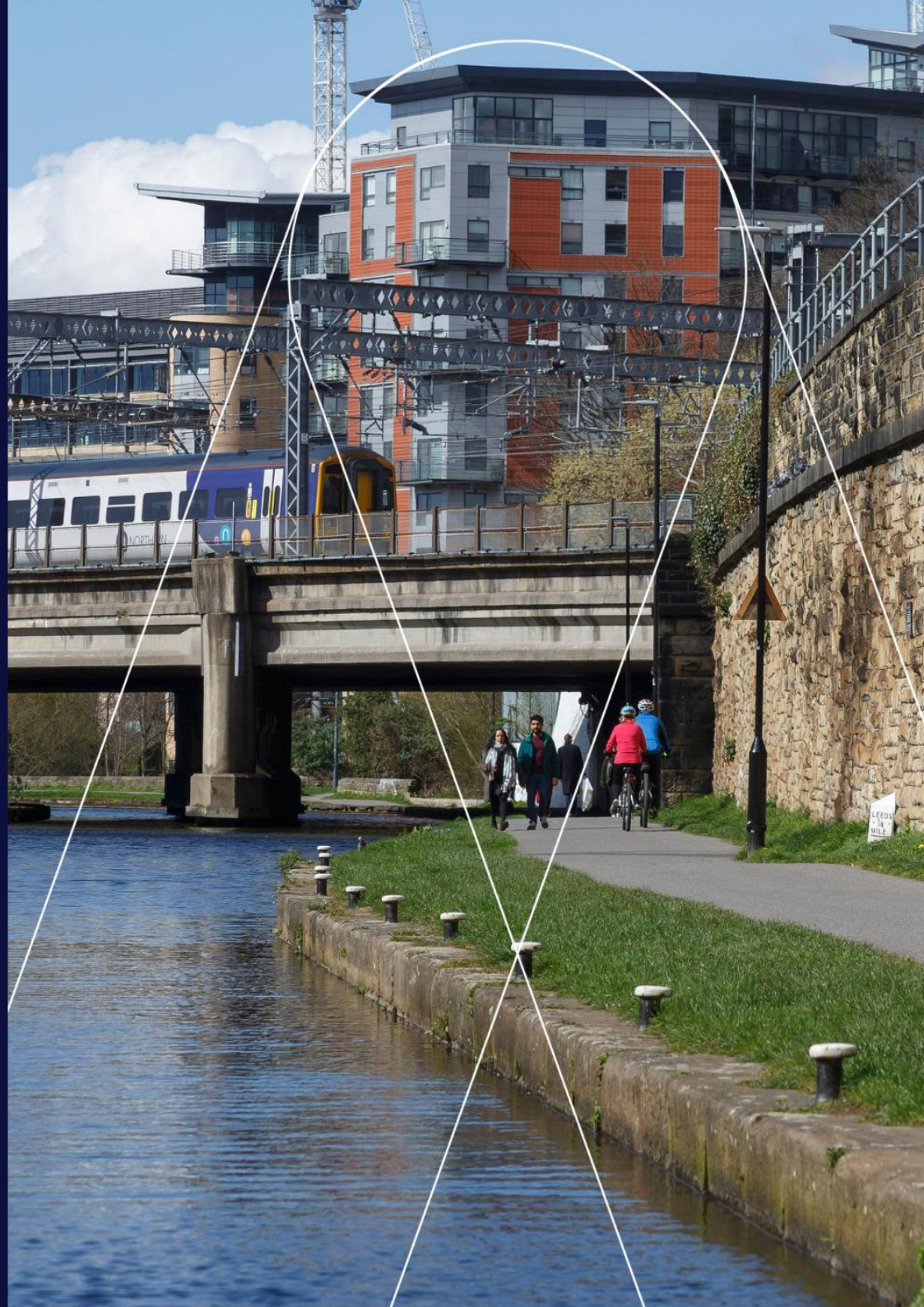


Transport for the North

Quarterly Operating Report

October – December 2025



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1.0 Chief Executive's Introduction

We remain focused on delivering the 2025/26 Business Plan, working closely with our constituent authorities to ensure our work supports delivery for their communities.

The continued year-on-year growth of 42.6% in the TfN Offer demonstrates the added value that access to our analytical tools, frameworks, and evidence base brings to our constituent authorities. The scope of what is available through the Offer continues to grow, with work on the Rail Information Visualiser and the integration of the Carbon Baseline Dashboard into the visualisation framework being welcomed by constituent authorities. The ongoing popularity of our work on the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Framework, including information on deployment and utilisation data, is also noteworthy, as constituent authorities continue to support the rollout of charging infrastructure in their communities.

We have continued to build on the foundation laid by the publication of the Northern Appraisal Playbook, supporting our constituent authorities in developing their strategic business cases. We have also continued to engage with the Department for Transport (DfT), the Treasury, and external bodies such as the National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority (NISTA) and the National Wealth Fund (NWF) to ensure that our appraisal work continues to shape national discussions. In addition, we have held workshops with our constituent authorities to support them as they begin developing place-based business cases.

Our work with the rail industry to develop a 'one view' of the rail investment (infrastructure and rolling stock) required to support economic growth is continuing. The York Place-Based Group concluded its work this quarter, delivering a report to the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority, while at the same time significant progress has been made in establishing the Sheffield Area Task Force.

Meanwhile, the Rail North Committee continues to champion the need for additional investment to improve the accessibility of rail services for all. A request for the devolution of "Access for All" funding to the North was rejected by the Secretary of State, but the Committee continues to make the case for this, arguing that it would create opportunities to better align investment with initiatives being taken forward by Combined Authorities. The Committee has also worked with Network Rail to make the case for investment that will ensure station upgrades associated with the Transpennine Route Upgrade are fully accessible.

In parallel with our work to support delivery by constituent authorities, the TfN Executive continues to work with the TfN Board on defining the framework for the reset of TfN. This work is required to reflect the role and powers of elected Mayors, including those linked to rail reform.

We have worked with the TfN Board, supported by the Executive Board, to further develop a shared view on where we deliver maximum benefit in terms of added value and value for money. This has enabled the Board to set out to the DfT the need for continued core funding for 2026/27. Our executive has followed this up with DfT officials as they prepare their advice to the Secretary of State on funding for 2026/27.

2.0 TfN Corporate Milestones Progress Report

This report covers progress against each milestone outlined in the 2025-26 Business Plan. Each item is assessed quarterly using a red-amber-green (RAG) rating system, accompanied by a quarterly progress indicator (QPI) to highlight changes from the previous quarter and a progress summary.

TfN Corporate Milestones Report Key:

RAG Rating Key		Quarterly Progress Indicator (QPI) Key	
R	Deferred progress	↑	RAG rating improved from last quarter
A	Delayed progress	↓	RAG rating decreased from last quarter
G	On target	↔	RAG rating is the same from last quarter

M1	Milestone 1		
	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:	RAG	Trend
M1.1	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	G	↔

<p>We have continued our engagement with National Highways, supporting our local partners on the development of the plans for investment in future road investment strategy (RIS) schemes. There have been no further announcements on the national RIS3 programme during this period, with the final RIS3 expected to be published by the Government in Spring 2026.</p>			
M1.2	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	G	↔
<p>During this quarter the State of Play has been refreshed and presented to Rail North Committee (RNC), providing a single, comprehensive view of planned investments in infrastructure and associated service changes.</p> <p>The Strategic Rail Investment Pipeline has been updated in collaboration with partners, maintaining a "long-list" of aspirations to help shape those programmes in early development, allowing alignment of opportunity.</p> <p>The visual mapping integrated into the Rail Information Visualiser Portal, has given partners and rail industry a clear, shared picture of schemes and progress for passenger and freight.</p> <p>The Programme Review Group report has moved to a four-weekly cycle, supported by enhanced engagement, keeping partners informed and supporting pan-regional workstreams on integration and long-term planning.</p> <p>These tools deliver transparency, reduce duplication, and maintain "one view" of the North's rail investment programme—strengthening collaboration.</p>			
M1.3	Establish a minimum of 2 place-based rail task forces, working with partners and the rail sector	G	↑
<p>During this quarter, the York Place-Based Group concluded its work, delivering a report to York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority. This report will underpin the development of a station vision, providing a framework to shape short- and medium-term investment decisions. It also acts as a guide for other authorities who may be considering similar workstreams.</p> <p>Significant progress has also been made on the Sheffield Area Task Force. A site visit was held with the independent chair of the Task Force, alongside representatives from East Midlands Railway, Northern, Network Rail, South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, and Sheffield City Council. The group demonstrated strong commitment and enthusiasm for collaborative working. The inaugural Task Force meeting is scheduled for late January, with invitations issued to key stakeholders including the Department for Transport (DfT), Network Rail, and train operators.</p>			
M1.4	Working with partners in support of their work to deliver the existing Large Local Major/Major Road Network (LLM/MRN) programme of highway schemes	A	↔

We continue to support local highways authorities sponsoring LLM/MRN schemes with their response to the DfT review of the national LLM/MRN programme.

We are expecting DfT to make an announcement on the outcome of the LLM/MRN review early in 2026.

M2	Milestone 2	RAG	Trend
	Deliver the programme of work focused on addressing issues with the traditional approach to appraisal, to include:		
M2.1	Publication of the Northern Appraisal Playbook	G	↔
Phase one of our work on our Northern Appraisal Playbook was published on 28 May 2025.			
M2.2	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	G	↔
<p>The Phase 2 report was approved by the TfN Board in December 2025. We submitted the report to the Treasury and DfT, summarising our findings and outlining our recommendations to inform their ongoing work on the Green Book and Transport Analysis Guidance.</p> <p>We continue to engage with the DfT and other external bodies such as the National Infrastructure Service Transformation Authority (NISTA) and the National Wealth Fund (NWF), to understand their plans and identify how our work could complement national efforts. A key outcome will be our ability to support the place-based business case approach currently being implemented by the Government. To enable this, we hosted several internal training workshops in December, to upskill our colleagues and shape the TfN offer on place-based business cases.</p>			
M2.3	Work with partners to identify two proposals to showcase how the current appraisal system might better reflect the challenges and opportunities across the North	G	↑
We have continued to support our partners own business case development. This includes supporting early work on Strategic Outline Business Cases for a Roads Investment Strategy (RIS) scheme and a Mass Transit scheme. This has included providing evidence to feed into the strategic dimension of the business cases on how the project will alleviate issues on the wider pan regional transport network.			

M2.4	Work with partners to identify at least three projects to which we will apply our Investing for Social Inclusion (IsFI) offer in support of the implementation of local transport plans and/or projects	G	↔
In this quarter, we completed work to support the implementation of the Local Transport Plan of one of our constituent authorities, providing reporting, data outputs, and Geographical Information System (GIS) outputs that identify areas and communities most in need, and to identify the types of intervention most effective in each.			

M3	Milestone 3 Continue to develop the scope of the TfN Offer to partners, and nationally to include:	RAG	Trend
M3.1	To increase the value delivered to partners above that achieved in 2024/25	G	↔
We have received 119 requests to the TfN Offer in this financial year (to mid-December 2025). 87 have been completed, with a further 27 in progress (five have been declined due to resource availability). Completed and in-progress requests comprise 58 bronze, 56 silver and 5 gold. This constitutes a year-on-year output growth of 42.6%. Overall, the average number of requests and the proportion of silver support level requests completed have all continued to grow month-on-month.			
M3.2	Delivering a minimum of 4 in-person bespoke TfN Offer Showcase Sessions to Combined Authorities/Local Authorities	G	↔
Six showcases have been delivered, with a number of ongoing projects arising from these sessions with several partners.			
M3.3	To develop the rail offering available through the TfN Offer by opening up access to rail data and models for use by partners	G	↔
We continue to develop our rail data portal as part of the TfN Offer. The portal is currently going through legal review, and we are seeking to clarify permissions to share with the organisations who originally supplied the data. Since quarter two, we have added additional data around future strategic rail and freight investments and baseline freight data. Following the conclusion of the legal review we are aiming to launch the portal in early 2026.			

M4	Milestone 4	RAG	Trend
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	Make the case for investment that enables more efficient and effective freight and logistic operations across the North, to include:		
M4.1	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.	G	⇌
A draft report has been prepared which sets out the priorities for investment in rail infrastructure and key the policy interventions required to support a mode shift of freight from road to rail across the North. The interventions are for the short, medium and long term. Throughout Q4 we will undertake an engagement exercise with constituent authorities and industry to sense-check the draft recommendations and test the level of consensus across the North. We expect to take draft recommendations to Rail North Committee in February 2026.			
M4.2	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	G	⇌
We have prepared a draft report setting out the strategic importance of Northern ports to the economy. This highlights what our Northern ports do and how they function, as well as identifying potential market growth opportunities and how multi-modal connectivity can unlock them. This builds on our ongoing engagement with ports, industry and constituent authorities. The draft report will be taken to Executive Board in January 2026 for consideration.			

M5	Milestone 5 Working with partners to ensure:	RAG	Trend
M5.1	That Northern deliver their Performance Improvement Programme, including the need to bring Sundays within the working week	A	⇌
Rail North Partnership (RNP) executive team continues to focus on supporting Northern Trains Ltd (NTL) with its Performance Improvement Programme. The operator has experienced numerous challenges during this quarter due to issues caused by autumn leaf fall and the team is discussing with NTL on how it can make future improvements to address this through wider industry collaboration and temporary timetable alterations.			
M5.2	Accessibility improvements are better reflected in investment proposals taken forward, and as part of the rail reform agenda	G	⇌
We reported to the RNC that the prioritised investment types from the innovations report (delivered in September 2025) were online mapping, staff training, artificial intelligence control of British Sign Language signs, and "changing places" toilets. These			

<p>recommendations were arrived at in the consultation with the operators, with their 2026-27 business plans containing information about what facilities will be improved. Additionally, funding from the TRU programme has been extended to cover accessibility improvements at additional stations along the route. A response was sent to the Secretary of State for Transport's letter of September 2025, strengthening the case for the devolution of accessibility funding to the North. However, the Secretary of State replied in November, stating that this funding has already been allocated and was therefore not available for devolution.</p>			
M5.3	The 10-year Outline Service Specification for Northern and Transpennine Express (TPE) reflects the priorities of TfN and its constituent authorities	G	↔
<p>This quarter RNP have presented a revised project scope to RNP board with prioritisation of the accessibility and train service specification (TSS) workstreams. As the rail industry is reforming and given the full impact of any changes will not be understood before the specification is finalised, the outline specification will need to evolve. As a result, the Strategic Rail team and the RNP executive have continued to work with constituent authorities this quarter, to adapt as necessary. The specification is wide ranging, and work is continuing so that it will include a set of station and accessibility standards and a high-level outline of rail services for the network currently covered by TransPennine Express Trains (TPT) and NTL.</p>			
M5.4	The specification for new rolling stock to be order by Northern and TPE reflect the priorities of TfN and its constituent authorities	G	↔
<p>We have continued work on identifying additional and viable trains to alleviate the challenges facing NTL's fleet in the next few years. We helped to secure four additional trains from Transport for Wales which will be used to replace NTL trains whilst they undergo upgrades as part of a major electrification programme. We are also proposing a series of rolling stock seminars for rail officers from our constituent authorities which are in response to members' queries for further information and engagement.</p>			
M5.5	The TRU Stakeholder Forum, chaired by the TfN executive, continues to support delivery of the Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU)	G	↔
<p>The TRU stakeholder forum met in December with discussions around the need for better linkage with the TRU Programme Boards upcoming decisions and consultations and the expansion of the stakeholder forum to include business representatives as part of the future engagement strategy. There was a focus on the Transport and Works Act Order (TWAo) for Stalybridge to Diggle, with letters of support issued by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) and us, and it is anticipated that the freight industry will also provide support for the latest TWAo order.</p> <p>Work continued to be undertaken to assess the design implications for investment in accessibility solutions at East Garforth, Micklefield and Church Fenton stations as these stations currently sit outside of the core scope for accessibility enhancements. We have continued to work with the TRU programme to support the business case for this investment as well as the business case for high gauge clearances.</p>			

M6	Milestone 6	RAG	Trend
	Deliver technical services commissioned by DfT in support of Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) in accordance with the agreed budget and programme, using the TfN Analytical Framework to provide the best possible evidence base for NPR	G	↔
<p>The Transport Analysis, Modelling and Economics (TAME) team have continued to use the Analytical Framework to provide analysis and evidence into the ongoing development of the Northern Powerhouse Rail business cases. This has included economic, social and land use analysis.</p> <p>The team are also carefully managing the remaining budget allocation for the 2025/26 financial year, ensuring project activities are agreed with the DfT for the remaining three months. In addition, detailed planning is underway with the DfT for 2026/27.</p>			

M7	Milestone 7	RAG	Trend
	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	G	↔
<p>The Analytical Framework re-base has proceeded according to plan, with highlights in the previous quarter including completion of an updated base year in our Northern Transport Modelling System (NorTMS), used to build business case evidence for rail investment in the North, and the first iteration of Business Residential Open Northern Transport Economic (BRONTE) model. The latter is a LUTI and capable of forecasting the land use impacts of rail investment. BRONTE is expected to be available for Partner use from June 2026.</p>			

M8	Milestone 8	RAG	Trend
	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	A	↔

There has been minimal work on NPR in the quarter as we continued to await an announcement from the Government. We were pleased to see the commitment to NPR announced in January and are working with partners to consider how we can support going forward. We expect the Board to consider this further at its meeting in March.

M9	Milestone 9 As part of the ongoing commitment to maintain and update the evidence base, and in the process increase the diversity of thinking:	RAG	Trend
M9.1	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	G	↔
Our research to understand Transport Related Social Exclusion (TRSE) among younger people in rural areas has progressed well across quarter three. Publication of the results of this project is on track to be delivered next quarter, with the results integrated in the next full update of the TRSE tool in 2026/27. Alongside this, we have undertaken interim updates of the vulnerability datasets used in the TRSE tool. This is data on the vulnerability of populations to social exclusion based on factors like poverty, disability and health issues, which can limit access to transport services. These updates will be made available via the TRSE tool in January.			
M9.2	Deliver two Northern Transport Voices research projects, one in each half of the financial year	G	↔
<p>In November we published our evidence report on transport users' attitudes to road safety and speed management, to coincide with Brake's Road Safety Week campaign. We also shared our new evidence with the DfT team developing the upcoming National Road Safety Strategy.</p> <p>We engaged with members of our Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) Officers Group to refine the scope of proposed new research with our Northern Transport Voices panel, which will focus on drivers' motivations and barriers to switching to electric vehicles, with an additional focus on user attitudes to different cross-pavement charging solutions, allowing those parking on-street to use a private charger at home to charge their vehicle.</p>			

M10	Milestone 10 Supporting partners with the roll-out of investment that enables electric vehicle charging infrastructure, to include:	RAG	Trend
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M10.1	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	G	↔
<p>We convened several partner engagement sessions in Q3 to facilitate knowledge sharing regarding cross pavement EV charging solutions and on the emerging approaches taken by constituent authorities to apply national grant funding for cross pavement solutions.</p> <p>We also facilitated a national policy update with the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) following the Autumn Budget and supported constituent authorities in their interactions with the National Energy System Operator's consultation on Regional Energy Systems Plans.</p>			
M10.2	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.	G	↔
<p>Through the TfN Offer we have continued to support our partners to access the EVCI framework, including self-service bronze level data and evidence.</p> <p>Our tailored 'silver level' requests have seen significant growth with partners requesting additional support in new areas, including on evidence to inform chargepoint site selection for LEVI delivery; metrics to help inform EVCI funding allocations within Combined Authority areas; and information and advice to support monitoring and evaluation of EVCI deployment. .</p>			
M10.3	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	G	↔
<p>We continue to provide access to EV chargepoint deployment and utilisation data (Zap Map) to our constituent authorities. This informs delivery of local funding, track deployment and monitor progress of activity. We also maintained and updated evidence available through the EVCI Framework to ensure it remains current and supports partner priorities.</p>			
M11	Milestone 11	RAG	Trend

	Complete upgrade of the Carbon Baseline Dashboard to allow breakdown of data by Mayoral Combined Authority/Local Transport Authority area.	G	↔
The completed dashboard has been fully integrated into the visualisation framework. A demonstration webinar was delivered in early December, attracting over 20 attendees from constituent authorities and generated positive feedback. The dashboard will be launched early 2026.			

M12	Milestone 12	RAG	Trend
	Extend climate vulnerability mapping to local road infrastructure and deliver data and mapping for use by our partners.	G	↔
<p>The climate vulnerability assessment for local roads has been completed and with the data being collated into GIS layers which we aim to share with partners on request in early 2026.</p> <p>Planning for a web-based mapping tool is underway, with development targeted to begin early in quarter four and completion expected by the end of the financial year. This tool will integrate outputs from our Phase 1 climate vulnerability work (strategic transport networks) and Phase 2 (local road networks) into the visualiser framework.</p>			

M13	Milestone 13	RAG	Trend
	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.	G	↔
<p>Following September's Rail North Committee (RNC), political leaders agreed that being able to work together on pan-Northern rail matters had been beneficial, and the opportunity to continue to do that in a way that supports new GBR-MSA partnerships would be helpful. That proposal is being developed, alongside assessing the impacts of the Railways Bill (which will set up GBR) to understand its effect and impact on the North and the current devolution through the Rail North Partnership Agreement. We expect to provide advice on both matters to the RNC in February.</p>			

3.0 Rail North Partnership (RNP)

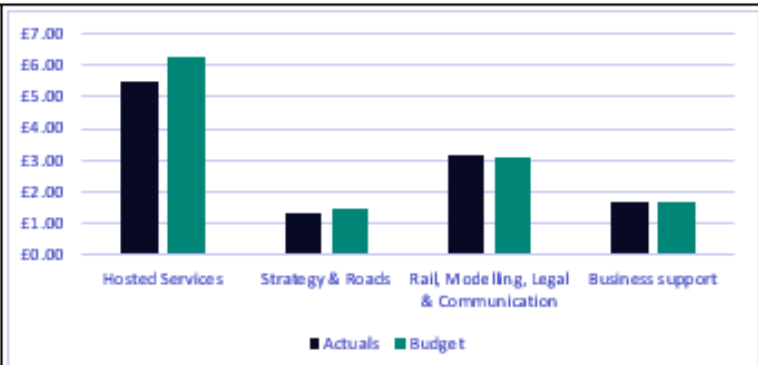

Our rail operators, Northern Trains Ltd and TransPennine Trains Ltd, have started Delivery Planning for the next five years. This replaces the previous annual business plan and on 1 December 2025, the RNP executive received the draft submissions. The team is now reviewing them to ensure they meet the proposed budget and deliver passenger experience improvements alongside service reliability and punctuality.

The RNP executive team reviewed its work to develop a new passenger services specification for the North and in light of wider industry work in this area, it has pivoted to focus on three key workstreams which cover rail services and accessibility. In the accessibility workstream, we're building on the work undertaken by Rail North Committee with advice from industry experts, ahead of wider engagement with constituent authorities and accessibility groups later in the Spring. As part of the two rail services workstreams, we reviewed future rail service plans and aspirations with Tees Valley and North East Combined Authorities and look forward to similar discussions with our other constituent authorities in 2026. The aim is to overlay this work onto the State-of-Play (referenced above) and create a single Rail Plan for the North to help inform future planning decisions, ahead of new arrangements with GBR coming into effect.

Both RNP operators are on new Service Agreement contracts after NTL transferred to the new way-of-working in November. RNP's contract teams were key to ensuring a smooth transfer on the agreements which will allow operators more freedom to allocate budget to locally important initiatives.

Huddersfield Station underwent a significant transformation in September as part of the TRU, involving a full station closure for 30 days. Throughout the closure, the RNP team travelled on the network, actively monitoring the effectiveness of customer handling plans. Their embedded role enabled rapid escalation of areas of concern, ensuring swift responses to any emerging customer issues. No major concerns were reported by the team during this period, and its focus now shifts to the next phase of prolonged TRU disruption east of Leeds which began in December and will continue until the morning of 26 January 2026.

4.0 People and Finance

TRANSPORT FOR THE NORTH				PERIOD	Q3	2025/26
FINANCE DASHBOARD				BUDGET CYCLE		BASE BUDGET
YTD ACTUALS VERSUS BUDGET - BY ACTIVITY						
	Actuals £m	Budget £m	Var. £m	Var. %		
Hosted services						
DfT Analytical Support	£4.17	£4.69	£0.52	11%		
Rail North Partnership	£1.34	£1.56	£0.22	14%		
	£5.51	£6.25	£0.74	12%		
Operational areas						
Strategy & Roads	£1.35	£1.47	£0.12	8%		
Rail, Modelling, Legal & Communication	£3.16	£3.05	-£0.11	-4%		
	£4.51	£4.52	£0.01	0%		
Business support						
	£1.68	£1.68	£0.00	0%		
	£11.70	£12.45	£0.74	6%		
						
YTD OPERATIONAL & BUSINESS SUPPORT EXPENDITURE - BY COST TYPE						
Actuals 						

HR DASHBOARD

Establishment

Permanent/Fixed Term Posts	Permanent (< 2 Years)	Fixed-Term (< 2 Years)	Total Posts
Hosted services			
DfT Analytical Support	26 (25.90 FTE)	-	26 (25.90 FTE)
Rail North Partnership	18 (17.80 FTE)	3 (3.00 FTE)	21 (20.80 FTE)
	44 (43.70 FTE)	3 (3.00 FTE)	47 (46.70 FTE)
Operational areas			
Rail and Roads	18 (17.92 FTE)	-	18 (17.92 FTE)
Comms, Legal, Analysis and Strategy	37 (36.86 FTE)	-	37 (36.86 FTE)
	55 (54.78 FTE)	-	55 (54.78 FTE)
Business support	16 (16.00 FTE)	-	16 (16.00 FTE)
Total Establishment	115 (114.48 FTE)	3 (3.00 FTE)	118 (117.48 FTE)
Strength (In Post)	102 (101.48 FTE)	3 (3.00 FTE)	105 (104.48 FTE)
Appointed (Start Date Pending)	1(1.00 FTE)	-	1(1.00 FTE)
Pending/Active Recruitment	-	-	-
Vacant - On-hold	12 (12.00 FTE)	-	12 (12.00 FTE)

HR KPI's - Year to Date

Corporate Sickness Level:	3.2%
Employee Turnover:	6.9%
% of Employees from an Ethnic Minority Background:	19.0%
% Employees declaring a Disability:	18.0%
Gender Mix - % of Female Employees:	39.0%
Gender Mix - % of Male Employees:	61.0%

HR KPI's - Year to Date	
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Gender Mix - % of Female Employees:	39.0%
Gender Mix - % of Male Employees:	61.0%

Total expenditure Year to date (YTD) is £11.70m, £0.74m (6%) below base budget.

The main driver of the underspend is within DfT Analytical Support. Rail Modelling Appraisal activity is underspent against original budget expectations, due to previous delays agreeing the specifications and programme of works. The NorMS Behaviour Survey work is behind schedule due to the need for some adjustments to the approach prior to commencing the full survey. The survey work has now been completed. This activity also has a core element, similarly, driving an underspend in Operational Modelling.


Deferred recruitment in the Modelling Team (within Hosted) also contributes to the total underspend. The "letter of intent" has now been received to fund NPR analytical services for 2026/27, and recruitment is planned to fully resource the team next year.



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