freight and logistics sector and partners to identify opportunities to increase the role of the North's ports | Q3 |

Working with partners to ensure:

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| • That Northern deliver their Performance Improvement Programme, including the need to bring Sundays within the working week | Q3/Q4 |
| • Accessibility improvements are better reflected in investment proposals taken forward, and as part of the rail reform agenda | On-going |
| • The 10-year Outline Service Specification for Northern and TPE reflects the priorities of TfN and its constituent authorities | Q3/Q4 |
| • The specification for new rolling stock to be order by Northern and TPE reflect the priorities of TfN and its constituent authorities | Q2/Q3 |
| • The TRU Stakeholder Forum, chaired by TfN, continues to support delivery of the Transpennine Route Upgrade | On-going |

Deliver technical services commissioned by DfT in support of Northern Powerhouse Rail in accordance with the agreed budget and programme, using the TfN Analytical Framework to provide the best possible evidence base for NPR

On-going

Complete the Analytical Framework re-base to 2023/24, including a new Land Use and Transport Interaction (LUTI) model for the North, making it available for Partner use through the TfN offer

Q3

As co-sponsor for NPR, work with partners to identify their requirements and expectations of NPR and ensure that these help define the forward work programme

Q2

As part of the ongoing commitment to maintain and update the evidence base, and in the process increase the diversity of thinking:

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| • Publish an update of the Transport Related Social Exclusion evidence base, with a particular focus on the transport needs of the North's young people, and safety on public transport | Q1 |
| • Deliver two Northern Transport Voices research projects, one in each half of the financial year | Q2/Q4 |

Supporting partners with the roll-out of investment that enables electric vehicle charging infrastructure, to include:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with Government departments and national agencies, including Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV), OfGEM, the National Energy System Operator and Distribution Network Operators, to improve integration of planning and investment across the transport and energy sectors | Q2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through our EV Forum support partners in the application of the EVCI framework and use the framework to inform policies and proposals at the national level, including the application of the national LEVI funding programme in the North. | Q4 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updating the evidence base and supporting data associated with the EV State of Play document as a means of monitoring and evaluating progress with delivery across the North | Q3 |

Complete upgrade of the Carbon Baseline Dashboard to allow breakdown of data by Mayoral Combined Authority/Local Transport Authority area.

Q3

Extend climate vulnerability mapping to local road infrastructure and deliver data and mapping for use by our partners.

Q4

Working with partners to maximise the opportunities presented by Rail Reform by identifying the North's requirements, building upon existing levels of rail devolution, for further devolution to Mayoral Combined Authorities.

Q2/Q3

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