

The background image shows a train station platform. A train is visible on the right side, with its lights and structure blurred. On the left, several people are standing on the platform, also blurred. The overall scene is out of focus, emphasizing the text in the foreground.

The Blake Jones Review of

**The Rail North
Partnership**

Technical Annex

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1 Objective of the Review

THE AGREED OBJECTIVE OF THE REVIEW IS:

To jointly review the Rail North Partnership arrangements for managing the devolved Northern and TransPennine Express (TPE) rail franchises with a particular focus on learning from the May 2018 performance issues and steps leading up to this. To recommend solutions to avoid such events happening again.

The Review team comprised representatives of the Department for Transport (DfT), Transport for the North (TfN), and West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

The focus of the Review is separate to other reviews that were initiated into what happened, most notably the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) Inquiry chaired by Prof Stephen Glaister, into the causes, impacts, and solutions to the implementation of the May 2018 timetable and associated disruption, as well as the DfT's 'Williams' Review into the structure of the rail industry that was announced in September 2018.

The ORR concluded its Inquiry in December 2018, setting out the causes of the May 2018 timetable problems and solutions. It made findings in relation to governance in the North's involvement with, and response to, the timetable problems and made recommendations for improvements in the way it works, including stating that:

“The unique devolved governance structure under which the Northern and TPE franchises operate, involving authorities from the North of England alongside the DfT, is complex and subject to a separate review in light of the May 2018 timetable disruption; the Blake Jones Review. On the basis of the evidence reviewed by this Inquiry, we find no reason why this structure created risks that were material to the failure to introduce an operational timetable by Northern, subject to the conclusion of that review.”

This Review is focusing on the Rail North Partnership involvement with, and response to, the timetable problems and is intended to be forward looking and makes recommendations to improve the working of the Partnership in the light of these recent events. It has not attempted to repeat the work of the ORR Inquiry.

This document follows the below structure, ensuring that the objective flows right through to the delivery of recommendations based on available evidence:

Background



HOW IS THE FRANCHISING PROCESS IN THE NORTH SUPPOSED TO WORK ?

Evidence



HOW DID THE PROCESS WORK DURING RECENT DISRUPTION?

Key Issues



WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

Recommendations



HOW DO WE GET THE PROCESS WORKING BETTER?

Action Plan



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Role of rail



WHY IS RAIL IMPORTANT TO THE NORTH OF ENGLAND?

Rail franchise model



HOW DOES RAIL FRANCHISING WORK NATIONALLY?

Rail devolution



HOW DOES RAIL FRANCHISING WORK IN THE NORTH?

Franchise specification, procurement, and benefits



HOW ARE THE NORTHERN AND TRANSPENNINE EXPRESS FRANCHISES SUPPOSED TO WORK?

The Partnership and governance



HOW ARE THE NORTHERN AND TRANSPENNINE EXPRESS FRANCHISES MANAGED?

Delivery, infrastructure, and how it all should work



HOW IS EVERYTHING BROUGHT TOGETHER?

Role of rail



WHY IS RAIL IMPORTANT TO THE NORTH OF ENGLAND?

Transport for the North's Draft Strategic Transport Plan, published in January 2018, set out a vision for "A thriving North of England, where modern transport connections drive economic growth and support an excellent quality of life". It identifies that to achieve this, an efficient and resilient rail network across the North is required to support and facilitate the transformation of the North's economic performance. In addition it should improve opportunities and quality of life, while playing a critical role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and moving towards a sustainable transport system.

The Strategic Transport Plan included an updated Long Term Rail Strategy (LTRS), identifying opportunities to transform rail across the North for both urban and rural communities. The LTRS sets out to deliver high quality rail services right across the North, with more frequent and better integrated services, faster journeys and improved reliability, all on modern trains with high quality facilities.

The LTRS identifies how rail can play a critical role in matching skilled workers with appropriate employment as a result of its specific characteristics – notably the capability of transporting large numbers of workers into town and city centre locations. A strengthened and more prosperous Northern economy will result in a higher number of employment opportunities distributed across the North, as well as an increased demand for education and training opportunities. A rising population will require more housing. The location of these activities will have a major impact on future travel patterns and transport demand. Already, commuting to town and city centres is characterised by longer than average journeys, and increased commuting demand and longer distance trips will become even more prevalent.

Commuting journeys, both for employment and educational purposes, are time-critical as they are structured around working patterns and timetables which are often inflexible. The door-to-door journey time (and the reliability of that journey time) is a crucial factor in influencing propensity to travel by rail and, consequently, in increasing labour market catchments, as well as the catchments of colleges and universities. Commuting journeys by rail should therefore be fast and predictable with concise and accurate travel information available throughout.

However, the LTRS also identified that there are a series of barriers to rail fulfilling this role. These take the form of 21 strategic gaps between the capability of the current network, and the network which must be delivered in order to realise the above vision. These include the fact that door-to-door journey times for public transport commuting into the North's economic centres limits the size of the labour pool (for businesses) and reduces the number of employment, education and training opportunities within reasonable travelling time (for individuals). In addition, on-train capacity has not kept pace with growing demand, leading to overcrowding which reduces the attractiveness

of rail, and the reliability and punctuality of services causes a perception that rail services cannot be relied on for commuting, business and other journeys. It should be added that the information provision throughout the journey does not meet expectations either, particularly at times of disruption.

Indeed, this is reflected in the DfT's Strategic Vision for Rail, published in November 2017, which identifies – among other factors – the need for an expanded network: “To rebalance the economy and create more homes we also need to forge new links between places, spurring development and economic growth”. This includes expanding commuter routes (including the Great North Rail Project of line and station enhancements); opening routes to unlock housing and development; and building a new generation of high capacity railways (including HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail).

These gaps serve to frame why improvements to the rail network are needed, and the ‘problem’ which Transport for the North and the DfT are seeking to solve through their work with the rail industry, including through the specification and management of the Northern and TPE franchises.

Transport for the North’s Draft Strategic Transport Plan, published in January 2018, set out a vision for “A thriving North of England, where modern transport connections drive economic growth and support an excellent quality of life.

IN SUMMARY

TfN and DfT both recognise rail's critical role in economic growth, improved quality of life, and sustainable development in the North of England

This role will only increase, with increased demand, particularly for commuting which relies on good journey times and reliability, adequate capacity, and clear passenger information

There is a mutual recognition of the need to improve these aspects of rail travel, including through the effective management of the rail franchises

Rail franchise model

HOW DOES RAIL FRANCHISING WORK NATIONALLY?

The operation of almost all passenger train services in Great Britain has been franchised to private sector operators (known as Train Operating Companies or TOCs) since the mid- 1990s, during which time the model for franchising has continually evolved. The recent round of franchises, including those for Northern and TPE, are based on a model developed following the Brown Review into franchising following the collapse of the West Coast competition in 2012.

For most rail services the Department for Transport (DfT) is the Franchising Authority. The DfT aims to encourage a flourishing, competitive passenger rail market which secures high-performing, value for money services for passengers and taxpayers whilst driving cost effectiveness.

It seeks to achieve this by running competitive tendering processes for the right to operate services on each franchise for a fixed term (currently usually 7 to 10 years) where transport owning groups submit bids against a specification set by DfT. These bids are then assessed and ranked according to a combination of quality and price to determine the winning bid and their offer is then formalised into a Franchise Agreement. In almost all DfT-let franchises the TOC retains the risk for changes in costs and revenues apart from those risks specifically provided for in the franchise agreement. The degree of revenue risk carried by the TOC varies, but in the case of Northern and TPE it is 100% with the TOC.

The goal is that through this process, every 7 to 10 years each franchise is reviewed, re-specified in the light of changes to demand, technology and other factors, and taken to the 'next level' by the winning bidder. This normally results in a significant investment in better services and trains at the start of the franchise, following which (assuming the terms of the Franchise Agreement are being fulfilled), the TOC delivers the required services to the required targets. Therefore the point at which the specification of each new franchise and its expected funding level is set is when elected representatives nationally and locally have the greatest ability to influence the provision of rail services.

Having set the specification, and agreed the commercial model, the competitive process then takes place according to the terms of the Invitation to Tender. Bids are received and evaluated by officials who then make a contract offer to the winning bidder – including enhancements above the minimum specification – into the Franchise Agreement. At this point the minimum agreed outputs for the next franchise term are fixed.

FRANCHISE AGREEMENTS

The Franchise Agreement entered into after the competition has concluded is the substantive legal basis for delivery of the train services and the conduct of both the TOC

and the Franchising Authority. It does not matter whether decisions needed once the Franchise Agreements have been signed are taken by officials or are directed by political leaders, they must be consistent with the Franchise Agreement.

Rail Franchise Agreements are major contracts and include the following elements which are relevant to this review:

1. The minimum level of train services to be provided during different phases of the franchise – known as the Train Service Requirement (TSR);
2. How the TOC secures its timetable to deliver the TSR and what happens if it is unable to do so;
3. The duty on the TOC to consult users and other stakeholders on detailed timetable changes by which it will deliver the requirements of the TSR;
4. What infrastructure enhancements were expected to be delivered at the time of bid submission on which it could base its planned TSR;
5. Benchmarks for operational performance including levels below which the TOC would be in breach of the franchise agreement. This only applies to performance that TOCs have control over and are expressed in terms of levels of cancellations, short formations (i.e. trains shorter than planned), and minutes of delay;
6. Benchmarks for customer satisfaction as measured by the National Rail Passenger Survey and (in the case of Northern) a Service Quality Regime which measures compliance against a range of customer, train and station quality measures. In both cases there are financial consequences flowing from the outcome of these;
7. Committed Obligations – the delivery of specific improvements or other outcomes across a whole range of initiatives, usually stemming from those offered in the bid and which helped form the basis of its quality score. These range from commitments to deliver entire fleets of trains to installing additional cycle racks at stations.

It is also expected that the TOC works with the Franchising Authority to develop and exploit opportunities through mechanisms provided for within the contract to continually improve services and performance beyond the contractual minimum. However this will usually require the Franchise Agreement and Franchise payments to be amended to secure this. In other words, if the Franchising Authority or other bodies wish the TOC to do something beyond its original Franchise Agreement, the franchising authority may well have to negotiate and pay to do so.

To summarise, once the Franchise Agreement has been signed, all decisions must be in accordance with that agreement. If the TOC fulfils all its obligations in the Agreement then any requirement by officials or political leaders to do more must be negotiated and potentially paid for. There is more need for proactive decision-making when the TOC fails to deliver its contractual obligations – either for reasons beyond its control or not – and this is where officials may need to seek political direction or agreement depending on the circumstances and the arrangements for using delegated authorities.

IN SUMMARY

The operation of rail services is undertaken by private companies based on bids assessed on quality and price and formalised through a Franchise Agreement

The specification of each new franchise is the key point at which political leaders nationally and locally have the greatest ability to influence the provision of rail services

The Northern and TPE Franchises have 100% of revenue risk, and are committed to delivering the Franchise Agreement

The Franchise Agreement includes minimum service levels in a Train Service Requirement, expected infrastructure enhancements on which the bid was based and Committed Obligations, benchmarks for operational performance, and a duty on the TOC to consult on detailed timetable changes

The Franchise Agreement is the substantive legal basis for the delivery of services, and if the TOC is delivering its obligations, then requiring the delivery of anything additional to the Agreement is subject to negotiation and potential cost. If the TOC has failed to deliver its contractual obligations there is more need for proactive decision-making

Rail devolution

HOW DOES RAIL FRANCHISING WORK IN THE NORTH?

Until the early 2000s, responsibility for specification, procurement and management of all Great Britain franchises was the responsibility of a single national agency, first the Office of Passenger Rail Franchising, and then the Strategic Rail Authority. The only element of devolution was that Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs) were co-signatories of Franchise Agreements that related to their local services. This meant that for many years PTEs were able to, and in some cases did, significantly invest in improved services and stations on their local networks. From 2005, the Secretary of State for Transport assumed responsibility for specifying, procuring and managing rail franchises in Great Britain, apart from the devolution of many rail responsibilities (including franchising) to the Scottish Government and more recently the Welsh Government in relation to the Wales & Borders franchise. Separately, certain rail services have been taken out of the definition of 'franchise services' and are provided by bodies such as Merseytravel PTE for Merseyrail, and the Mayor of London for what is now London Overground and Transport for London (TfL) Rail.

In 2012, the coalition Government sought proposals for further devolution of rail services within England. This led to a proposal (amongst others) for local control of rail services in the North of England, including the Northern and TPE franchise areas. However, unlike the devolutions above, the franchises concerned did not map neatly on to existing transport authorities that were directly accountable to an elected body. As a result, new arrangements were required.

In November 2013, the Secretary of State and leaders of the Rail North authorities agreed on an initial partnership structure to take forward devolved decision-making on rail services in the North of England.

In October 2013, the Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) covering the North of England came together to form Rail North and submitted a proposal to the DfT for the devolution of services operated by the Northern and TPE franchises.

In November 2013, the Secretary of State and leaders of the Rail North authorities agreed on an initial partnership structure to take forward devolved decision-making on rail services in the North of England, to help manage the risks associated with a project of this scale.

In January 2014, the Department (DfT) and Leaders of the Rail North authorities agreed and published the principles of a partnership for the procurement and management of the next TPE and Northern franchises. Rail North was formalised as a consortium of all the LTAs covered by the two franchises, with the creation of Rail North Ltd (RNL) and associated governance arrangements for elected members and officers.

In October 2014, the Department entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with RNL, setting out the principles behind the joint working arrangements for management and development of the two franchises.

In March 2015, a legally binding Partnership Agreement was signed, setting out the detailed terms by which RNL and the Department would work together to manage and develop the new franchises once they started in April 2016.

In April 2018, Rail North Ltd became part of Transport for the North (TfN) and its role in the Partnership Agreement was novated to TfN.

IN SUMMARY

In 2014, Rail North Limited was formed as a consortium of all local transport authorities covered by the Northern and TPE franchises to take forward devolved decision-making on those rail services

This was followed by a legally binding Partnership Agreement to manage and develop the franchises in 2015 when they were let. These responsibilities moved to Transport for the North when RNL became part of it in 2018

Franchise specification, procurement, and benefits



HOW ARE THE NORTHERN AND TRANSPENNINE EXPRESS FRANCHISES SUPPOSED TO WORK?

The important role Rail North Ltd could play in franchising was recognised in advance of the signing of the Partnership Agreement, with DfT and RNL working jointly on the consultation, specification and procurement of the new franchises during 2014 and 2015.

This involvement was at both a strategic level – helping to set the level of transformational ambition in the specification – and on the detail. DfT worked jointly with RNL, its member authorities, and their elected representatives to develop the format and the content of the stakeholder consultation document for the Northern and TPE franchises. RNL provided experience of the key issues which were important to rail passengers in the North of England. This experience was then used to shape the content of the document and the questions asked. Rail North’s view of the important role rail plays for the North of England, together with the DfT’s approach of using franchising to secure high-performing, value for money services, were used to agree a set of objectives for each franchise. These are:

NORTHERN	TPE
Help the economy of the North of England thrive by offering good quality rail services for travellers across the region, with service levels that are appropriate to demand and provide sufficient passenger capacity, all while working within the affordability constraints on public funding	Help the economy of the North of England to thrive by offering competitive inter-regional rail services between urban centres, providing sufficient passenger capacity and expanding rails mode share
Realise the benefits from rail investment in the North of England, ensuring the successful delivery of journey time, frequency, reliability and connectivity benefits for passengers	Realise the benefits from rail investment in the North of England, ensuring the successful delivery of journey time, frequency, reliability and connectivity benefits for passengers
Deliver excellence in customer service through all aspects of the passenger journey, including consistently high standards of performance and efficiency in the operation of train services	Deliver excellence in customer service through all aspects of the passenger journey, including consistently high standards of performance and efficiency in the operation of train services
Secure efficiencies in operation of the franchise through innovative and transformational approaches to operations, retailing and customer service, and at a whole-industry level by working in partnership across the rail industry	Secure whole industry efficiencies and help reduce overall industry costs by working in partnership across the rail industry
Support local communities to help deliver local transport integration, local regeneration and investment at and around stations	Support local communities to help deliver local transport integration, local regeneration and investment at and around stations
Improve social and environmental sustainability to reduce carbon emissions, use resources efficiently and build skills and capability within the business and supply chain	Improve social and environmental sustainability to reduce carbon emissions, using resources efficiently, and building skills and capability within the business and the supply chain

There was an excellent response to the consultation with the total number of respondents nearing 22,000. All of Rail North's Partner Authorities responded to the consultation, either individually or as part of a group, alongside 31 other Local Authorities.

The consultation document asked for views from local political representatives, members of the public, and other stakeholders, on a variety of specification matters affecting the public and that information was provided to shortlisted bidders for the next Northern and TPE franchises. There was an excellent response to the consultation with the total number of respondents nearing 22,000. All of Rail North's Partner Authorities responded to the consultation, either individually or as part of a group, alongside 31 other Local Authorities. RNL and DfT shared the responsibility for analysing the responses and ensuring these were considered as part of the specification development work.

RNL and the DfT undertook a thorough review process to ensure that every suggestion submitted as part of the consultation process was reviewed by the specification teams and considered as a potential specification option in order to reflect the aspiration of the North and its political representatives.

A list of options reflecting local authority aspirations was taken forward for option appraisal testing to confirm which had a good business case. The work by officers representing the Rail North authorities, reporting back to local politicians, to develop this list was vital to ensure that all had input to the franchise specification. This input was invaluable in shaping the final Invitations to Tender (ITTs). Examples of changes made in light of stakeholder responses included:

1. The decision to retain direct services from Manchester Airport to Cleethorpes (rather than terminating them at Doncaster and providing a separate Sheffield-Cleethorpes service);

2. A substantial increase in train services on weekdays and especially on Sundays. This increase was particularly marked in off-peak times, it was specified that Saturday services should generally be the same as weekday service levels, and earlier first trains and later last trains on Sundays were also included;
3. Significantly improved rolling stock, particularly for the Northern franchise with the phasing out of 'Pacer' trains by the end of 2019 at the latest and specification of higher standards for longer distance Northern routes;
4. Avoiding the need for suggested trade-offs between making substantial improvements to services and rolling stock by reducing some lightly used services or raising fares.

RNL and DfT worked together at every level allowing RNL and its Partners to influence the outcomes of the Northern and TPE franchises. Transparency and the sharing of information, alongside an open and honest relationship, ensured development of Invitation to Tender (ITT) documents that reflected a transformation in rail services. Specification options were reviewed jointly by Rail North and DfT at frequent joint workshops to shape and determine final specification.

Rail North's engagement with its leaders and local MPs strengthened the political engagement with Ministers on the development of the rail network in the North of England to support the forecast economic growth.

Once the ITTs were issued in February 2015, bids were received and evaluated. It should be noted that the winning bidders for each franchise offered significantly enhanced train service, rolling stock and other improvements above the minimum specified in the ITTs. RNL officers were fully involved in relevant parts of the bid evaluation process and in particular the train service sections. Where bidders had used flexibility in the specification to make changes that were potentially controversial (e.g. the change to the Manchester destination of services from Southport), these were fully tested with, and supported by, RNL officers before being contracted by the DfT. RNL officers were also involved in the finalisation and drafting of the Committed Obligations in the Franchise Agreements which is how the enhancements offered in the bids are turned into legally binding commitments.

The franchises were awarded to Arriva Rail North Ltd and First Group for the Northern and TPE franchises respectively in December 2015 and both franchises commenced on the 1st April 2016, which is also when the devolved arrangements for the management of the franchises began.

The Franchise Agreements are between the TOCs and the DfT, and DfT retains all financial responsibility and risk on behalf of the public sector.

SUMMARY OF FRANCHISE BENEFITS

The key benefits offered through the Northern and TPE franchise bid are outlined in the two tables opposite:

NORTHERN RAIL



INVESTMENT BY 2020 NEW CARRIAGES FLEET SIZE INCREASE

12 enhanced inter-urban routes known as Northern Connect



FREE WIFI NEW INFORMATION SYSTEMS NEW TICKET MACHINES

MAJOR INVESTMENT IN ALL STATIONS

TRANSPENNINE EXPRESS



INVESTMENT BY 2020 NEW CARRIAGES FLEET SIZE INCREASE

MAJOR BOOST TO INTER-URBAN CAPACITY



FREE WIFI & ONBOARD ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEMS EXTRA PLUG & USB SOCKETS ENHANCED CATERING USING LOCALLY SOURCED PRODUCTS DISCOUNTED FARES FOR JOB SEEKERS AND 16-18 YEAR OLDS

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE GREATLY IMPROVED

IN FOCUS:

Timetable Development

The actual timetable operated at a given point in time is the responsibility of the TOCs working with Network Rail as the 'system operator' responsible for the national timetable and for ensuring that the timetables of all the different TOCs fit together as a single network. For a passenger franchise such as Northern and TPE the key outcomes required of the timetable are specified in their Franchise Agreements through the Train Service Requirement (TSR). This is normally expressed in terms of the number of calls at each station on each route (often different on different days of the week and at different times of the day) and elements such as the times of the first and last trains of the day. There are also provisions for the amount of capacity to be provided (available seats and standing space on trains) although not at individual route level. The TOCs need to maximise their use of the available rolling stock to match the expected demand.

In the case of the TSRs for Northern and TPE, these were developed jointly by DfT and Rail North officers through the partnership working established as a prelude to the formal Rail North Partnership. This was particularly relevant as it was a culmination of the work by Northern authorities to make the case for significant enhancements and growth-led franchises in contrast to the previous Northern franchise which was let on the premise of 'no growth'. The TSRs, for example, established the broad pattern of the new North TPE services utilising the planned Ordsall Chord to Manchester Airport as well as the other infrastructure improvements planned as part of the Great North Rail Project, including electrification in the North West. The development work included a full public consultation in 2014 on the principles of the franchises and the services to be included, which were then considered and responded to in a Stakeholder Briefing Document published alongside the ITT in February 2015

Having established the overall shape of the train services through the TSRs, bidders then seek to demonstrate how they will fulfil the requirements of the TSR and offer any additional ideas or enhancements (such as linking up two terminating trains across a city to provide new through services). Bidders submit some proposed timetables and unit diagrams to demonstrate how the services would be provided and also to give assurance that the planned resources (especially rolling stock and train crew) provided for within their bids are sufficient. These timetables are reviewed by Network Rail and reported on as part of the evaluation process. However, it has always been recognised that the timetables submitted as part of a three month bidding process many years in advance of the actual delivery of an enhanced timetable will never have the level of detail of the actual timetable planning process which takes over a year.

Therefore when the final TSR is contracted (including additional outcomes offered by the winning bidder), it is still subject to the standard industry processes of TOCs applying for Access Rights to the network to operate services, which the Office of Rail and Road then approve, vary or refuse (the Sale of Access Rights or SOAR process). In the event that the TOC's application to run a new service that DfT specified in its TSR is refused or varied (for example to fit round other TOCs), then (as long as they have followed the industry process) the TOC is not in breach of its contract. In other words, if there are services included in the TSR that (years later) Network Rail believe cannot be run on the network, then the SOAR process has primacy.

CASE STUDY:

Huddersfield - Manchester Local Services

The Manchester to Huddersfield local service was, up until May 2018, operated by Northern as an hourly all stops service between Manchester Victoria and Huddersfield. The basic hourly service was supplemented by peak additional services to provide two trains per hour at the busiest times. The TOC was Northern, who operated the majority of services as through trains beyond Manchester Victoria to other destinations in the North West via Salford. There were well established commuting patterns, particularly westwards towards Manchester.

As part of the development of the specification for the new Northern and TPE franchises (which was undertaken jointly by DfT and Rail North authorities), options were considered to increase the frequency of services on the North TransPennine route. However, it was determined that performance was likely to suffer if this was done ahead of the planned major route upgrade. As an alternative, it was planned to transfer the local service to TPE (apart from the peak additional services).

The idea was to have a single TOC for the majority of services and give bidders the flexibility to split the local stops between a number of services to improve performance both during normal operation and times of disruption, when the TOC could put additional calls into services to pick up local stops. The overall service was designed to allow new patterns of faster and more regular TPE services which was the planned upgrade as a result of the Northern Hub scheme (including the Ordsall Chord).

One of the consequences of giving bidders this flexibility was that the local stops could be split between different services and therefore some local journeys would become more difficult as there would no longer be a single service calling at all stations. Although they were not specifically consulted upon as part of the full public consultation (also jointly undertaken by DfT and Rail North), the plans were set out in the consultation response (a public document) with a caveat that TOCs would be expected to consult with stakeholders and users on the detail of the proposed service changes.

First's winning franchise bid (involving a distribution of calls across different services) was contracted and TOCs developed their plans for May 2018 during the spring and summer of 2017. The proposals were consulted on by TPE and immediately drew concerns from local user groups. In particular, the concerns were about the loss of local connectivity, loss of direct journey opportunities to Manchester Victoria (as the local services were planned to switch to Manchester Piccadilly) and less convenient arrival times for commuters. A number of meetings took place with TOCs and users to address the concerns.

Several changes were made, although it was not possible to address all the issues raised as the basic pattern of services had been set up to unlock the wider benefits of the investment and the local calling pattern had to fit around this. The scope to respond further to points raised by stakeholders was limited by the late revision to the May 2018 timetables which had to be undertaken in such short order.

Whilst there are still concerns about aspects of the revised service (including current levels of performance), there are benefits including the higher specification of rolling stock used by TPE and the increase in capacity promised for 2019.

In December 2018, some improvements were made to the service pattern to address some of the fundamental performance concerns. This included splitting the Manchester Piccadilly to Leeds stopping service into two sections (Manchester to Huddersfield and Huddersfield to Leeds) and removing two calls from the Hull – Manchester Piccadilly service by re-allocating them to other stopping services. Whilst early indications are that this has provided performance improvements the further-short notice changes have impacted on some passengers and highlighted the need for greater transparency and understanding of passenger impacts when changes are made.

TfN has worked with local user groups and TPE to develop an enhancement to the service pattern, as a potential scheme to be funded through the Service Option provisions in the Franchise Agreement. This would provide greater reliability, a better pattern of services for local journeys and bring all the services, including peak additional services, into the TPE franchise.

IN SUMMARY

The Department for Transport and (what was) Rail North Limited, including its constituent local authorities and elected representatives, worked together closely to specify and procure the Northern and TPE franchises

This included incorporating local aspirations and views and ultimately resulted in franchise Train Service Requirements that included significant enhancements after many years of “no growth” franchises

Transformational benefits from the winning bids represent a total of £1.5 billion investment, with over 500 new trains, a more than 40% increase in capacity, £60 million for stations, and a substantial uplift in the number of services operated

The Partnership and governance



HOW ARE THE NORTHERN AND TRANSPENNINE EXPRESS FRANCHISES MANAGED?

The key outcome of the Rail North Partnership Agreement between DfT and TfN, was the commitment to jointly manage the franchises.. This is undertaken on their behalf by the Rail North Partnership (RNP) management team based in Leeds. The team is headed up by the Rail North Partnership Director and reports to the Rail North Partnership Board (RNPB). This board has three officers each from DfT and TfN (or its member authorities) and has an independent chair appointed by both.

The Partnership Agreement sets out those matters that are reserved to the DfT and those which TfN is responsible for. The Partnership Agreement also gives TfN the power to vary the level of regulated fare increases away from that determined by the DfT for other franchises, as long as it bears the financial consequences of doing so – i.e. if fares were set to increase by a lower amount than that determined nationally, it would need to fund the additional subsidy to the train operator. Conversely if the fares were set to increase by a higher amount than nationally, the additional revenue would be available to be spent by TfN on improvements to the railway.

The RNP management team is the body which manages the contractual relationship with the two franchises and through whom all franchise matters are directed. The Rail North Partnership Board is the decision-making body for matters not delegated to the management team or not matters reserved for one of the two partners. The Board was designed to be strategic and meets a minimum of four times per year although in practice it has generally met (in person or via telecon) monthly and more frequently in the period following the May 2018 timetable change. Board meetings are not open to the public and generally the majority of items contain commercially confidential information (e.g. relating to proposals subject to commercial negotiation and to the financial and business affairs of the train TOCs).

Because of the legal requirements of the Franchise Agreements with regard to handling the TOC's commercially confidential information, the DfT requires that access to such information (e.g. relating to franchise finances) is carefully controlled and will only be made available to those who have personally signed an appropriate confidentiality agreement. The signing of agreements and access to relevant information is managed by the Rail North Partnership team working with the DfT. All franchise management activities (e.g. contract and financial management) is undertaken through DfT's standard systems (which the Rail North Partnership Team have remote access to) and controlled in line with all other franchises.

The Partnership Agreement now also outlines the Board's responsibilities with regard to TfN's role in respect of advising the Secretary of State about its rail infrastructure

investment priorities. Finally, it also sets out the means by which TfN could propose the devolution of further powers and responsibilities in respect of rail.

The Partnership Agreement does not set out how either DfT or TfN RNPB members feed into, or communicate back from, their respective organisations including political input into any decisions. This is a matter for those organisations and is described in the following sections.

Governance of the Partnership Agreement is illustrated in **Figure 01**.

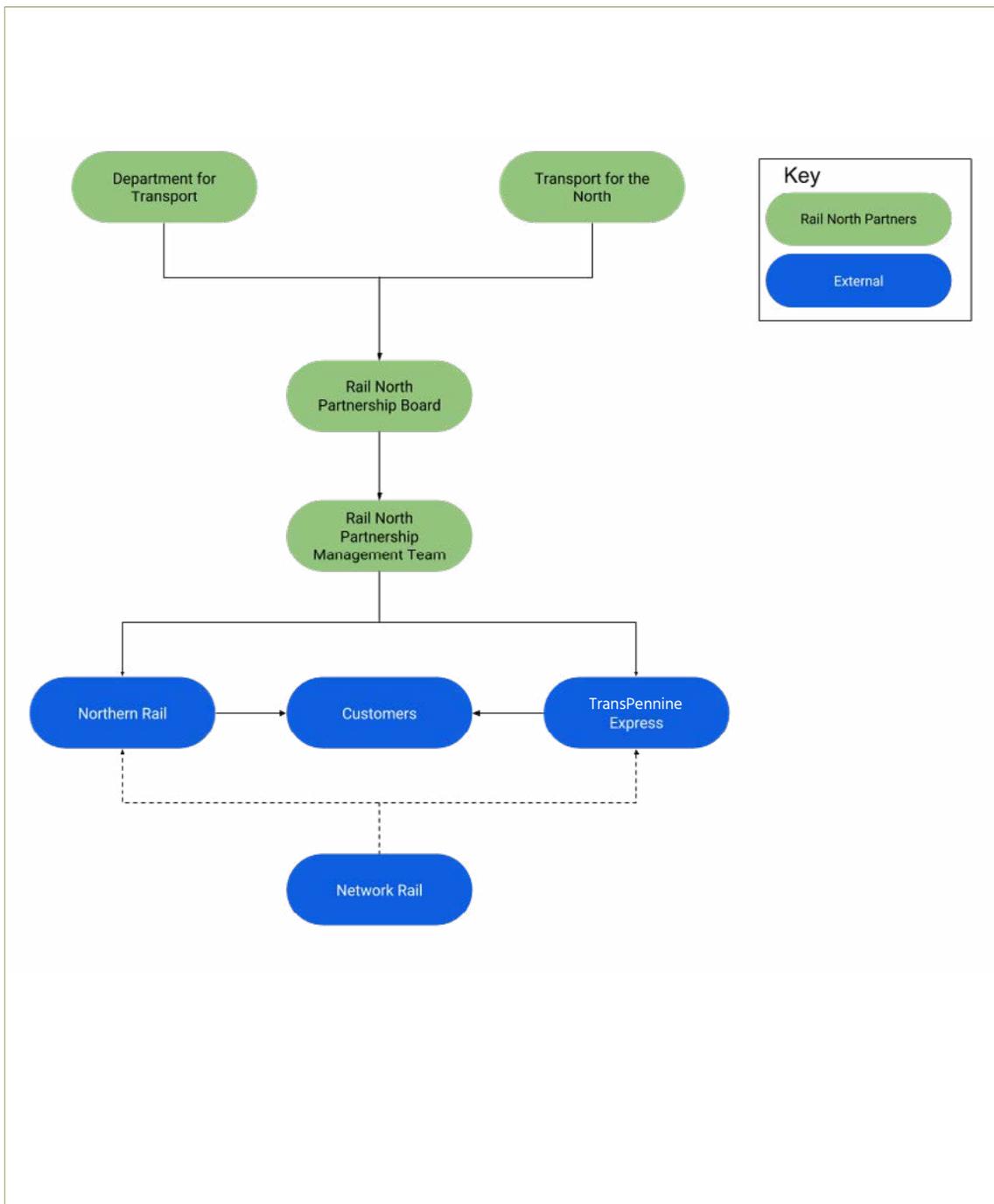


Figure 01 - Overall Governance of Rail North Partnership.

DFT MANAGEMENT OF FRANCHISES

The diagram below shows the organisational structure of the DfT in relation to the management of rail franchises and should help provide context in understanding the governance arrangements, see **Figure 02**.

Once the franchise begins, compliance with Franchise Agreement obligations and delivery of Committed Obligations is undertaken by Commercial Management teams within the Passenger Services section of DfT's Rail Group. Each franchise is generally managed by a Commercial Management team of two or three people reporting into a 'Market Lead' at Senior Civil Servant level. The commercial teams can draw upon a wide range of support services and policy experts whose costs are spread across the franchises – for example processing service recovery claims from TOCs, fare experts, legal advice, stakeholder communication, and so on.

Decision-making and financial authority is formally delegated to the most appropriate level with a clear decision-making structure within the Department (including to ministers where necessary). The process of receiving approvals is therefore relatively straightforward and can be swift when required.

DFT GOVERNANCE OF RNP FRANCHISES

When the new franchises started the Department removed the posts that were previously dedicated to managing the Northern and TPE franchises and instead provided equivalent funding as agreed in the Partnership Agreement to the Rail North Partnership team in Leeds, who assumed these responsibilities.

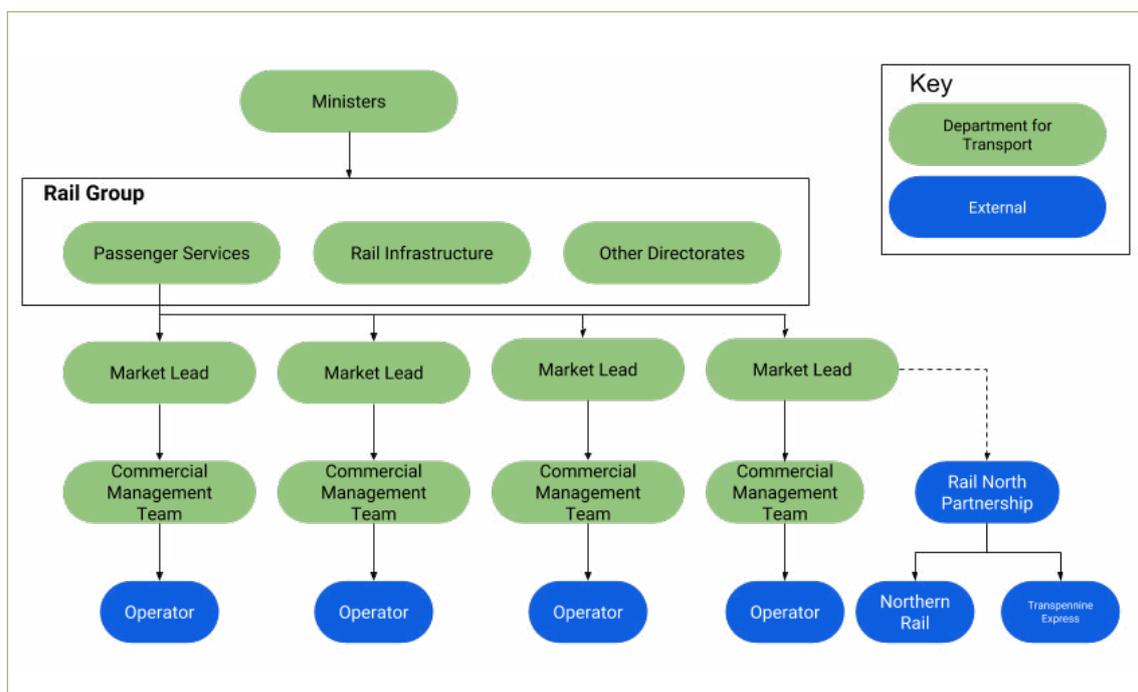


Figure 02 - DfT Rail.

In April 2018, Transport for the North (TfN) came into being as England's first Sub-national Transport Body and the business of Rail North Ltd was transferred to Transport for the North.

Some responsibilities that (in accordance with the Partnership Agreement) cannot be delegated to a non-Civil Servant (such as the RNP Director) remain in DfT, such as authorising financial payments and answers to Parliamentary Questions. The RNP team retains full access to the support services available in Passenger Services.

The Department's three RNP Board members contribute to decisions of the Board using equivalent levels of delegated authority and reporting back or seeking views from the formal DfT governance structures and/or Ministers primarily only in the case of matters of strategic importance or where there would be material financial consequences for the DfT's budget. For example, where there are choices to be made about changes to local train services, the DfT representatives on the RNP Board have to date the endorsed recommendations of the TfN representatives reflecting their greater local engagement.

TRANSPORT FOR THE NORTH GOVERNANCE

Prior to April 2018, governance in the North was via Rail North Ltd - a company established and owned by the 25 Local Transport Authorities covering the geography of the Northern and TPE franchises, with Member level involvement on franchise matters primarily through a Board of Directors. The Board last met in December 2017 and the full membership of Rail North Ltd met for the final time on 8 February 2018.

The Rail North governance also included an Officer Steering Group (OSG) mirroring the make-up of the board of elected members and established to advise political representatives and feed in views from Local Transport Authorities (LTA's) in between formal members' meetings. The Officer Steering Group generally met monthly and continued to meet throughout the changeover to TfN governance and specifically in the run-up to the May 2018 timetable change. Representatives from the Rail North Partnership team regularly attended the OSG meeting to provide updates and answer questions.

In April 2018, Transport for the North (TfN) came into being as England's first Sub-national Transport Body and the business of Rail North Ltd was transferred to Transport for the North.

The top-level governance for TfN is through the TfN Board consisting of Local Authority leaders and representatives from the Local Enterprise Partnerships together with the five former Rail North authorities outside the core TfN geography covered by the franchises overseen by TfN. DfT, Network Rail and Highways England also attend TfN Board meetings. There is also an Audit and Governance Committee, and a Scrutiny Committee, see **Figure 03**.

TfN has taken over the role and functions of Rail North Limited in relation to the management of the TPE and Northern Rail Franchises and has established a Rail North Committee to oversee this role. Rail franchise matters are considered in the Rail North Committee, which is made up of representatives of 11 regional groups covering the rail franchise area (the Rail North Authorities). At meetings of the Rail North Committee, the Rail North Authorities are entitled to attend, speak and vote on rail franchise matters.

Due to the change in governance, the Rail North Committee was not established until the second full meeting of Transport for the North in June 2018. The Rail North Committee then met for the first time on 12 July. As mentioned above, the Officer Steering Group continued to meet during this period and from April 2018 it was re-named the Officer Reference Group in line with the TfN Constitution.

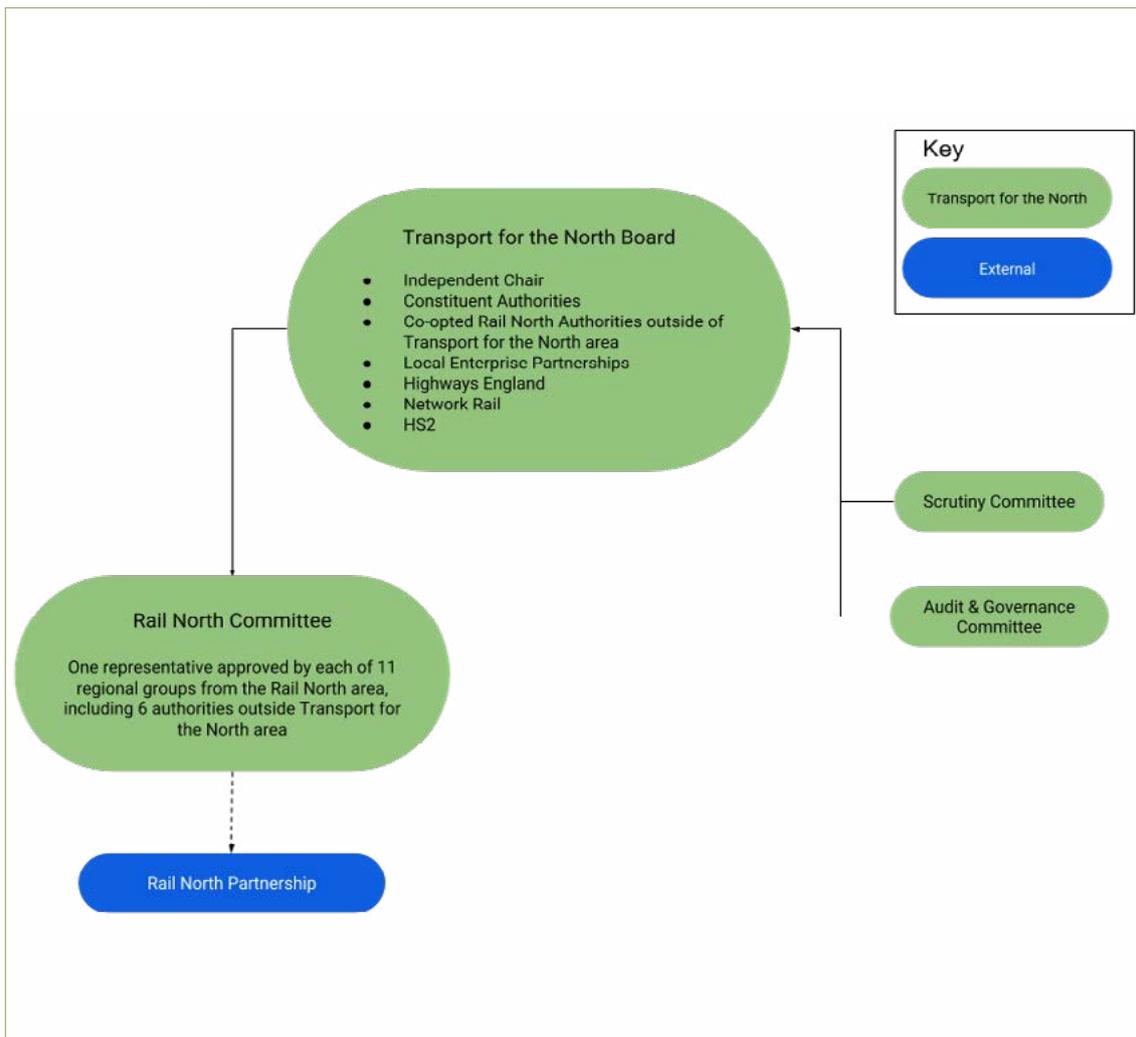


Figure 03 - Transport for the North Governance.

IN SUMMARY

The Rail North Partnership Agreement commits the DfT and TfN to jointly manage the Northern and TPE franchises. This is undertaken by a Management Team, reporting to a Partnership Board, with representation from each Partner

Some matters in the Partnership Agreement are reserved to the DfT (primarily relating to finance and risk), some are reserved to TfN (which manages them through the Rail North Committee), some are delegated to the Management Team, and some sit with the Partnership Board (which is intended to be a strategic body)

Access to commercially sensitive information is necessarily carefully controlled including through confidentiality agreements

How the DfT and TfN feed into or communicate back from their respective organisations, including political input into any decisions, is a matter for those organisations

Since April 2018, TfN's role and functions within the Rail North Partnership are overseen by the Rail North Committee, comprised of member authorities covering the franchise areas. Prior to then, this was done by Rail North Ltd and its Board of Directors. An Officer Reference Group (previously the Officer Steering Group) has continued to meet since RNL was originally established

Most franchises are managed in-life by a commercial management team within the DfT, but for the Northern and TPE franchises the RNP team assumed responsibility for management of the Franchise Agreement. The RNP team retains full access to all DfT support services

Delivery, infrastructure, and how it all should work



HOW IS EVERYTHING BROUGHT TOGETHER?

Rail franchising has become increasingly complex when undertaken against a background of passenger growth, a more congested network, and an increased number of infrastructure enhancement projects taking place across the network. In particular during each franchising process the bidders are told when they can assume certain planned infrastructure enhancements will be delivered by and what the capability of that infrastructure will be as far as it can be known at that stage. They are then able to take this into account when planning their bids – including the plans for additional services, new fleet or cascaded fleets of trains, and then cost and revenue changes that follow. These financial out-turns then form the contracted subsidy needed (or premium paid) in each year.

Because delivery of infrastructure is a risk over which the TOCs have little control, in recent competitions the DfT has for the most part taken on the financial risk of any delay in, or change to, the infrastructure assumptions given at bid. In other words, if such a delay has an adverse effect on the TOC's finances or ability to meet the specified Train Service Requirement, or operational performance, then DfT will hold the franchise harmless. These protections are similar to others in Franchise Agreements known as Secretary of State Risk Assumptions (SoSRAs). However other elements of enhancements under the franchisee's control (such as a new fleet delivery) will be the franchisee's responsibility and they bear the financial risk for successful delivery or otherwise of such initiatives.

It should be noted that since these franchises started the protections for delayed infrastructure have been triggered and that, in accordance with the Franchise Agreement, DfT (but not TfN), will therefore ensure that there is no worsenment of financial position of the TOCs compared to that which would have existed if the infrastructure had been delivered by Network Rail as planned.

RELATIONSHIP WITH INFRASTRUCTURE AND NETWORK RAIL

Infrastructure enhancements are the responsibility of Network Rail and the relationship with Network Rail is managed from the Rail Infrastructure Directorate of DfT Rail Group. This area has not been devolved, apart from Scotland, given DfT's role as funder of Network Rail nationally.

There is no contractual relationship between the Rail North Partnership and Network Rail on day-to-day operational matters. The contractual relationship is through the TOCs (who have access and contractual agreements with Network Rail for the use of their infrastructure and systems). Network Rail has developed scorecards to assess their performance based on the requirements of the TOCs. Network Rail generally do not have

a direct relationship with passengers. That relationship instead exists through the TOCs who operate the services and manage most of the stations. The exception to this are 'major' stations managed by Network Rail which include Leeds, Liverpool Lime Street and Manchester Piccadilly. In terms of enhancement schemes (including the North West Electrification Programme and TransPennine Route Upgrade) there is an interface with Network Rail through the North of England Programme Board (chaired by DfT as the funder of enhancement schemes) which is attended by officers from DfT, TfN, the Rail North Partnership, Network Rail and TOCs.

In the North of England, currently there are interfaces between four distinct parts of Network Rail; The London North Eastern and East Midlands Route, the London North Western Route, the Infrastructure Planning function, and the System Operator function (responsible for the national timetable and the long-term planning). In recognition of the multiple interfaces for TOCs and clients in the North of England, Network Rail has recently appointed a North of England Director as the single point of contact for TfN and TOCs in the North of England. It is worth noting that Network Rail are in the process of changing its geographical structures which will amend these relationships, see **Figure 04**.

As mentioned above, Network Rail attends the TfN Board and there is a strong relationship between Network Rail and TfN on planning and future development.

For example, Network Rail as delivery partner with DfT on the Northern Powerhouse Rail programme, joint work and evidence collection for TfN's Strategic Transport Plan (including the Long Term Rail Strategy) and Network Rail's Long Term Planning Process (now reconfigured as the Continuous Modular Strategic Planning Process).

TfN has a role as a statutory partner with responsibility for setting key priorities, advising on decisions, and developing the case for further investment.

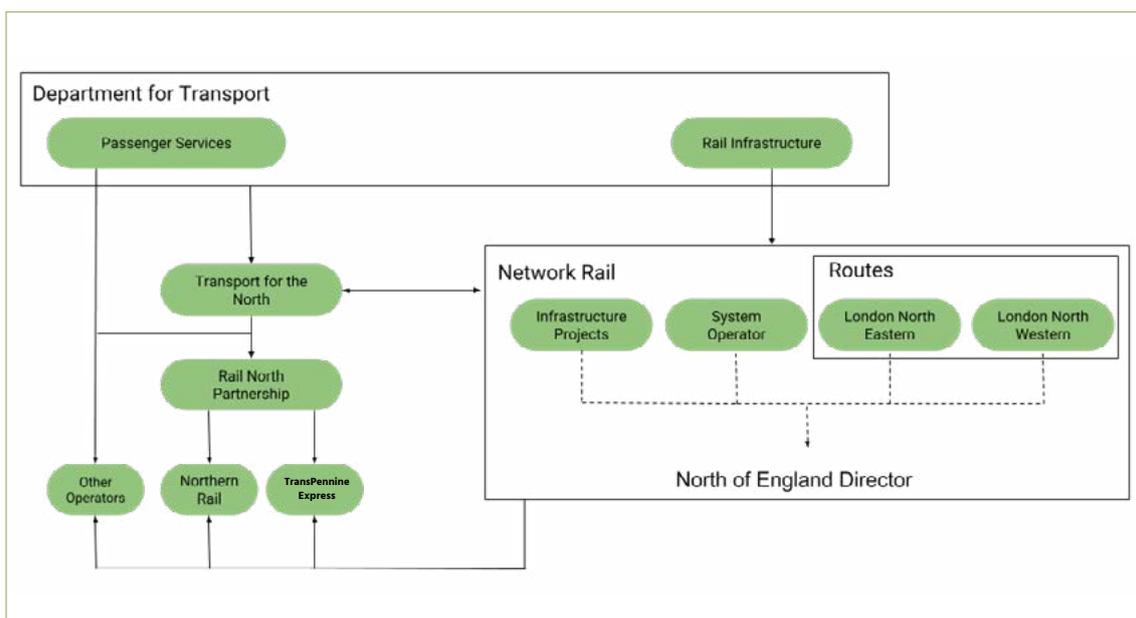


Figure 04 - Network Rail and DfT Governance.

As recent events have shown, rail services can only be as good as the infrastructure on which they run. Use of rail has more than doubled in the North of England over the last 20 years making the rail network very congested, which causes unreliability and limits future growth. Investment is needed to upgrade the infrastructure to increase capacity, improve reliability and speed up journey times across the whole of the North, in accordance with the policies set out in the Long Term Rail Strategy and TfN's Strategic Transport Plan. TfN consider that there is a need for further enhancement of the infrastructure, in particular to make best use of the investment in new rolling stock that is being delivered by the two franchises.

EXAMPLES OF RECENTLY DELIVERED INFRASTRUCTURE ENHANCEMENTS

NORTHERN HUB:

- Orsdall Chord; Manchester Victoria capacity improvements
- Manchester Airport station
- Calder Valley journey time improvements

NORTH WEST ELECTRIFICATION:

- Manchester Airport to West Coast Main Line
- Liverpool to Manchester and Wigan with journey time improvements
- Preston to Blackpool Route Upgrade
- Manchester to Preston via Bolton with journey time improvements
- Manchester to Stalybridge journey time improvements
- Bradford Mill Lane junction capacity improvements

The biggest such scheme is the TransPennine Route Upgrade (TRU) between Manchester and York, for which TfN's advice to the DfT was reported through the Rail North Partnership Board. In addition, TfN is working to develop a programme with Network Rail and the TOCs to raise linespeeds, cut journey times, and increase frequencies throughout the whole of the North.

HOW IT SHOULD ALL WORK

The Rail North Partnership team was established as a joint collaboration between the two parties (DfT and TfN). As the RNP team is based in the North, the intention was that it would naturally be more accessible to passengers and stakeholders in the North as well as more accessible to the TOCs. The RNP Board overseeing the work of the RNP team was designed to be strategic and, after an initial period, meet on a quarterly basis to oversee delivery of the franchise enhancements and future proposals for further development and enhancements.

Both DfT and TfN have the ability to make incremental changes to the franchise outputs (subject to funding) and some matters are fully devolved to TfN whilst certain matters (e.g. finance and enforcement) are reserved to the DfT. The TOCs are contracted to deliver the proposals and enhancements set out in their bids and in a normal course of events, it is for them to develop the detailed plans to meet their contracted requirements (e.g. timetables and rolling stock plans) and undertake the relevant consultation with stakeholders (including the northern authorities). The TOCs are responsible for securing the necessary train paths from Network Rail to deliver their timetable plans and for communicating with passengers. Thus the RNP Board would generally be focused on change and development rather than detailed timetable planning. The RNP Board has its own annual business plan which is informed by both the TfN and DfT business plans.

In a normal course of events, and as provided for in the Franchise Agreements, there will always be some change from the committed franchise outputs (in some cases the TOCs will develop better proposals than originally planned and/or make adjustments

Rail franchising has been complicated by passenger growth, increasing congestion, and more infrastructure enhancement projects.

to response to stakeholder feedback). The RNP team have delegated authority to agree changes (within pre-defined limits and in a similar way to how DfT officials manage other franchises). Only the most significant changes would come to the RNP Board for approval. Where a change impacts one or more of the northern local authorities, the TfN representatives on the RNP Board would consult the relevant authorities via the Rail North Committee and reflect their views to the RNP Board for decision.

Therefore, it was intended that the TOCs would get on with development and delivery of their contracted enhancements (and they are incentivised to do so), consulting on the detail and agreeing changes with the RNP team. The RNP Board (and by definition the two partners, in TfN's case through the Rail North Committee) would focus on further development and positive change (for example DfT implementing enhanced Delay Repay compensation for passengers or TfN bringing forward enhancements in line with its Long Term Rail Strategy and fares strategy).

The franchise specification process demonstrated that the strategic objectives of DfT and TfN in relation to delivery of rail services are well aligned and the Partnership was intended to deal with issues as they arose and seek opportunities for further improvements. Generally, this was how the Partnership worked for the first two years of its operation. The only change was that, in practice, the RNP Board continued to meet monthly given the level of planned change being overseen in the first years of the franchises.

This describes the 'business as usual' way of working, but the significant delays to infrastructure projects and consequential changes to the May 2018 timetable and problems that ensued have tested many aspects of the workings of the Partnership.

IN SUMMARY

Rail franchising has been complicated by passenger growth, increasing congestion, and more infrastructure enhancement projects
Franchise bids are based in part on assumptions on planned infrastructure delivery provided by DfT. Where this is not delivered, the risk usually sits with the DfT: should non-delivery adversely affect the TOC's finances, the DfT will hold the franchise harmless by restoring their financial position to that which would have existed if the infrastructure had been delivered as planned
Network Rail manages infrastructure and delivers infrastructure enhancements. There is no direct relationship between the Rail North Partnership and Network Rail. Generally, the Rail North Partnership manages the day to day contractual relationship with operators, who in turn have a contractual relationship with both Network Rail and the rail customer
In terms of enhancement schemes, the North of England Programme Board is chaired by DfT with representatives from Network Rail, DfT, TfN, the RNP team, and TOCs

There are two Network Rail Route Directorates, along with the System Operator and Infrastructure Projects Directorates, that affect the North. Network Rail has appointed a North of England Director as a single point of contact

Network Rail attends TfN Board, and the two organisations work closely together to make the case for, and deliver, investment and enhancements

Under 'business as usual', it was envisaged that:

- TOCs would deliver contractual requirements, develop the necessary detail, and undertake consultation
- The Management Team would agree minor changes and ensure compliance
- The Partnership Board would be a strategic body focusing on franchise development and agreeing significant changes
- Rail North Committee member authorities would be responsible for devolved matters, make changes to franchise outputs subject to funding, and be consulted on changes that impact their areas
- The DfT would be responsible for reserved matters (for example finance and enforcement)

This approach, which worked as planned prior to May 2018, was tested by the problems arising from the introduction of the new timetable

3 Evidence

HOW DID THE PROCESS WORK DURING RECENT DISRUPTION?

The May 2018 timetable



WHAT HAPPENED AND WHY?

Impact



HOW DID THE DISRUPTION AFFECT PASSENGERS AND BUSINESSES?

Input from Partners and industry



HOW WELL DID THE RAIL NORTH PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS WORK?

The May 2018 timetable



WHAT HAPPENED AND WHY?

This chapter considers how the timetable development process normally works and what went wrong in planning the May 2018 timetable. It draws heavily on the Inquiry by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) into the causes of the timetable problems. We have also reviewed the report into the timetable change by the House of Commons Transport Committee and consider it broadly consistent with the evidence we have gathered.

The views on the effects in the North following the May 2018 timetable introduction, and how the Partnership responded, are crucial. Therefore views have been specifically sought from representatives of local partners, national agencies, industry, and passengers.

It should be noted that in these cases we have tried to faithfully reproduce the evidence others have provided, and that this doesn't necessarily indicate agreement with the view expressed. We will set out our views in response to the evidence in the Key Issues chapter later in this report.

EVENTS THAT LED UP TO MAY 2018

The main review considering the overall industry approach to the events of May timetable 2018 and examining the issues that caused the timetable problems in more detail was carried out by the Office of Rail and Road under the chairmanship of Professor Stephen Glaister, which is summarised later in this report. This review has not replicated this but rather focuses on the role of the Rail North Partnership and draws out lessons learned and potential future changes.

The timetable planning process begins up to two years in advance of the timetable change. It is the responsibility of the TOCs to undertake consultation with Local Transport Authorities, stakeholders, and passengers. The client body (the Rail North Partnership) does not approve details of the timetable except if any changes are needed to the actual specification (the Train Service Requirement) set out in the Franchise Agreement. These might be as a result of network constraints or opportunities to generate better outcomes for passengers arising from such consultation.

The original plan in the Franchise Agreements was that the first major timetable enhancements from Northern and TPE (known as TSR2) would take place in December 2017, following the introduction of electric services on the Bolton corridor and through to Blackpool by December 2016.

However, delays to these electrification projects beyond the dates expected originally surfaced following the review of infrastructure scheme delivery by Network Rail in 2015 (the Hendy Review), with the electrification to be delivered by December 2017, and as a result the TSR2 enhancements were re-timed to start in May 2018.

The TOCs developed the original May 2018 timetable over several months from spring 2017. This was consulted on through lead officers representing the Rail North member authorities.

Initially there were a number of issues identified with the proposals, but this was not surprising as they were draft proposals relating to a very significant change to the existing timetable. The TOCs were able to respond positively to the feedback and address many of the issues raised to create a better plan. The TOCs then undertook consultation with a wider group of stakeholders.

As more details of the timetable were developed there were inevitably some areas where the contract specification could not quite be met or opportunities to deliver a better outcome for passengers emerged. The RNP team was able to negotiate some additional enhancements including additional calls at Kirkstall Forge (in Leeds) and an extension of a service to Gainsborough Central.

Rail North Ltd signed off the final plans in autumn 2017, which it considered a good outcome for the North of England. The TOCs were then able to progress their timetable bid through the normal industry processes on the continued assumption that the infrastructure would be ready in time.

The root cause of the inability to implement the original May 2018 timetable was Network Rail's failure to deliver the Preston - Manchester electrification scheme on time, and subsequently, the late notice of that delay and the knock-on impact on the timetable planning process. Not only would the scheme improve that corridor, but it was also planned to enable the cascade of diesel trains released by the electrification scheme to provide the planned service and capacity enhancements in TSR2 elsewhere, before the arrival of new and additional trains.

Whilst foundation installation problems encountered by Network Rail in summer 2017 imported further delays to the project, by later summer/early autumn, there was still a high degree of confidence that whilst the December 2017 deadline had been missed, May 2018 was deliverable. However, progress over the Christmas 2017 pre-planned blockade was not as good as Network Rail expected and it was clear the project would not be delivered on time. This led to Network Rail tabling a number of options to a meeting of the North of England Programme Board in early January 2018, which included pressing ahead with some additional substantial and highly disruptive (to passengers) blockades of the line to try and catch up time. With no guarantee of completion even with the additional disruption, the industry together with DfT, RNP, and TfN representatives agreed to recommend deferral of the completion date of the electrification scheme to autumn 2018 and Network Rail proposed a hybrid timetable for May 2018 to replace the originally planned timetable.

The concept of the hybrid timetable was to protect those elements of the original timetable that could still be operated in the new circumstances and remove those elements that could no longer be reliably operated. The primary driver for this was that Northern could not run electric trains on the Bolton corridor as intended and the diesel

trains used on the corridor could not be cascaded for service enhancements elsewhere. Practically this meant Northern re-planning and re-writing large elements of their timetable in a short space of time.

Although Northern had requested it, the option of simply rolling over the December 2017 timetable was not accepted by the industry because the May 2018 timetable change was a very substantial change to the whole national timetable with notable changes on Thameslink, East Coast and Midland Mainlines which had knock-on implications across the North. Thus, the basic structure of the December 2017 timetable no longer existed to come back to. The TOCs did raise concerns about the impact of rewriting the timetable at late notice.

Two other factors that weren't foreseen at the time of the Programme Board decision in January significantly contributed to the disruption in May 2018. First, there were delays to the Blackpool electrification scheme (which included a blockade of the line). While the Blackpool electrification was ultimately completed in time for May 2018, there was a three-week delay in the completion of the five-month blockade due to problems not foreseeable by Network Rail (including road accidents and extreme weather). This meant that Northern train drivers operating the route needed to be retrained as per their terms and conditions. This significantly added to the problem of availability and planning of train crew. Secondly, this was exacerbated even further by industrial relations issues, including ongoing industrial action, managing three legacy sets of terms and conditions, and the inability to agree a renewal of a Rest Day Working Agreement with drivers.

The drastically shortened the amount of time to plan the new timetable and had a major impact on Northern's ability to produce accurate and robust train crew diagrams and rosters, matched to rolling stock schedules that had still not been finalised. At the point that the new timetable went live, agreed rosters were still not in place at Manchester Piccadilly, Manchester Victoria and Leeds.

The concept of the hybrid timetable was to protect those elements of the original timetable that could still be operated in the new circumstances and remove those elements that could no longer be reliably operated.

When the new timetable was introduced on the 20 May, the failure to develop and implement accurate train crew diagrams and rosters, with an inadequate number of available, trained drivers, became apparent and resulted in the introduction of emergency rostering. This affected approximately 700 drivers and 2,300 trains per day, and required Northern to manage the allocation of work on the day, matching available resources to work requirements on an hour-by-hour basis, see **Figure 05**.

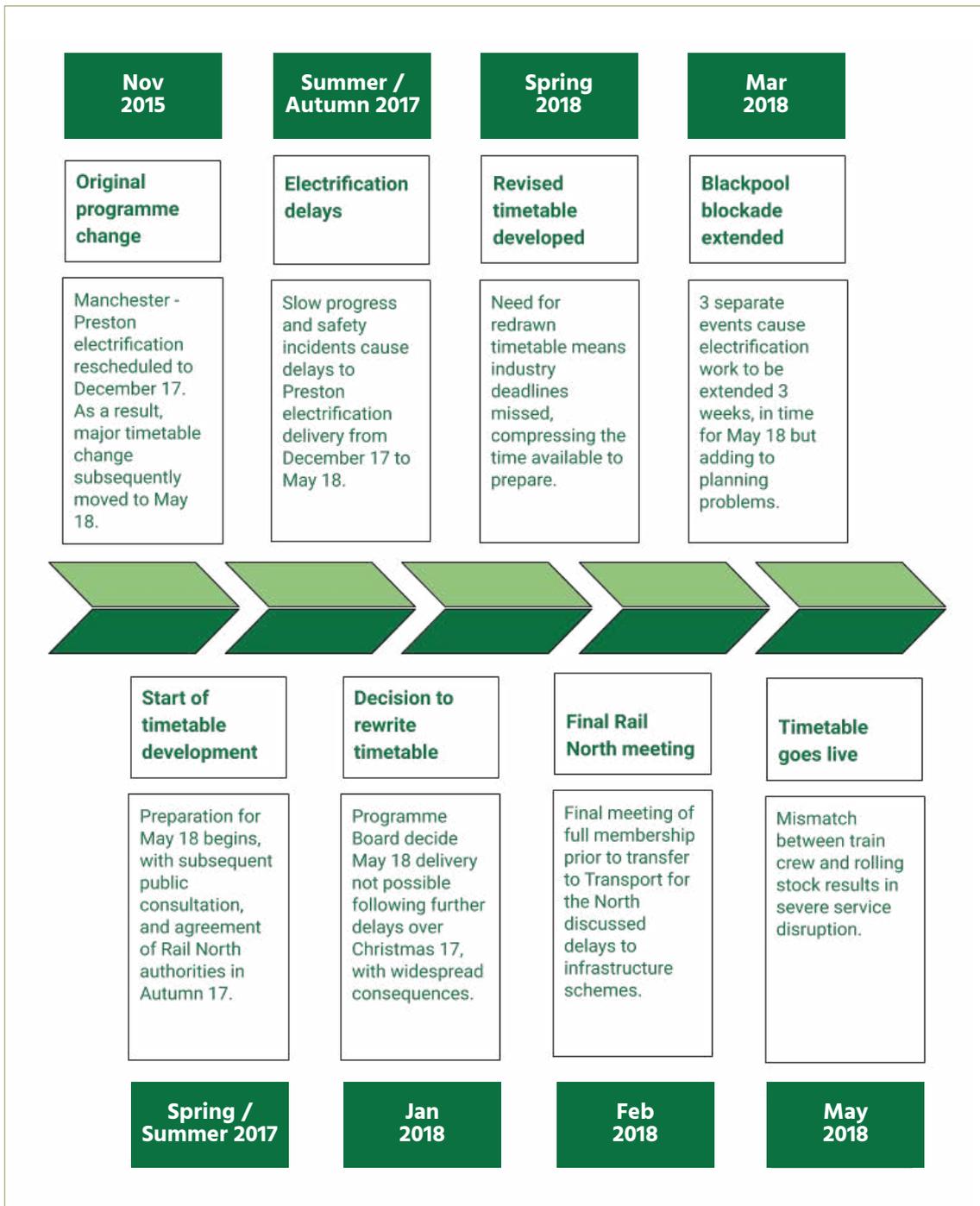


Figure 05 - Timeline of events.

COMMUNICATIONS UP TO MAY 2018

Communications to the public and stakeholders is the responsibility of Network Rail and the TOCs. TfN and DfT are each responsible for their own internal communications (for example, for the former, to Northern authorities and politicians).

Following the confirmation of the delay to the Bolton corridor electrification in early January, Network Rail led the public communication of the change. At this point the detailed timetable impact was not known, so the message was focused on the delay to the infrastructure scheme rather than the timetable impacts.

Rail North Ltd and TfN also provided written communications to elected members and other stakeholders, highlighting the likely delayed implementation of some enhancements planned as part of the May 2018 timetable. Due to the planned change in governance arrangements in April 2018 (from Rail North Ltd to TfN) there were no formal meetings of elected members of Rail North Ltd between the 8th February and the first meeting of TfN's Rail North Committee on 12th July. However, in the weeks following May, TfN Board members had a number of specifically arranged meetings and phone calls (including with DfT Ministers and officials) to deal with the issues that had arisen.

In the absence of elected members meetings, the main communication channel between Rail North Ltd and its members during the period between February and April was the Officers' Steering Group (re-named the Officers' Reference Group from the transfer to TfN in April 2018). Lead officers received monthly updates from the Rail North Partnership on May 2018 progress together with detailed franchise management dashboards for each of the two TOCs. Officers from the Rail North Partnership attended these meetings and provided direct feedback from their discussions with the TOCs as they prepared for May 2018. Lead officers provided feedback to/from other officers and members within their sub-region. In March 2018, detailed timetable proposals from Northern were shared including outstanding issues and risks. Feedback, at this stage, was positive and it was recognised that Northern had worked hard to create a timetable that fitted the resources available (rolling stock being the primary constraint) and preserved some of the benefits of the original May timetable.

During March and early April, TOCs shared more details of their revised timetable plans with local stakeholders including Local Transport Authorities. As part of the normal timetable development process, it is for the TOCs to consult locally on the detail of their timetable proposals and demonstrate how they have taken feedback on board. This did take place for May 2018, albeit in a very compressed timescale. Despite this challenge Northern, in particular, were able to take on board some of the stakeholder feedback and made positive changes as late as a week before the new timetable was implemented.

In the run-up to the timetable changes further gaps and issues emerged with the timetable (for example timings of some peak trains were less than ideal to meet peak commuter demand). The focus of the RNP team was on highlighting the 'hotspots' in the timetable. In the immediate few days before the timetable change, Northern communicated the possibility of some 'localised service disruption' but as they stated in

evidence to the Transport Select Committee, even at this late stage they were not able to quantify the scale of the impact. TfN sent a communication to lead officers that mirrored the Northern communication and set out an approach for dealing with any feedback on the timetable.

It is recognised that the industry had highlighted to the RNP team potential risks including some performance impacts as a result of the need to re-plan the May 2018 timetable at short notice. The precise impact was not quantified and the potential for the very widespread disruption that actually ensued (including the substantial mismatch in driver knowledge incurred by Northern in the days following the timetable change) was not anticipated or advised.

The two TOCs communicated the need to re-plan the timetable and, later, the details of the new timetables to stakeholders and public. The communication to passengers is covered in detail by the ORR's review and will not be repeated here save to say that communication of the new timetable was outside the normal industry timescale of information being available 12 weeks before the timetable change - the consequence of the late re-plan was that detailed information was only available 6 weeks before. The other key point from the ORR's findings is that the potential for disruption as a result of the new timetable was underestimated and communicated with a misplaced confidence by the industry - Northern's communication to stakeholders on 18 May spoke only of the possibility of some 'localised disruption'. In addition both Northern and TPE had communicated the potential for performance improvements (compared to performance in the lead up to 20th May).

In the case of Northern this was in the letter to TfN dated 9th May (in response to a letter from TfN about poor operational performance in the North West);

"...we expect to be in a position to run a full service from the implementation of the new timetable on 20 May 2018 when our operational performance will significantly improve"

and in the case of TPE their stakeholder briefing in advance of the timetable change stated;

"We will, except for at peak times, be the sole operator between Manchester to Huddersfield which should lead to performance improvements owing to the high performance of the trains operating on that section of our network."

The problems with the May 2018 timetable have been severe, but it should be remembered that there were some enhancements to the previous level of service.

RESPONSE TO EVENTS

In the days following the timetable change and in response to the severe problems experienced by passengers as a result of the shortage of trained drivers for the new timetable, TfN and DfT, both through the RNP team and directly, immediately escalated the issue with Northern.

A meeting was held early in the second week after the timetable change to discuss an action plan to improve the situation for passengers. Northern indicated that they were developing an interim (or emergency) timetable to bring stability for passengers and outlined the principles of the short-term changes.

This was discussed with ministers and elected members of TfN later in the week and they raised a number of concerns about the plan, and also agreed to instigate this review. Unfortunately, performance deteriorated further towards the end of that week and Northern took the operational decision to upload the interim timetable to industry systems in order that it could commence from Monday 4th June. This included the complete replacement of train services on the Lakes Line between Oxenholme and Windermere with buses, and coincided with the start of a revised timetable that had already been planned to come into effect to enable major upgrade works at Liverpool Lime Street station.

Although it was presented immediately before implementation, it operated as a plan without the specific approval of the DfT or TfN at that stage. Amendments to the interim timetable (including the phased return of train services to the Lakes Line) were subsequently discussed and agreed with TfN. The interim timetable ran until 31st July when Liverpool Lime Street re-opened and did stabilise the initial disruption albeit with a lower number of services operating and a level of performance below acceptable levels. It should also be acknowledged that the major closure and re-opening of Liverpool Lime Street and consequential train service changes worked very well, especially given the wider disruption that was occurring. Performance was also helped when the Rest Day Working Agreement with Northern drivers was reinstated in June 2018.

The problems with the May 2018 timetable have been severe, but it should be

Improvement plans are now being taken forward through an industry performance working group as well as the North of England Route Supervisory Board.

remembered that there were some enhancements to the previous level of service. This means that even under the interim timetable (with the pre-planned cancellations), there were more Northern services operating than prior to the May 2018 timetable. Specific service enhancements include the introduction of a direct Leeds-Lincoln service, improved electric services to/from Blackpool North, improved rolling stock on the Harrogate line, and hourly services on the York to Hull route.

Despite the stabilisation of Northern services as a result of the interim timetable, it became apparent over the summer that overall performance (of both Northern and TPE) was not improving as expected. Focus turned to the performance of TPE as well as Northern and particularly on their North Route including problems of congestion through central Manchester. These issues spread the economic impact of the poor performance to parts of Yorkshire and the North East.

TPE made two proposals to the TfN Board to improve performance for the December timetable but these were not endorsed as there were significant concerns about the adverse impact on the North East.

TfN members therefore called for an independent expert to be brought in to oversee performance recovery in the North. Richard George (an industry expert) was subsequently appointed by the Secretary of State to oversee the industry's performance recovery, reporting jointly to the DfT and TfN and producing a report and action plan in early 2019.

Network Rail responded to the May 2018 issues by establishing a Programme Management Office (PMO) to oversee all national timetable planning and change. One of the first recommendations by the PMO was to limit changes in the December 2018 timetable (in the North of England and some other parts of the country) to improvements targeted at performance recovery and therefore limit the risk of another chaotic change in December. In the North, there were originally a number of further timetable changes planned which were dependent on infrastructure delivery and these were held over until May 2019, with DfT again holding the TOCs blameless for the delay.

Improvement plans are now being taken forward through an industry performance working group as well as the North of England Route Supervisory Board.

The RNP team has brought in additional resources to scrutinise the TOCs own preparedness and readiness plans for each timetable change including working on infrastructure (such as platform extensions) and rolling stock. The RNP team also required each TOC to provide a written statement of readiness in advance of the timetable change.

The RNP team has also been monitoring the TOCs performance against the benchmarks in their Franchise Agreements. This continues at the time of writing because, firstly the TOCs were entitled to ask for their benchmarks to be re-set to reflect the lack of the assumed infrastructure and its knock-on impacts and secondly, there is a lengthy process to establish the correct attribution of individual delays and cancellations including whether any are allowable to restore operational performance more quickly on the day in question (Service Recovery Claims). A view on whether the TOCs have or have not met the revised performance benchmarks for the period after May 2018 is still being determined.

The December 2018 timetable change was implemented without any significant issues and demonstrated that a more resilient timetable has been established which was further improved in May 2019, see **Figure 06**.

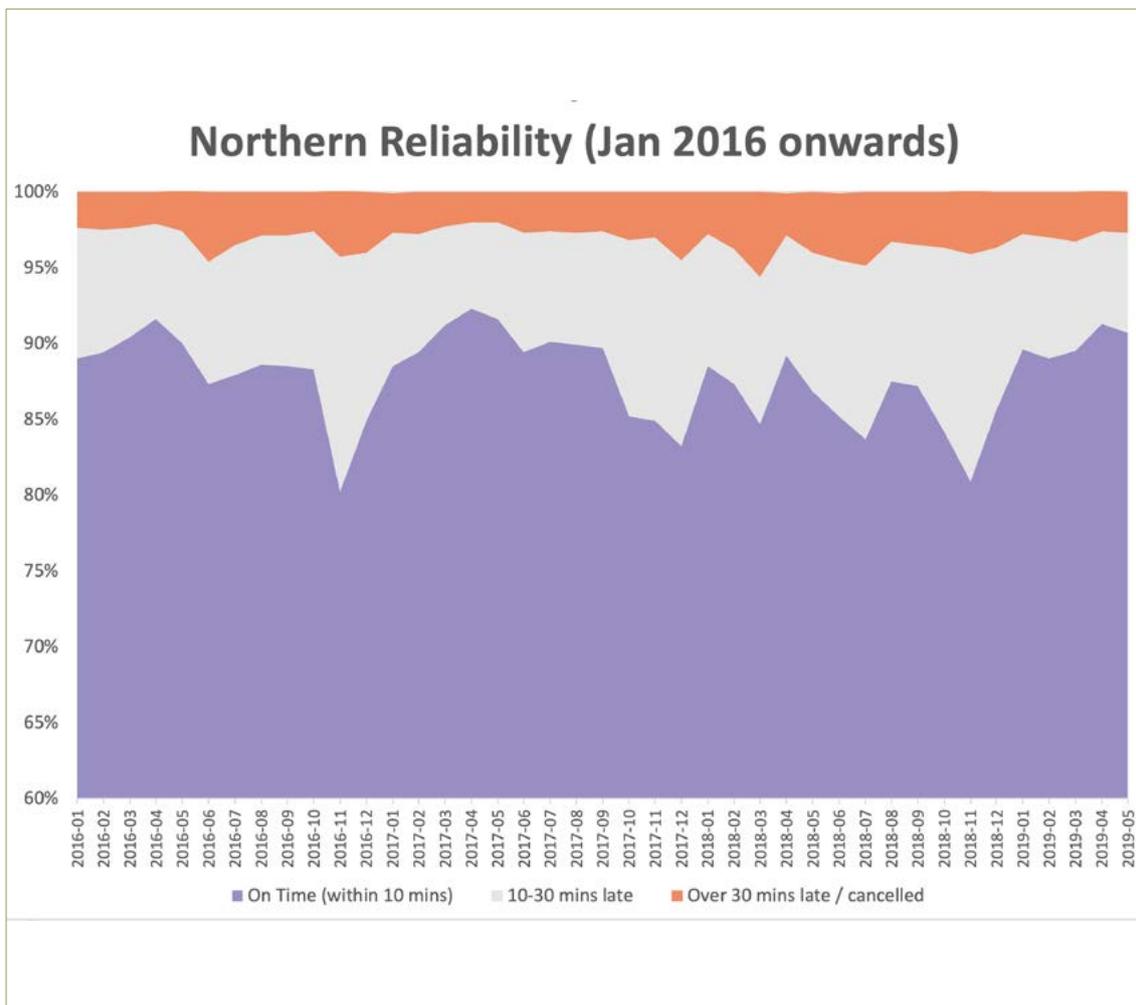


Figure 06 Northern performance.

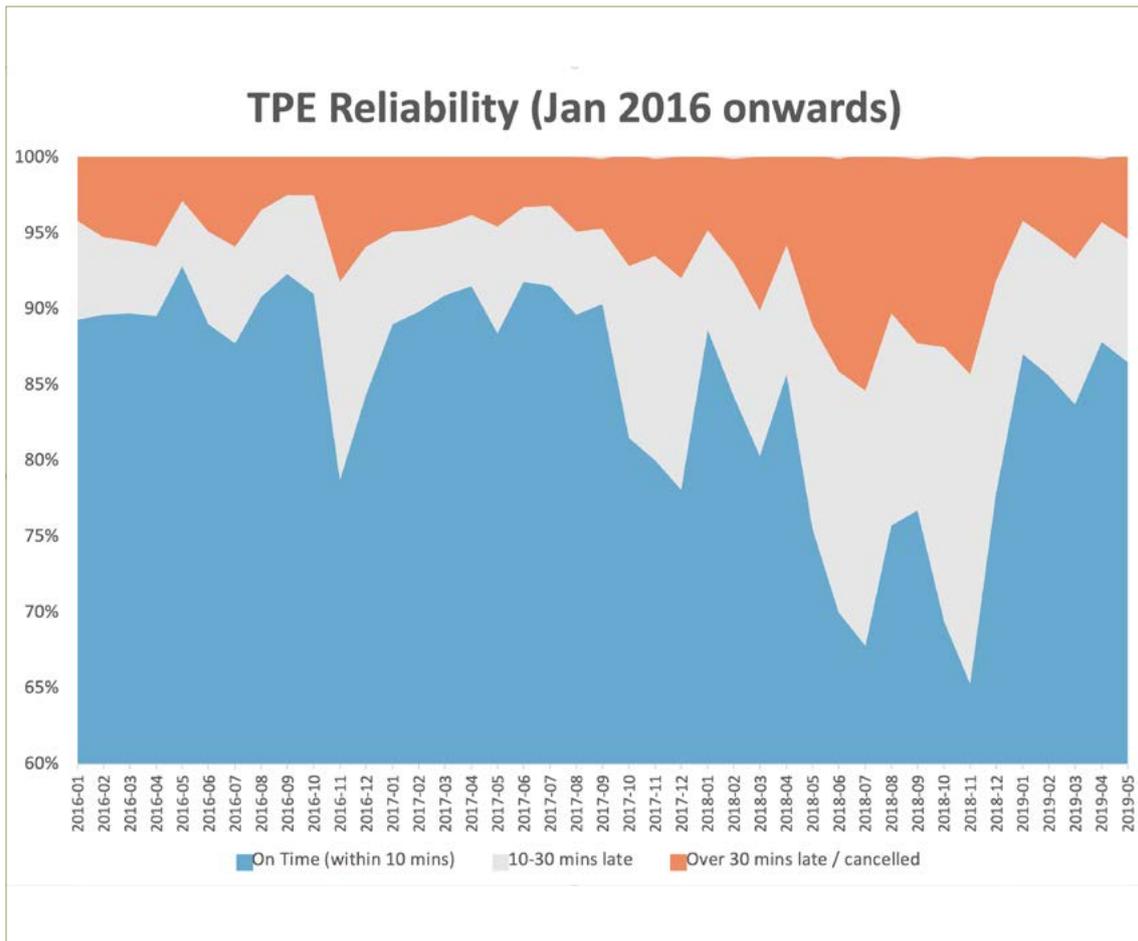


Figure 07 TPE performance.

Following severe disruption in the months following May 2018, the indications are that these performance improvements have had some positive impact. This can be seen in the above graphs of Public Performance Measure (PPM): the percentage of services that were on-time (less than 5 minutes late at their final destination, or 10 minutes if long distance), late (5/10 – 30 minutes), and very late (more than 30 minutes) or cancelled, for the two operators, see Figure 06/07.

COMPENSATION FOR PASSENGERS

Following the disruption, TfN members called for compensation for passengers and affected businesses. DfT agreed and given that the root cause of the problem was down to Network Rail, arranged for Network Rail to fund an industry compensation scheme. DfT agreed that TfN could determine how the compensation was allocated within an overall budget. The one condition was that the scheme should include a base package for season ticket holders similar to schemes previously provided in the South of England.

TfN worked closely with the train operators and Transport Focus to develop the scheme. A season ticket compensation scheme was announced in July and this was subsequently extended to cover regular travellers (those travelling an average of three or more days

a week) who are not season ticket holders. Both schemes ran until December and over 13,000 successful claims were made by passengers.

TfN members were also keen that businesses that had suffered as a result of the disruption benefited from compensation. Therefore around £500,000 was allocated to local authorities where there had been particular disruption to leisure markets. The funding was directed to marketing and promotion activities to encourage visitors and therefore help support local businesses.

The compensation scheme is a good example of the Partnership working in practice, with DfT providing the allocation (and ensuring consistency with other schemes elsewhere) and TfN providing local knowledge and understanding of issues and priorities to tailor the package.

TfN is working with the operators and Transport Focus on potential further phases of compensation (e.g promotional fares) to help further rebuild confidence in the railway.

THE OFFICE OF RAIL AND ROAD INQUIRY

Following the disruption arising from the implementation of the May 2018 timetable, the Secretary of State for Transport requested that the Office of Rail and Road, as the independent body that protects the interest of rail and road users, provide advice on what went wrong and what should be changed to prevent a recurrence. The Inquiry was headed by Professor Stephen Glaister CBE. In September 2018 it published an interim report focusing on identifying the factors that contributed to the failure to develop and implement an effective operational timetable in May 2018, and drawing conclusions about the management of operational risks created by major timetable changes, based on information received from those involved. In December 2018, it published a final report with recommendations for change to address these factors.

In response to the interim report and the emerging need for wider change to the structures and processes of the rail industry, the DfT established a Rail Review, also known as the Williams Review, which will report in 2019. The ORR also issued a number of formal Orders in relation to the activity of Network Rail, as well as undertaking a subsequent review into a possible breach by Northern Rail of their passenger information requirements, discussed further below.

The ORR Inquiry took a thorough, detailed and robust approach: it reviewed over 2,000 documents and conducted wide-ranging interviews with senior executives in the rail industry, government officials, rail industry representative bodies including Network Rail and the TOCs, trades unions, railway experts and the public. For the latter it gathered a significant volume of information from a range of sources, including direct engagement with TOCs and Transport Focus; independent qualitative focus group research and quantitative research with over 1,000 rail users; seeking views from Members of Parliament, Local Government leaders, and rail user groups; analysing posts made by passengers on Twitter and over 2,200 responses to a web-based survey with passengers.

As such, this Review does not duplicate the work done by the Inquiry into the causes of the disruption arising from the implementation of the May 2018 timetable. Rather this section will reproduce and summarise the key points from the ORR Inquiry as they relate to this Review and use these as part of our evidence base.

The Inquiry found that there had been a significant financial and emotional cost to those passengers affected, directly impacting upon their work and families and in some circumstances their personal safety. It found that they had been badly treated on a daily basis by the operators that they had paid in the expectation of a decent service, and that this has undermined the trust in the railway and the reliance they place upon it in their lives.

“[The] findings of this Glaister Review clearly highlight that there is a real need for radical change in the way the rail industry operates. Fundamentally, as our members have said from the outset, changes are needed so we can be sure passengers’ interests are put front and centre of every decision made.

“The Report’s summary highlights the Rail Delivery Group’s statement that ‘the timetable is our promise to passengers’. This summer, in the North of England, and elsewhere, that promise was broken. That is unacceptable. It was passengers who suffered and that must not be allowed to happen again.”

Barry White, Chief Executive of Transport for the North

The Inquiry found, as outlined in the previous sections, that risk first emerged in delays to the planning and delivery of the North West Electrification Programme (NWEF), compressing the time available to develop the timetable and then further compressing the time for TOCs to prepare for implementation of new services. The scale and impact of these interdependent risks crystallised in May 2018, without any of the parties responsible apparently being aware of the scale of the consequences until after the disruption occurred.

The Inquiry made findings attributable to Network Rail, the TOCs, the DfT, and the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) about the failures to identify these risks and properly manage them. It found that:

1. Network Rail's System Operator managed the timetable process and was in the best position to understand and manage the risks, but did not take sufficient action, especially in the critical period in autumn 2017;
2. Northern was not properly aware of, or prepared for, the problems in delivering the timetable and that they did not do enough to provide accurate information to passengers once disruption occurred;
3. DfT and ORR have responsibilities overseeing most aspects of the industry and neither organisation sufficiently tested the assurances that they received from the industry about the risk of disruption, despite having information and powers that would have allowed them to do so;
4. The rail industry's processes for planning and managing major timetable changes do not adequately manage the risk arising from the engineering and other projects on which they depend, or prioritise the impact on passengers when making decisions about these risks.

Specifically, the Inquiry found that the diffuse nature of accountability for different programmes across the industry and Government resulted in a lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities for the oversight and control of complex system risks. It found an apparent gap in industry responsibility and accountability for the management of systemic risks, and industry process needed to change to accommodate these responsibilities. This finding lay behind the Inquiry's central conclusion that 'nobody took control'.

It considered that a major train service change such as for May 2018 is dependent on the parallel delivery of at least four major programmes, which are currently each subject to separate governance and assurance processes: the commissioning of new infrastructure; the specification and tendering of franchises; the procurement and introduction of new rolling stock; and timetable development. The Inquiry's view was that these elements cannot afford to be considered separately because they are interdependent: delay or changes to one element forces change in the others, but industry processes are not built to accommodate this or to adequately prioritise the impact on passengers. It found that this did not happen at the right points in advance of May 2018, with weaknesses in the process of preparing and implementing the May 2018 timetable revealed because of the scale and complexity of the infrastructure changes combined with the volume of consequential timetable changes required.

The Inquiry highlighted that this is important because major network changes will continue to influence future timetables, driven by unprecedented levels of investment in new infrastructure and rolling stock currently underway or being planned. This is of particular relevance given the transformational level of investment being proposed by Transport for the North.

“The railway is a complex set of interdependent activities. Decisions or failures in one activity can have implications for the delivery of service over a large geographical area, the more so as the numbers of trains and passengers have increased. It has become clear that there are inadequate mechanisms to ensure that decisions involving any one activity observe a due regard for implications for the system as a whole.

“The present industry arrangements do not support clarity of decision-making: it was unclear who was responsible for what. Nobody took charge.”

Stephen Glaister, Chair of the Office of Rail and Road

The Inquiry did make particular reference to the devolved Rail North Partnership arrangements for managing the Northern and TPE franchises, stating that:

“The unique devolved governance structure under which the Northern and TransPennine franchises operate, involving authorities from the North of England alongside the DfT, is complex and subject to a separate review in light of the May 2018 timetable disruption; the Blake Review. On the basis of the evidence reviewed by this Inquiry, we find no reason why this structure created risks that were material to the failure to introduce an operational timetable by Northern, subject to the conclusion of that review.”

Independent Inquiry into the Timetable Disruption in May 2018, 20 September 2018, p110.

In short, it provisionally found that the RNP arrangements did not have a negative impact of contributing to the May 2018 disruption, and nothing that this Review has found contradicts that conclusion. However, there are areas where there might have been an opportunity to have a positive impact, which if implemented will help ensure such disruption is avoided in future.

First, the Inquiry did find that Northern engaged properly with Network Rail's timetabling process and that the factors that caused the timetable to be re-planned at a late stage were outside its control, and that TOCs made exceptional efforts and acted reasonably in response in terms of rewriting the timetable, train unit planning, train crew rostering, and managing driver training. Northern maintain that they could not have known the full extent of the disruption in advance.

However, it also found that in the lead-up to the timetable change, Northern failed to adequately understand or communicate the risks arising from failing to have a sufficient number of trained drivers to operate the May 2018 timetable. It found that as a result, passengers faced severe disruption and were not provided with information that would have allowed them to manage the impact. Further, it found that the messages to stakeholders (including from the Rail North Partnership and Transport for the North) downplayed the scale of the potential problems. The ORR subsequently opened an investigation into Northern's compliance with requirements over passenger information, and in March 2019 this found that although in many cases passengers did experience inadequate information in the two weeks that immediately followed the timetable introduction, it had considered and subsequently took reasonable steps in these circumstances to give passengers appropriate, accurate and timely information both prior to and during the disruption.

Despite being able to identify risks to the delivery of the May 2018 timetable at various stages in its development, and on 9 May 2018 writing to Transport for the North setting out the challenges it had faced in preparing for the May 2018 timetable, Northern expressed its view that it still expected to be able to run a full service from 20 May.

Regarding passenger trust, the Inquiry found that there was insufficient consideration of passenger interests when assessing delivery risk in the infrastructure programme and timetable planning processes ahead of May 2018, and that this was a contributory factor the disruption. Further, it identified inadequate provision of passenger information during the disruption as one of the key failings.

As a result the Inquiry recommended new processes be put in place to ensure that when investment and delivery decisions are made, appropriate assurance that the impact on passengers had been assessed. It also committed the ORR to commission industry-wide research to examine the end-to-end provision of information to passengers.

This is consistent with the initial steps the RNP team have taken to more rigorously test assurances regarding the risk of disruption, assess impacts on passengers, and support the provision of better passenger information.

Second, perhaps the Inquiry's central finding was that nationally a range of organisations and bodies were aware of the consequential risks to the May 2018 timetable of a failure to deliver infrastructure projects on time, but there was a lack of a voice specifically remitted to focus on the management of systemic risks. It considers that the impact on passengers must be prioritised when decisions are made, but that the types of systemic risks exposed by the May timetable change are likely to arise again in the future because of the large investments currently being made to grow railway capacity.

The Inquiry's view was that these challenges will increasingly be for the system as a whole, rather than individual participants, because of the integration of these investments into a congested existing network, often including the introduction of new technology and integrating new areas of the network. 'System risks' involving the integration of infrastructure, technology, rolling stock, the timetable and operational planning will increasingly need to be considered due to the interdependency of the system.

However, the Inquiry heard circular arguments about whose responsibility it was to make these judgements, and that in the North no organisation felt empowered to advocate different decisions by the North of England Programme Board.

The Inquiry considers that the creation of the DfT-chaired Programme Boards was a necessary strengthening of infrastructure programme governance and control of costs. However, the Boards are focused on the development of infrastructure and are not remitted to consider systemic risks arising from the programmes. It found that there was a recognition of the importance of focusing on system integration issues and that a more integrated approach can help avoid risks, however, this needed to be sufficiently integrated and resourced into formal programme management architecture.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Among other things, the Inquiry considered that a stronger focus on systemic risks may drive better alignment between the timing of programme decisions and the schedule for timetable development: it found that additional whole industry review processes may have enabled earlier recognition of risks and informed more timely and decisive decisions; helping to assess key deliverability of projects such as the North West Electrification Programme in 2017 and the scale of change for the May 2018 timetable.

The Inquiry recommended that in the immediate term, the responsibilities of programme boards (such as the North of England Programme Board) should be extended to include dependent systemic risks, as well as the establishment of Industry Readiness Boards to manage major network changes.

However, while the Inquiry considers that these recommendations represent a necessary and urgent strengthening of existing industry arrangements, it also stated that they were not sufficient to fully manage the material risks that arise when managing the complex interaction of multiple programmes of change. It found that, while the recent steps taken by Network Rail referred to in the previous section were a welcome improvement in transparency and risk assessment, the informal and temporary arrangements, were remit

limited in critical respects, and concluded that there was a need for an additional cross-industry governance of major network change.

Therefore, the Inquiry recommended that the future must include the creation of an enhanced system-wide advice, audit and assurance capability, independent of individual programmes. The Inquiry stated that it was for the Rail Review to consider where this capability would sit – whether and how devolved transport authorities might play a role in these arrangements are still to be determined.

Ultimately, the findings and recommendations of the ORR Inquiry are welcome. This Review concurs that they are relevant to any future model of organisation, and need to be implemented regardless of future changes to industry structure, and recognise that this Review’s approach and recommendations need to be consistent with them.

IN SUMMARY

Failure to complete the Preston-Manchester electrification scheme meant that diesel trains that would have been released for enhancements elsewhere on the network were unavailable. In January 2018, the decision was made to replace the original May 2018 timetable – successfully planned under normal industry processes since spring 2017 – with a new, hybrid timetable

This required large elements of the timetable to be rewritten in a short space of time (16 rather than 40 weeks), and when it went live on the 20 May, inaccurate train crew and rolling stock diagrams led to emergency rostering, hour-by-hour resource allocation, and ultimately severe disruption to services at a scale that had not been anticipated or communicated

While the industry did highlight some risks to stakeholders and the public, it also underestimated the potential for disruption and communicated a misplaced confidence in their ability to implement the new timetable

Due to the planned change in governance arrangements from Rail North Ltd to TfN in April 2018, member authorities did not formally meet between February and July, introducing an additional challenge. However, in the absence of formal elected member meetings, communication with officers was maintained, with regular updates, detailed franchise management dashboards, and member and officer meetings with TOCs and the DfT

Performance has stabilised since the adoption of an emergency timetable for Northern in June, and the indications are of significant improvement following the timetable change in December 2018, but it remains inconsistent across the North with some areas affected more badly than others

TfN members agreed and implemented a passenger compensation and marketing package funded by Network Rail

The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) has concluded its Inquiry into the causes of the May 2018 disruption. The DfT have also established a wider Rail Review into wider industry structures and processes

The ORR Inquiry found that there had been a significant financial and emotional cost to those passengers affected, that they had been badly treated on a daily basis by the rail industry, and that this has undermined the trust in the railway and the reliance they place upon it in their lives. It confirmed that the root cause of the disruption was the delays to the North West Electrification Programme, compressing the time available to develop the timetable and then further compressing the time available to prepare for implementation

The ORR Inquiry made findings attributable to Network Rail, the TOCs, DfT and the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) about the failures to identify risks and properly manage them. More broadly, it found that the rail industry's processes for planning and managing major timetable changes do not adequately manage the risk arising from the engineering and other projects on which they depend, or prioritise the impact on passengers when making decisions about these risks

Specifically, the Inquiry found that the diffuse nature of accountability across the industry and government resulted in a lack of clarity about roles and responsibility for the oversight and control of complex system risks; that industry processes are not built to accommodate the interdependent nature of different programmes or the scale and complexity of recent infrastructure changes and consequential timetable changes; and that this will be a continuing and increasing issue for the future given unprecedented levels of investment

The Inquiry did make particular reference to the devolved Rail North Partnership arrangements for managing the Northern and TPE franchises, stating that it was not a material factor in the failure to introduce an operational timetable, a conclusion confirmed by this review

However, it made recommendations in a number of areas the RNP might in future make a positive contribution to, including the need to adequately understand and communicate relevant risks and disruption information to passengers, and for structures able to manage systemic risks and prioritise the needs of passengers

Impact



HOW DID THE DISRUPTION AFFECT PASSENGERS AND BUSINESSES?

Transport Focus provided information on the impact on, and communication with, passengers using Northern and TPE trains to help inform the review of the passenger perspective. Transport Focus is the independent consumer watchdog representing the interests of Britain's rail passengers, users of motorway and major 'A' roads in England and bus, coach and tram users in England, outside of London.

IMPACT ON PASSENGERS

Transport Focus set out three main points relating to the impact on passengers:

- The service was not what passengers had paid for. It was unpredictable; for many passengers it was a lottery with practical and emotional impacts.
- The crisis affected people's work life and home life; for example, being late for work, missing appointments and not getting home before children go to bed.
- The scale of the disruption has led to the understandable decision to defer timetable improvements planned for December 2018. Passengers will wait longer for the much-needed improvements they were promised.

They included a small selection of the comments Transport Focus received from passengers describing how they were impacted. These comments illustrate a number of the themes:

"I travel on the Bolton to Manchester line and, to be honest, it's hard to know where to start. Since before the introduction of the new timetables, Northern were cancelling or delaying trains during rush hour. Introducing the new timetables has exacerbated the disruption... Travelling to work has become a complete lottery..."

Again due to the emergency timetable I am getting a train 20 mins earlier, due to change of route the train is full of suitcases and busy... Just weary."

(Widnes to Manchester Oxford Road)

“I had to get a rail replacement bus from Ormskirk to Preston as the service I needed to use is one of several peak hour services swapped for rail replacement bus services in the emergency timetable. Journey takes extra 35 minutes.”

(Ormskirk to Blackpool North)

“Daily stress travelling to work. Never know if the train will be on time and have all its carriages. I have a disability so not being able to find a seat or worrying about packed trains causes me stress. I had to be home at a certain time today and left work early to catch an earlier train to ensure I made it.”

(Chorley to Manchester)

Transport Focus' view was that passengers can generally cope with the odd 'bad day', the difference here was some passengers' journeys were impacted every day. It also stressed that some passengers in the worst affected areas, for example those travelling in the North West, for example from/to Blackpool, Bolton and the Lake District, endured unacceptable levels of cancellations in the months before May too.

FAILURE TO WARN PASSENGERS IN ADVANCE

Transport Focus stated that Northern and TPE passengers were not given any warning before the unprecedented disruption after the timetable change on 20th May. In contrast, stakeholders were at least notified by Northern on 18th May to “expect some localised service disruption, which could happen at very short-notice while the new timetable beds in”. Transport Focus' view was that given Northern were already cancelling services due to problems with driver availability, it was hard to understand how it was thought

this problem would not be exacerbated given the planned uplift in services on 20th May. Transport Focus understood the scale of the impact of the delays to the timetable planning process on staff rostering was not fully understood by Northern until a matter of days before the change. However, the industry missed this opportunity to alert passengers to the risk of disruption and allow some passengers to change their travel plans.

“Before the timetable changes there was a direct train from Stockport to Kirkby... I now have to go Stockport to Salford Crescent then from there to Kirkby. The first day of the new timetable the journey took 4.25 hours due to cancellations. The second day took 3 hours or so. By the third day I gave up and borrowed my son’s car which I have done every day since.”

(Stockport to Kirkby)

POOR INFORMATION ‘ON THE DAY’

Transport Focus’ view was that for passengers making journeys in the immediate aftermath of the timetable change information about services and cancellations was very poor. Reliable journey planning was often impossible, passengers could leave work thinking a train was running only to reach the station minutes later and find it was cancelled. The high numbers of cancellations led to severe overcrowding and often meant some passengers were unable to board the services that were running.

Many cancellations were attributed to a ‘shortage of train drivers’, but it wasn’t at all clear to passengers what was really going on. It is very hard for passengers to understand why the train companies did not communicate sooner which trains would not run or were at high risk of cancellation. This situation improved following the introduction of Northern’s temporary timetable which stabilised the service, but the cumulative impact of the crisis should not be overlooked. Transport Focus claims that on those routes already impacted before 20 May the railway had burned through many passengers’ tolerance and goodwill.

“Total disruption to my commute for a week or more... The low point was Thursday with no trains to Urmston at all between 1546 and 1846. Last-minute changes and cancellations, no substitute bus service... Just terrible terrible terrible.”

(Urmston to Colwyn Bay via Warrington)

“Since the May timetable changes, the delays to most trains I have used have significantly increased - particularly TransPennine Express... As a result on a number of occasions I have missed the last 205 bus... Journeys home have been increasingly difficult and stressful. I have to check the National Rail live departure board for Huddersfield each day to check the cancelled and delayed trains beforehand.

(Morley to Huddersfield)

LACK OF OPEN COMMUNICATION

Transport Focus stated that having failed to warn passengers before 20th May, or provide reliable information to allow passengers to plan journeys, the industry was slow to acknowledge there was a serious problem, explain why and be open that it could not be fixed quickly. Instead, Transport Focus considers that Northern and TPE passengers faced a period when they were, in effect, promised a service the industry knew full well it could not deliver. Transport Focus’ view was that in the immediate aftermath there was a lack of openness and the industry failed to take responsibility in the media, passing up the opportunity to demonstrate accountability and empathy or to communicate the work being done to recover services. This is likely to have damaged trust, not only in Northern and TPE, but in the railway as a whole.

HOW COMMUNICATION COULD BE IMPROVED

Transport Focus’ research on passengers’ relationship with the rail industry found that

to build greater trust with passengers, it is important not only to deliver a punctual and reliable service, but also to build a stronger relationship, based on communicating openly and honestly directly with passengers. This is especially true of passengers who rely heavily on the train, such as commuters, and can be highly engaged with the service and train companies' plans. Transport Focus are of the view that Northern and TPE, like most train companies, need to use all communication channels to offer value to passengers and more effectively explain the challenges they face and what they are doing to improve. For example, they should aim to directly and regularly update passengers on their recent performance and development of their timetables from December 2018. Both Northern and TPE have an opportunity to capitalise on planned improvements, including the introduction of new trains, to build trust. However, to build a relationship with passengers, through 'thick and thin', requires a genuinely open and frank approach.

COMPENSATION

Compensating affected passengers is an important step in rebuilding passenger trust. Transport Focus welcomed the compensation for season ticket holders and the scheme for other regular passengers, though expressed concern that the industry has been slow to announce and deliver the compensation which will have hampered its impact.

It encouraged the review to consider how it could ensure passengers are compensated more quickly and effectively when they are severely disrupted. Their view is that this should happen not only when disruption is unprecedented and widespread, as around the timetable change, but also when the intense local impact of welcome improvement work means it is unfair to expect passengers to continue to pay for a train ticket and then travel by bus.

"I now get to work 15 minutes later than I used to. My trains home (services between 5pm-6pm) have now reduced by 33%, and those that still run do so from different train stations... in the first working week of the changes, I submitted five delay repayment claims, over double the number I submitted in the three years prior to timetable changes."

(Rainhill to Manchester Victoria)

“Train was 29 minutes late and I was unable to get on that or the next one. Had to get a bus. I have a yearly season ticket and have paid nearly £40 out on bus journeys since the new timetable due to cancelled, delayed and overcrowded trains. I have paid for a service and am not able to access it! I am unsure as to whether or not it is worth me renewing my season ticket in July.”

(Swinton to Manchester Victoria)

DECISION-MAKING AND PASSENGERS' INTERESTS

Transport Focus welcomed the opportunity to ensure passengers' interests are at the heart of planning and decision-making, as it is often not only unclear to passengers if or how their interests have been considered in decision-making, but also often which industry bodies are involved and their roles in decisions affecting them.

Transport Focus emphasised that when difficult decisions are made, if the industry is truly confident it has done the right thing for passengers then it should seek to communicate the reasons more clearly and transparently. It encouraged the review to consider how the passenger interest could be better represented 'in the room' when decisions are being made.

IMPACT ON BUSINESS AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY

The consequences for business and the economy of the North of the rail delays and cancellations immediately following the introduction of the new timetable on 20th May 2018 are difficult to quantify, but one estimate was provided by the Northern Powerhouse Partnership (NPP) in its report "Devolving Our Railways" published in July 2018. This put the total cost to the Northern economy at £38 million arising from Northern Rail service delays, or £1.3 million a day.

Persistent late arrival at work and altered commuting patterns will have had a direct impact upon the productivity of passengers' employers. The impact would not have been distributed evenly across the North's economy with those employers whose staff are more disposed to rail commuting affected more.

Impacts on business and the economy have been similarly serious, with some estimates as high as £1.3 million per day.

The tourist industry in parts of the North West was particularly affected. The disruption to rail services on the Lakes Line saw 45% of services cancelled the week commencing 22nd May. They were eventually replaced with buses during June and July, coinciding with the peak visitor season. This had a significant impact on access to the Lake District by rail with a direct impact on visitors to the area. Cumbria Tourism reported that, county wide, 39% of businesses in the visitor economy considered that the rail disruptions have impacted their business in a negative way, including reduced occupancy levels. Cumbria County Council have welcomed funding for a marketing campaign provided by Network Rail and a separate commitment that Northern launch specific campaigns orientated to visiting Cumbria by rail to help address some negative perceptions, but continued instability has meant that these have not been initiated. It considers that this highlights a longer term strategic risk, with unreliable services having the potential to curtail demand and the travel choices people make, particularly given local geography and impact on the large number of visitors (around 47 million in 2017), and the dependence on rail to access services, education, work, and leisure.

Although not directly related to the May 2018 issue, following the five-month blockade while line works were carried out, a similar effect was felt in Blackpool and the Fylde Coast due to the reduced rail service to this popular tourist area, which receives around 18 million visitors a year and also saw severe disruption and the use of rail replacement buses. Blackpool Council estimates a loss of more than £20 million in visitor spend, and a year-to-date reduction in rail usage of 15%. Again, Blackpool Council welcomed the financial compensation provided by Northern used for increased marketing, but has expressed concern that this will be undermined by continuing disruption.

It is even more difficult to quantify the economic impact of the loss of confidence in the rail network during this period. Some people will have chosen not to travel as a result of concerns arising from the well publicised rail disruption. The retail and tourism industries in particular would be impacted by a reduction in shopping, leisure and visiting friends and family trips. It is likely that this effect was magnified by the industrial action that continued until it was suspended in February 2019.

IN SUMMARY

Transport Focus has provided information on the impact on, and communication with, passengers using Northern and TPE trains. They found that the service was not what passengers had paid for, with practical and emotional impacts; that it had affected people's work and home life; and has led to passengers having to wait longer for the much needed improvements they were promised

It highlighted the failure to warn passengers in advance of the unprecedented disruption after the timetable change on 20th May, as well as very poor information 'on the day' in the immediate aftermath of the timetable implementation often making reliable journey planning impossible, with last-minute cancellations and severe overcrowding. Transport Focus' view is that there was a lack of openness in how the industry communicated with passengers that is likely to have damaged trust, not only in Northern and TPE, but in the railway as a whole

Transport Focus have made a number of suggestions on how to improve this communication, as well as compensation arrangements and decision-making processes, and made clear its commitment to engaging in those processes

Impacts on business and the economy have been similarly serious, with some estimates as high as £1.3 million per day. The tourist industry in parts of the North West was particularly affected, with local authorities in areas with important visitor economies such as Cumbria and Blackpool reporting a significant reduction in visitors arriving by train adversely affecting local businesses

Input from Partners and industry



HOW WELL DID THE RAIL NORTH PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS WORK?

Views on the local effects of the May 2018 timetable problems and the effectiveness of the current RNP arrangements have been sought from all TfN's constituent Member Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships, as well as representatives of TfN, DfT, the RNP itself, the two TOCs, Network Rail, and Transport Focus on behalf of passengers. For this purpose, questionnaires were devised to seek out feedback on communications for the period between the commencement of the Northern and TransPennine Express franchises in April 2016 and May 2018, and for communications for the period from the planning and introduction of the May 2018 timetable. This was primarily delivered through two questionnaires, using a combination of paper forms and an online survey platform:

1. **Questionnaire A**, used only by Local Authorities and Transport for the North members;
2. **Questionnaire B**, used for all consultees including governance bodies and industry bodies.

These questionnaires were also supplemented by a number of in-depth interviews.

The survey process began in September 2018 – of the 42 organisations invited to participate, 34 responses to the consultation were received. This included eight in-depth interviews, 24 completed questionnaires and two additional written submissions. In some instances, multiple individuals were consulted within some of the stakeholder organisations listed above.

This section presents the quantitative data first, then the qualitative data. For the most part, analysis has not been explicitly split out by respondent type, as the small number of consultees in the governance and industry sub-groups limit the meaningfulness of any comparison. Where important distinctions do appear to have arisen by sub-group in the qualitative data, this has been drawn out in the text.

In order to conduct the analysis presented in this document, the data from across all data sources (questionnaires A and B, including both written submissions and online submissions; transcripts of in-depth interviews and other written submissions) was brought into a single database to facilitate quantitative analysis of the closed-question responses. The qualitative data from across the submissions received was then categorised and structured to allow themes to be drawn out.

As with other provided information, responses have been faithfully reproduced without necessarily indicating agreement, and some of the contributions may have been made without knowing the legal and other constraints around the proposals.

QUANTITATIVE DATA FROM QUESTIONNAIRE A

Questionnaire A (sent to Local Authorities and TfN members) asked a series of questions on how effectively the TOCs communicate generally (on a day-to-day basis, during business as usual periods during the first two years since the new franchises started in 2016), compared with how effectively the TOCs and other organisations communicated in the weeks up to and following the introduction of the May 2018 timetable.

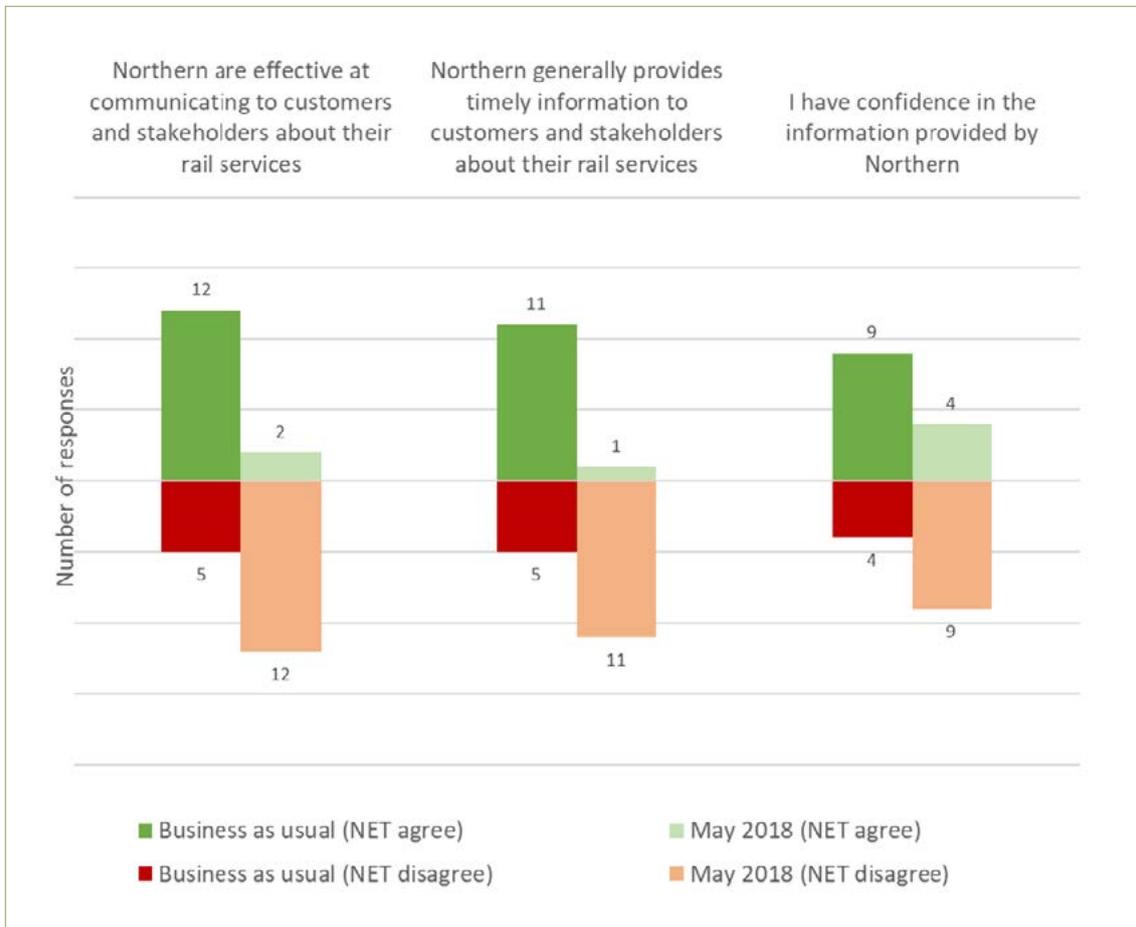
For both franchises, responses showed a marked decline in confidence during the May timetable disruptions. It should be noted that due to the small number of responses it would not be appropriate to make a statistical comparison between the two TOCs.

(N.B. For visual clarity, the following charts present only the responses that ‘Agreed’ or ‘Disagreed’ with each statement – those that responded ‘Neither disagree or agree’ or ‘Do not know/not applicable’ are not shown in these charts. There were a higher number of ‘Do not know’ responses for TPE.)

THIS SECTION OF THE SURVEY GATHERED VIEWS.

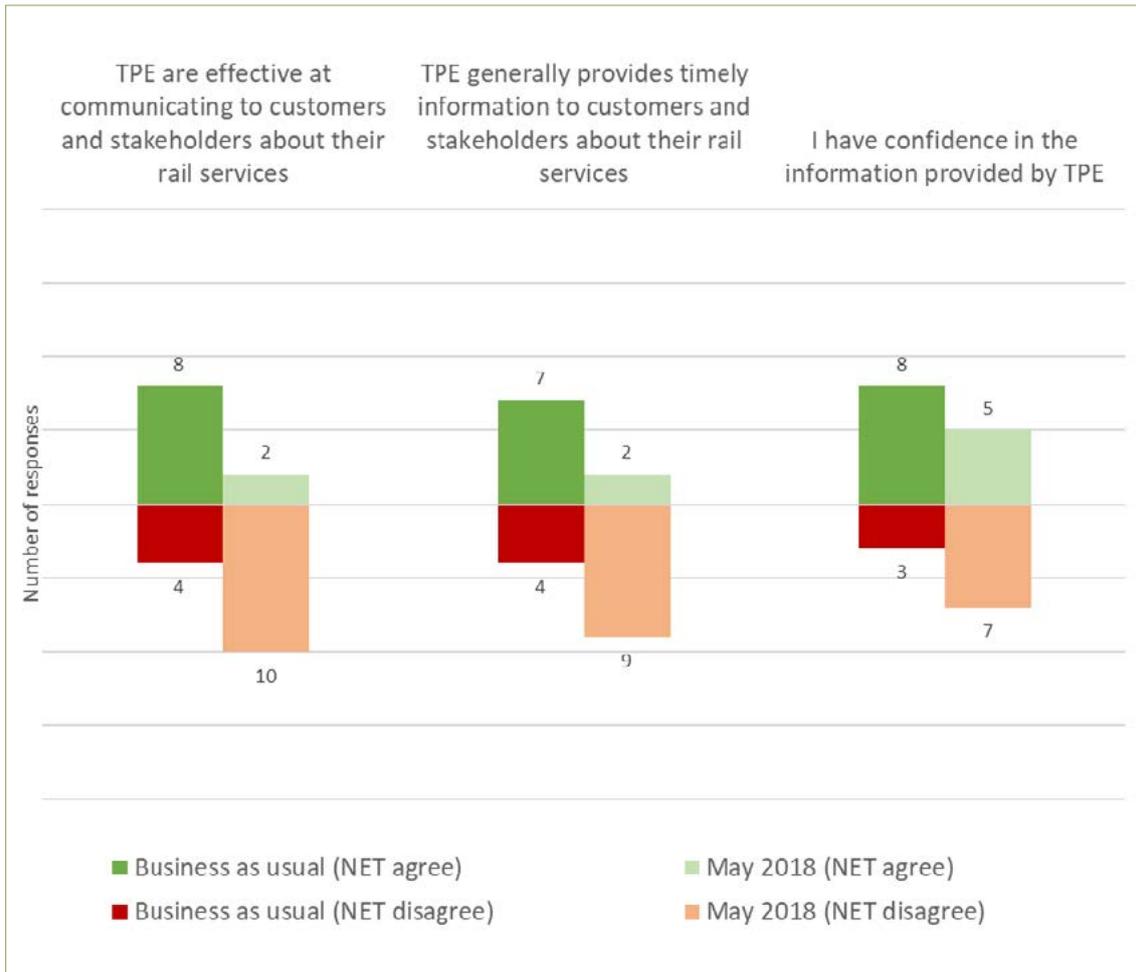
(Further response data can be found in Appendix A)

Chart 1.1: Perceptions of Northern franchise



(Base = 18 responses; ‘Neither disagree or agree’ and ‘Do not know’ not shown)

Chart 1.2: Perceptions of TPE franchise.

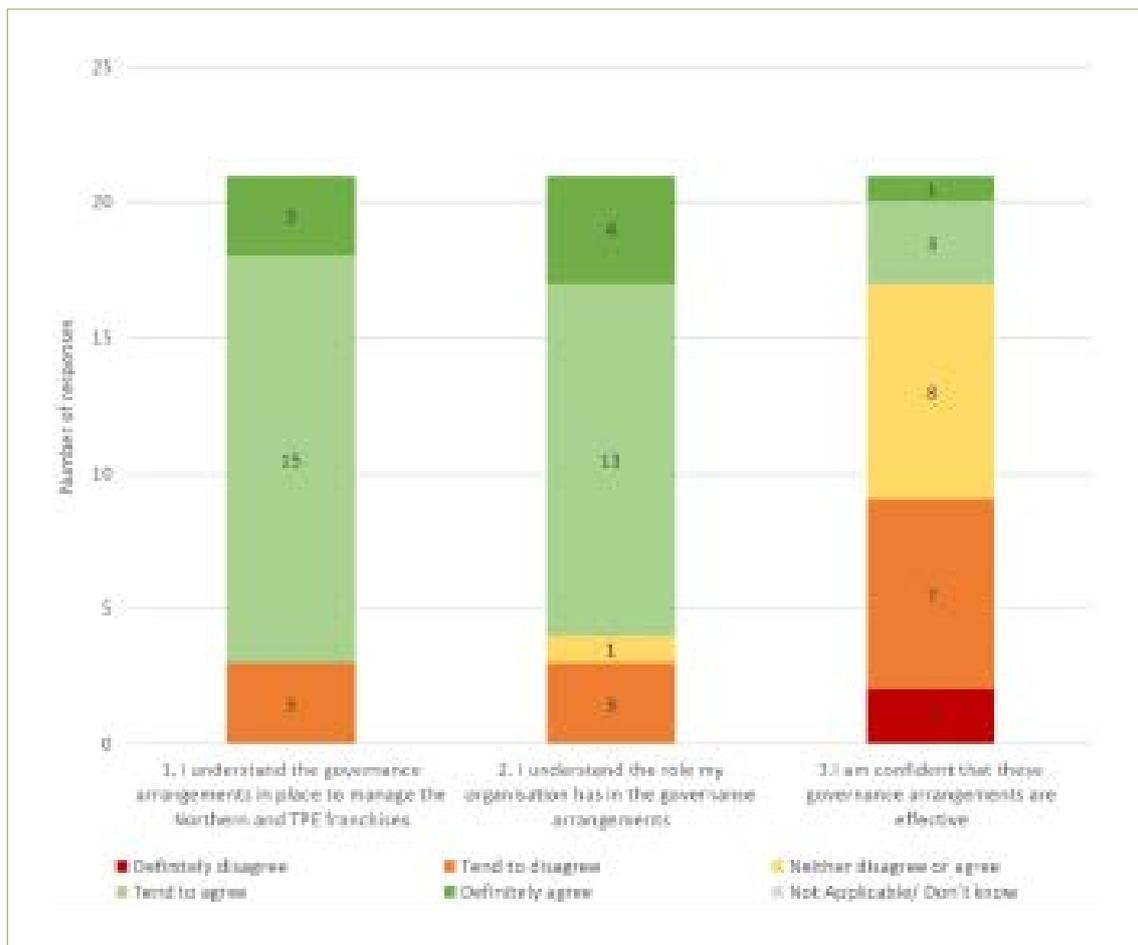


(Base = 18 responses; 'Neither agree or disagree' and 'Do not know' not shown)

QUANTITATIVE DATA FROM QUESTIONNAIRE B

Questionnaire B (sent to the full group of consultees including Local Authorities, TfN members, DfT, RNP and industry representatives) asked a series of questions about the governance arrangements in place to manage the Northern and TPE franchises. As shown in the charts below, consultees were generally confident in their understanding of the governance arrangements. For example, all but three participants agreed that they understood the governance arrangements. However, consultees were much less confident about the governance arrangements' effectiveness – only four participants agreed that the arrangements were effective, while nine disagreed.

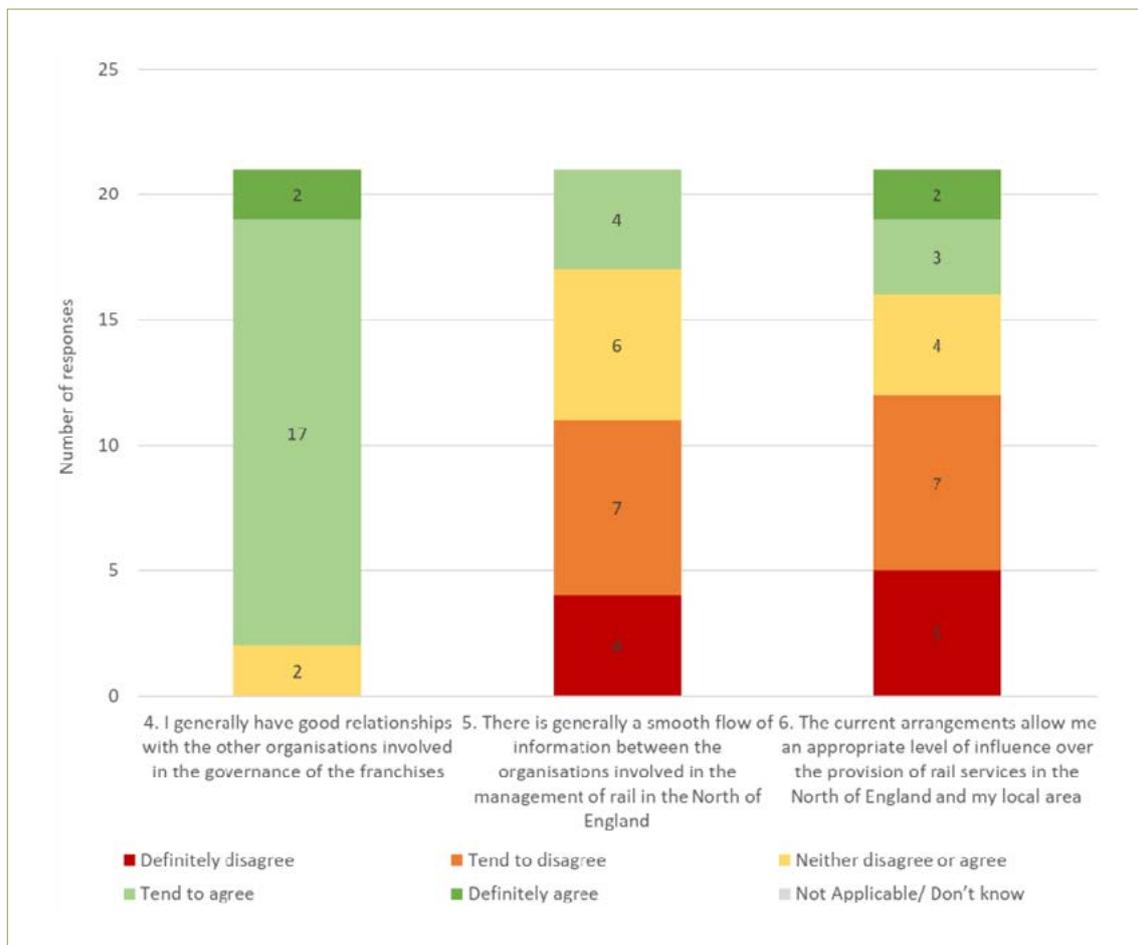
Chart 1.3: Governance arrangements.



(Base = 21 responses)

Questionnaire B also asked a series of questions about stakeholder relationships. On the whole, consultees generally agreed that they had good relationships with the other organisations involved in the governance of the franchises (none disagreed with this statement). However, consultees were much less confident about the flow of information between organisations (only four agreed that this was smooth) and their level of influence over the provision of rail services (only five agreed that their influence was appropriate).

Chart 1.4: Stakeholder relationships.



(Base = 21 responses)

QUALITATIVE INFORMATION FROM QUESTIONNAIRE A

The following section takes each of the 'open' questions included in Questionnaire A in turn, providing an overview of the key themes that emerged across responses from local authorities and TfN members (including in transcribed interviews). Other consultees (DfT, RNP and industry representatives) were not asked to provide responses to these questions.

Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the information and engagement you receive from Northern and TPE during business as usual periods?

Improving communication was the most prominent theme that emerged from responses about improvements to business as usual operation.

- 1. Improved communication with stakeholders:** The most commonly suggested change to business as usual operations was an improvement in the quality of communications from TOCs. It was often reported that the timeliness of information received from TOCs was insufficient, particularly with regards to disruptions and changes to services. One commonly reported barrier that might need to be addressed was the confidentiality agreements that were seen to inhibit the flow of information. Other suggestions for ways that communication could be improved included more regular in-person meetings between TOCs and Local Authority representatives, and addressing the particular weaknesses perceived around advance warning of weekend disruptions. "Whilst [we] enjoy constructive relationships with the Stakeholder Managers at the respective TOCs, there is a concern that this is often on a 'need to know' basis and there could be more engagement at earlier stages in decision-making. As a stakeholder we often feel we are being 'managed' rather than engaged with."
- 2. Improved communication with customers:** Deficiencies were also identified in relation to how TOCs communicated with rail passengers. The same timeliness issues that affected stakeholders were also seen to affect passengers, again with an emphasis on the unreliability of information about weekend services. It was also suggested that current information provision relied on passengers proactively seeking information about services, and more might need to be done to proactively 'push' information to customers.
- 3. Closer collaboration with Local Authorities:** One Local Authority suggested that it might improve business as usual to be more cooperative in the design and delivery of services. "Greater use could be made of the regional structures to help to develop the timetable changes, consider their local impacts and disseminate information to local interest group and through local information channels... [using] the local expertise to deliver better 'local solutions'."
- 4. Pragmatism about communications as business as usual resumes:** A few participants sounded notes of caution about calls for increasing communication, noting the need for pragmatism about who should be involved in key decisions as

business as usual resumes. “At the moment there is a big demand for lots of detailed information to [TfN] Members which I think long term is not [realistic]. We will need to find a level.”

Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the information and engagement provided from operators to stakeholders about changes or disruption to local rail services?

There was agreement across the local authorities and TfN Members surveyed that information and engagement from TOCs needed to be improved during times of disruption. Suggestions for improvement centred around six key themes:

1. **Clearer communication about risk:** One of the key deficiencies highlighted about communication during the May timetable disruptions was that there had not been enough advance warning from TOCs about the potential risks. There was widespread agreement that future communications (particularly where timetable changes or similar activities are planned) should provide clear assessment of potential risks, to ensure these are foreseen and mitigating actions can be planned. Consultees recognised the challenges of communicating about uncertainty, but felt it was preferable to have an indication of potential risks (even if these did not materialise) rather than none at all. “We’re supposed to get a week’s notice for changes to services, but we’ve had successive Sundays with 80 services cancelled with only two days’ notice. Precisely the same 80 services, so... don’t tell me we can’t [know] that ahead of time ... they know pretty much what is going to happen.”
2. **Information closer to real-time:** Receiving outdated information was a recurrent point of frustration for consultees – and a common suggestion was that during times of disruption it would be useful to have access to real-time updates (or as close to this as feasible).

One of the key deficiencies highlighted about communication during the May timetable disruptions was that there had not been enough advance warning from TOCs about the potential risks.

3. **Overcome confidentiality barrier:** Another common point of frustration was when confidentiality agreements acted as a barrier to information sharing during times of disruption. Consultees suggested that the flow of information should be improved, either by expanding the number of people covered by confidentiality clauses (so that key stakeholders such as TfN and Local Transport Authorities can be kept informed), or by loosening the restrictions on what can be shared. “By the time you end up with the May timetable... you’ve got a lack of information; worse than that you’ve got an NDA that is preventing people giving information.”
4. **TOCs taking responsibility:** Several consultees suggested that a tonal shift in the communications from TOCs, with a clearer sense that they were taking responsibility for the disruption, might have helped the communications land more effectively. “Both operators ... seem in complete denial that any part of the current mess is their responsibility. Some elements of the timetable delay are clearly attributable to Network Rail’s delayed infrastructure, whilst others (such as the base timetable between Manchester and Leeds) are clearly unrelated to that.”
5. **Increased collaboration:** Several consultees suggested that the most effective way to improve engagement would be for TOCs to be more collaborative in working with local stakeholders to address issues of disruption. Some of these suggested this collaboration should come early, when potentially disruptive activities are being planned (i.e. consulting Local Transport Authorities on timetable changes); others suggested working together directly at times of crisis (e.g. TOC staff supporting exercises in the TfGM Control Room). “The TOCs should brief Local Transport Authorities on the potential impact of service changes and disruption giving sufficient time for a full communication plan and any mitigation measures to be adopted.”
6. **Address underlying performance issues:** The most critical consultees suggested that improvements in communication alone would be insufficient to address the loss of confidence that has been caused by the May timetable disruptions, and that TOCs would need to ensure their service delivery met the promised levels of performance in order to rebuild this confidence.

Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the information and engagement provided from operators to customers about changes or disruption to local rail services?

There was also agreement across the local authorities and TfN Members surveyed that information and engagement with customers needed to be improved during times of disruption. Suggestions for improvement centred around five key themes:

1. **Quality information provision at stations/from frontline staff:** A recurrent theme across consultees’ comments was the importance of good information at stations. Consultees highlighted that for many passengers this was the key location where information was sought, and the variable quality of information available to staff on

the frontline led to inconsistent communication at this important touchpoint. “One of the problems with the May 18 changes was the lack of information at stations, which is sometimes the only point of information used by some customers.”

2. **Minimising conflicting information:** Stakeholders emphasised the importance of ensuring that customer-facing communications about the disruptions were aligned. Suggested actions included ensuring that out-of-date online information was removed as soon as possible; and coordinating with third-party organisations such as Trainline to ensure consistency of information. “Where Network Rail is the provider of electronic timetable information, the Operators should ensure these sites are also updated as soon as possible. If a timetable is likely to be subject to change, original timetables should be removed from sites as soon as this is known and advice provided of when the amended timetables will be available.”
3. **Focusing on practical solutions:** Consultees suggested that customer-facing information needed to focus on the practicalities of customers’ journeys, providing clear advice on the best available route and alternatives where these are required. Some consultees perceived TOC’s existing communications to have focused on identifying the cause of the problem, rather than addressing travellers’ immediate needs for a solution. “Customers are more interested in how their journey is affected rather than which organisation is to blame.”
4. **Clarity on compensation:** Information about the proposed compensation packages was highlighted as a particular weakness with the information provision during the May timetable disruption. This was seen to be a key concern for customers where information was lacking or inconsistent.
5. **Mixed views on role for Local Authorities:** Consultees held mixed views on the role of Local Authorities and other providers of local information. Some wanted to collaborate more closely with TOCs in order to have greater oversight of communications; others worried about adding to the number of potentially conflicting information sources and felt it was best for TOCs to take full ownership of providing information to passengers.

Do you have any comments about stakeholder communications to/from other relevant organisations including Network Rail, Rail North Partnership, DfT and TfN about changes or disruption to rail services?

Consultees recognised that there had also been issues with communication between stakeholder groups during the May timetable disruption. The primary issues raised related to four key themes:

1. **Diffusion of responsibility:** A commonly raised issue was the spread of responsibility across a wide range of stakeholder groups. Some consultees felt that this needed to be addressed by closer collaboration between the various organisations. Other consultees suggested that a ‘single definitive voice’ would be better placed to address the complex challenges of managing the disruption.

2. **Information sharing about risks:** One key area in which consultees wanted greater coordination in future was around project delivery, particularly with regard to risks that might have a knock-on effect. Examples given of risks that could have been flagged earlier, and which might have changed decisions about the timetable changes, included Network Rail's delayed delivery of the Bolton electrification scheme, and works at Leeds station that coincided with the timetable change. "We do recognise that there are currently some very challenging issues and timescales but it is vital that due progress is followed to allow for informed decision-making, particularly when major and detrimental changes for passengers are proposed."
3. **Better contingency planning:** It was suggested that clearer contingency plans needed to be in place in the event that risks (such as the ones identified above) did begin to have a knock-on effect on timetabling decisions. "Operators should have a contingency timetable prepared when infrastructure delivery is an integral part of that timetable delivery in case the infrastructure delivery does not happen. This would have avoided the four-month turn around for a full timetable rewrite."
4. **Focus on practical solutions:** As with communications from the TOCs, it was noted that there was a need to challenge the tendency to focus on identifying who was to blame for problems rather than delivering practical solutions. It was suggested that greater clarity on who ultimately had ownership of the problem might be necessary to encourage this.

QUALITATIVE INFORMATION FROM QUESTIONNAIRE B

The following section takes each of the 'open' questions included in Questionnaire B in turn, providing an overview of the key themes that emerged across responses from local authorities, TfN Members, DfT, RNP and industry representatives (including in transcribed interviews).

Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the operation of the Rail North Partnership to make it more effective at managing the Northern and TPE franchises?

There was broad agreement that changes would be necessary in order to ensure that RNP could effectively manage the Northern and TPE franchises. Consultees had a range of suggestions for potential improvements, with six key themes emerging:

1. **Address confidentiality issues:** Consultees consistently suggested that one of the key barriers to the effective working of the RNP was the restrictive Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) that its members were required to adhere to. This was seen to particularly affect the three TfN representatives on the RNP Board, who represented 25 TfN Members but were unable to share any information with them as a result of their NDAs. As a result, many consultees suggested that RNP needed to become more transparent and facilitate information sharing. TfN Members (including board

Another common theme that emerged from consultees' responses was the need to clearly define the scope and remit of RNP.

members and non-board members) were particularly keen for this arrangement to be changed. "All members of Rail North Partnership Board have to sign individual Non-Disclosure Agreements which preclude them from sharing the information they discuss with any external persons, including members of their own organisation and members of the 25 member authorities. This is not a transparent system ... it also creates a bottleneck for decision-making which is unsustainable in a time of crisis."

2. **More transparent decision-making:** As well as addressing the specific concern around restrictive NDAs, consultees generally felt that the RNP would benefit from becoming more transparent about its decision-making. Specific suggestions to address this included potentially transcribing the meetings, and holding votes on key decisions.
3. **Clarity on scope of RNP's power:** Another common theme that emerged from consultees' responses was the need to clearly define the scope and remit of RNP. Several consultees identified areas where RNP's authority was ambiguous: for example where the Board needed to respond to issues with TOCs based outside the North; and how far the Board is subject to the investment decisions made by the DfT and the Secretary of State. "As we understand the situation the Secretary of State maintains the right to make all major investment decisions which affect the franchises. In this case there is limited power for TfN/RNP to determine long-term direction."
4. **Ensure delivery against franchise commitments:** When considering how RNP could more effectively manage the TOCs, a common theme that emerged was the need to hold TOCs accountable to their franchise commitments. Some suggested that RNP should be empowered to penalise TOCs if they are not meeting franchise obligations.
5. **Focus on big picture risks and contingency:** Several consultees suggested a gap around risk assessment and contingency planning – and saw this as something that potentially RNP could be empowered to take account of. "There is a concern that, leading up to May 2018, the Rail North Partnership were not effective in questioning

the risks and passenger implications of the decisions being made within the rail industry.”

6. **Increased resource:** Given the scale of problems that had been presented by the May timetabling issues, several consultees suggested that additional resource was required to bolster the capacity of both the RNP team and the TOCs.

Alongside these main themes, a few specific points were raised by consultees from industry:

1. As with other consultees, industry were keen for the respective remits of RNP, TfN and other stakeholders to be more clearly defined. Their responses placed an emphasis on the need for clear accountability and governance structures; with a concern that existing arrangements were too diffused. “We believe all parties would benefit from greater clarity of the roles of each of the organisations governing the Northern franchise, and their involvement in industry level decision-making, as well as the nature of the communication flows between RNP and TfN/DfT.”
2. One industry representative emphasised the need for sensitive handling of commercial information, and suggested that rather than loosen/remove NDAs, the alternative solution might be to hold a combination of public and private meetings, allowing greater flow of information while maintaining commercial confidentiality.
3. On the point about franchise commitments, one consultee from industry sounded a note of caution that TOCs are required to bid to the specification that is provided, even if they do not necessarily think it is realistic. They raised a concern that unrealistic expectations may be driven by the franchise specification itself. “The TOCs are obliged to bid the franchise train service specification, even if they think it’s not going to work. ... This creates unrealistic expectations for stakeholders and customers and creates tension in the relationship when inevitable variations are required.”

Do you have any suggestions on how to improve the relationship between Network Rail, the Rail North Partnership, TfN and DfT?

There were five primary themes that emerged around potential improvements to the relationship between the various stakeholder groups:

1. **Improved communication:** Consistently, consultees identified communication between stakeholders as one of the key areas for improvement, particularly in relation to risks and mitigations. Previous sections have outlined consultees’ suggestions for improving communication.
2. **Consider closer relationship between RNP and Network Rail:** There was a broad agreement among consultees that it would be advantageous for Network Rail to be more closely linked in with RNP and TfN. Particularly, Network Rail was perceived to hold critical information about infrastructure projects that would be important to share with other stakeholders and to triangulate with information from the TOCs.

Several consultees suggested that additional resource was required to bolster the capacity of both the RNP team and the TOCs

3. **Accountability for meeting commitments:** A recurrent theme across responses was that there needed to be clearer accountability for meeting commitments, with franchise obligations (for TOCs) and infrastructure works (for Network Rail) being frequently cited. At present, there was a perception that the diffusion of responsibility made it difficult for individual organisations to be held accountable. Some consultees suggested that it might be preferable to empower an overall authority figure who could mediate the relationship between the partners; others suggested that a culture of collective responsibility needed to be fostered, to encourage collaborative development of solutions. “Let’s get to the root of exactly what happened: as a learning exercise, rather than a blame game. But I think so far no-one’s prepared to step up to the plate and say here’s how we collectively deal with it.”
4. **More authority/inclusion for TfN Members:** Several Local Authorities were concerned that the current arrangements provided them with limited influence and information – particularly due to the restrictions on what information could be shared with them by RNP. Some TfN Members wanted to have a more direct influence on franchising decisions.
5. **Clarity on overall authority:** Several consultees described a perception of uncertainty about who held the ultimate decision-making authority. Some consultees sounded a note of caution about creating too many new structures in response to the May disruption, and ensuring that governance arrangements are streamlined. Others (primarily TfN Members) felt that there might need to be further devolution of power from DfT in order to clarify matters. “We should be looking for full devolution of the rail franchises ... that would be a way of simplifying this governance.”

Alongside these main themes, a few specific points were raised by consultees from industry:

1. There was support among industry representatives for a closer relationship between Network Rail and the other bodies involved, to ensure that they had the opportunity to provide intelligence about infrastructure that could inform decision-making.

2. Industry representatives also echoed the point about the need for clearer overall authority, emphasising the need for clarity about the roles of their 'clients' and who is accountable for taking key decisions. "One of our concerns centres on accountability and a lack of clarity regarding the factors and decisions that are within RNP's authority, and those that sit outside and therefore need consultation with their stakeholders – i.e. DfT and TfN. This can lead to duplication of effort, delays in the decision-making process and difficulties for the TOC."

Our review seeks to ensure passengers' interest are considered during decision-making. Have you any suggestions which could assist this?

Consultees consistently agreed that passengers' interests should be taken into consideration when decisions are taken. Suggestions for improvement centred around 3 key themes:

1. **Build in passenger representation:** The most common suggestion made was for closer collaboration with passenger representation groups such as Transport Focus. Suggestions about what exact form this should take varied, and included: nominating a passenger representative to sit on the RNP Board; conducting market/ social research with passengers to provide information to decision-makers about passenger priorities. One consultee emphasised that it was important to recognise the potential diversity of passenger views, and to acknowledge that passengers do not have a homogeneous set of priorities. "We involve Transport Focus as the statutory watchdog in a lot of our processes and procedures... [to] make sure there's an objective customer champion with suitable independence in the process."
2. **Ensure passenger data informs decisions:** As well as passenger representation, consultees were also keen to ensure that data about travel demand and passenger behaviour was provided to decision makers to inform their thinking.
3. **Build passenger interests into franchise commitments:** Some consultees suggested that future franchise requirements should include terms specifying the responsibility of TOCs to assist passengers during periods of disruption.

Representatives from industry agreed that it was important for passengers' interests to be taken into consideration and did not raise any specific points that are not covered in the themes set out above.

IN SUMMARY

The organisations that make up the Rail North Partnership (including member authorities) as well as the rail industry provided feedback regarding the current arrangements through a survey, interviews, and other submissions.

For both franchises, partner responses showed a marked decline in confidence in communications with customers and stakeholders following the May timetable disruptions. Both partner and industry responses expressed general confidence in their understanding of the governance arrangements and generally agreed that they had good relationships with the other organisations involved, but were much less confident about the governance arrangements' effectiveness, the flow of information between organisations, and their level of influence over the provision of rail services.

Improving communication was the most prominent theme that emerged from responses about improvements to business as usual operation. In particular, they highlighted the need for improved communication with customers (in terms of timeliness and accuracy) and stakeholders (with confidentiality agreements seen as a barrier).

There was agreement across the Local Authorities and TfN Members surveyed that information and engagement from TOCs needed to be improved during times of disruption. Suggestions for improvement centred around clearer communication about risk; more timely information and overcoming the confidentiality barrier; a more collaborative and honest relationship; and addressing performance issues.

There was also agreement across the Local Authorities and TfN Members surveyed that information and engagement with customers needed to be improved during times of disruption, with a particular focus on consistency of information. Consultees held mixed views on the role of LAs and other providers of local information, with a desire to have greater oversight while avoiding adding to the number of information sources.

Consultees recognised that there had also been issues with communication between stakeholder groups during the May timetable disruption. The primary issues raised related to diffusion of responsibility with a need for greater clarity on ownership of problems, and information sharing about risks with better contingency planning.

There was broad agreement that changes would be necessary in order to ensure that the RNP team could effectively manage the Northern and TPE franchises. Consultees had a range of suggestions for potential improvements, including more transparent and accessible information (though industry respondents emphasised the need for sensitive handling of commercial information);

clarifying the remit and scope of the RNP's powers (a point also raised by industry); a greater focus on franchise commitment delivery, risks, contingency, and infrastructure interdependencies; and provision of adequate resource.

Potential improvements to the relationship between stakeholder groups included consideration of a closer relationship between the RNP and Network Rail; greater clarity over decision-making accountability and authority; and a more authoritative role for local authorities with more direct influence on franchising decisions.

Consultees consistently agreed that passengers' interests should be taken into consideration when decisions are taken, including suggestions for building passenger representation into decisions.

4. There are considerable concerns about the lack of a single body, 'guiding mind', or 'definitive voice' to consider the system-wide risks that were found to have contributed to the disruption, which the ORR Inquiry recommendations around the System Operator role and widening the remit of Programme Boards has already flagged, as well as about the need to address the failure on the part of TOCs to adequately understand or communicate risks to passengers.
5. As such, arrangements could be strengthened so that all parties, including Northern elected members, can be sufficiently aware of and engaged in addressing these issues in future.
6. To do this there needs to be a retained and enhanced focus on outcomes for passengers. Decision makers at all points in the process – from public representatives right through to TOCs and Network Rail – need to understand the priorities, including what trade-offs might be involved and a long-term view of franchise development.
7. An example of this, raised by Local Authority partners, are the strategic principles, risks and choices involved in timetable development, such as the need to strike a balance between increased frequencies and greater connectivity versus improved performance and reliability.
8. Closer collaboration with passenger representation groups such as Transport Focus was raised as a specific measure to help support putting passenger outcomes at the centre of the RNP's decision-making.
9. A focus on passenger outcomes happened relatively effectively in 'business as usual' periods – good examples of successful decision-making include the development of the original May 2018 timetable which improved the offer to passengers.
10. However, there is a particular need to improve the functioning of the process during periods of significant change – a challenge exacerbated over summer 2018 by the concurrent switch of governance arrangements from Rail North Ltd to Transport for the North, but that will continue to be a risk as the North makes the case for and secures transformational investment.
11. Existing resources have been severely stretched by recent events, limiting what additional activity is possible – a point also made by partners.

HEADLINE FINDING:

Current arrangements need to be strengthened so that there is a greater focus on passenger impacts, including addressing the lack of prior information about the May 2018 disruption, engaging decision makers in strategic choices and franchise development, and ensuring priorities carry through to TOCs and Network Rail.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND CLARITY

1. Northern elected members believe there is not a sense of appropriate influence and accountability for decisions on their part. There is a lack of a 'golden thread' showing how their views feed through to service decisions and then impact passengers. In particular, there is a feeling that those operating services and infrastructure are not sufficiently accountable or transparent to the North for decisions that affect passengers.
2. This is despite DfT seeking to delegate 'local' decisions to TfN and its representatives on the RNP Board (involving the Rail North Committee as appropriate), for example, the decision to bring the Lakes Line back into service earlier.
3. Local Authority partners are comfortable with their understanding of both their role and the general arrangements within the current process, but both local and industry partners emphasised that there was a need for greater clarity over ownership of problems and obligations, and greater certainty over the scope and remit of the parties involved in the process.
4. To begin to address this, there needs to be simpler and clearer processes for how different parties understand what changes they are consulted on and what they can decide, and how this is done. This includes clarifying the roles of officers versus that of elected members.
5. Such clarity would enable officers to seek input and decisions at relevant points; Northern political leaders to make, and be accountable for, relevant decisions; and TOCs to build more constructive relationships and so deliver better outcomes from a process that it is recognised has placed additional demands on them.
6. There is a need to provide greater support to decision makers, including additional guidance and advice regarding the contract management process. It should be noted that such guidance is now being provided to the members of the Rail North Committee during the development of this review.
7. The partnership approach has brought strengths and weaknesses: it has led to greater local influence and national investment than in the past, but also necessarily means a more complex decision-making process. Some local authority partners hold the view that there should be changes to how different decisions are delegated, with more or all matters (including those relating to finance) fully devolved to local bodies, which would require statutory changes.
8. In any case, accompanying greater clarity over where change can be made, it is important to share decisions and data – particularly where there is an impact on passengers – at an early a stage as possible, even if no specific choice is required or possible.
9. The interaction between operational and infrastructure issues was also raised by both local and industry partners as an important aspect that needs addressing (particularly the need for greater coordination with Network Rail).

HEADLINE FINDING:

There is not a sense of appropriate influence and accountability for decisions on the part of Northern elected members. There is a lack of a 'golden thread' between their views, service decisions – particularly by those operating services and infrastructure, and impacts on passengers. This is exacerbated by a lack of clarity over ownership of problems, obligations, and remits.

COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPARENCY

1. A central theme emerging from the evidence gathered was a need to improve communication and transparency: there is a dissatisfaction with the efficiency of communication in the current arrangements and the level of information made available.
2. If there is to be a more long-term planning of priorities and a stronger 'golden thread' of accountability, there is a need to improve how information is used and decisions are shared (including between the RNP Board and the Rail North Committee).
3. In terms of improving the efficiency of communication within the Partnership processes, this includes visibility of what decisions have been made and why, what the impact will be on passengers, when they take place and at what point changes can be made, and what the attendant risks and mitigation or contingency measures are.
4. An important issue raised by Local Authority partners was the barrier presented by confidentiality agreements. It should be noted that during the development of this review, the Rail North member authorities have signed a Non-Disclosure Agreement that will allow them access to relevant commercially sensitive material. This starts to address this key issue and reflects the need for greater relevant information provision for decision makers.
5. In terms of improving the transparency of communication beyond the Partnership processes, there is an opportunity to address the desire to more strongly embed the principle of transparency where possible.

HEADLINE FINDING:

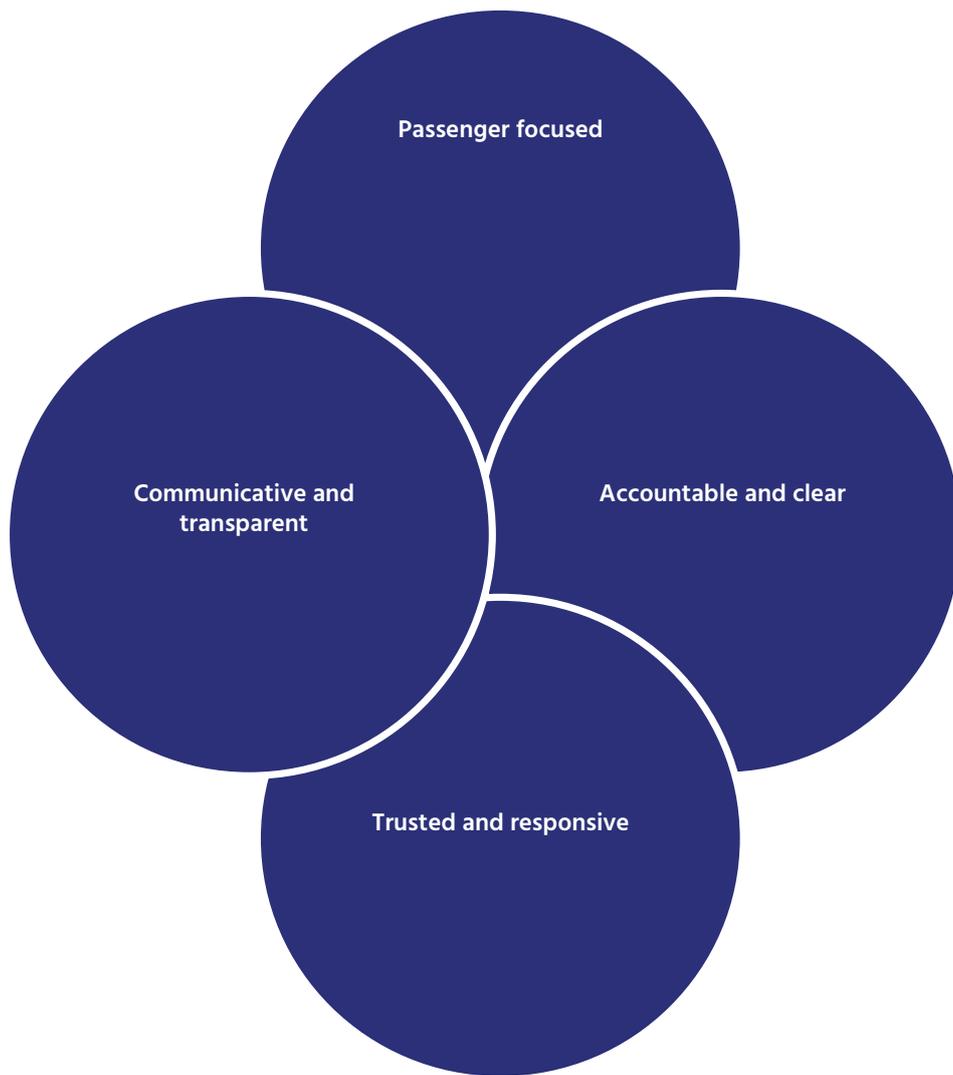
Communication within the decision-making process – with visibility of passenger impacts and risks and opportunities for change, along with overcoming the confidentiality barrier – and transparency of those decisions – with more accessible records of discussions and decisions – need to be improved.

TRUST AND RESPONSIVENESS

1. Recent events have resulted in the trust in the rail industry by passengers, business, and local and national Government being undermined. There is a need to rebuild from this loss of trust.
2. The task of rebuilding this trust is also an opportunity: to strengthen a sense of ownership of, and collective responsibility for, the RNP process by involved parties, to foster an appreciation of how best to effect change in a complex and diffuse industry, and to make the industry more responsive to local needs.
3. There is a need for more and better information and a more open and honest assessment regarding the performance of services operated by the franchises. This should be accompanied by improving the exchange of information between TOCs, decision makers, and customers (in addition to greater coordination with infrastructure issues). This particularly applies at times of disruption. A range of practical solutions to achieve this have been suggested by partners.
4. However, it should be acknowledged that the way to do this is not straightforward – in some cases it may not necessarily be a case of swamping decision makers with large amounts of operational detail, but rather bringing different pieces of information together in way that is helpful to effective decision-making and a focus on passenger impacts, risks, and choices.
5. Given this, there were mixed views as to the role of Local Authority Partners with regard to communicating operational information (e.g. disruption messaging), recognising the importance of avoiding increasing the number of information sources while ensuring coordination.

HEADLINE FINDING:

Recent events have resulted in the trust in the rail industry by passengers, business, and local and national government being undermined. To rebuild from this loss of trust, the sense of ownership of the process needs strengthening, the industry made more responsive, and the exchange of information improved.

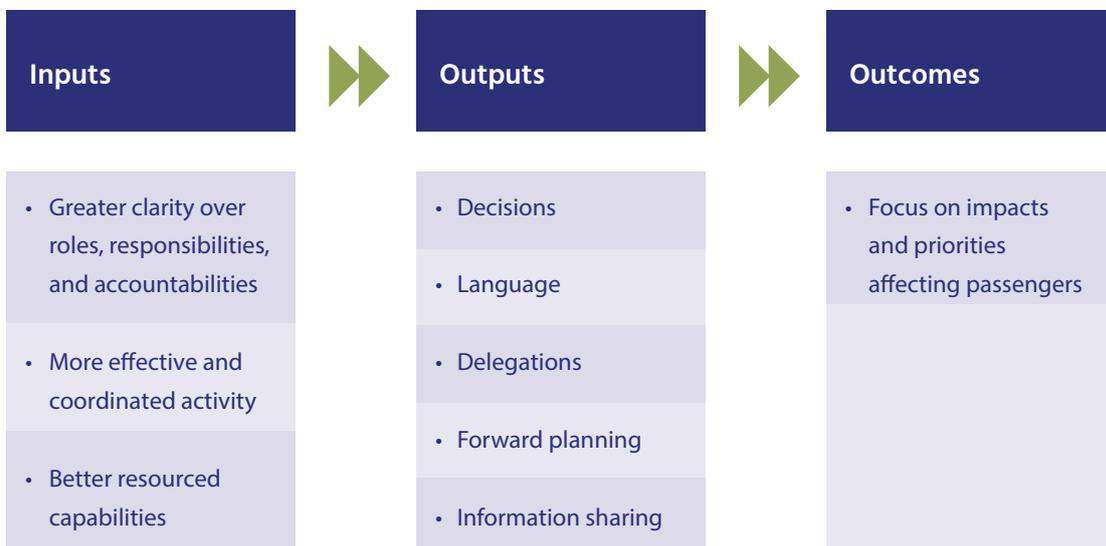


Key focus points of outcomes

5 Recommendations

The current arrangements for the Rail North Partnership need substantively changing in order to ensure the Northern and TPE franchises, and the Rail North Partnership management of them, is accountable, transparent, trusted, responsive, and focused on the needs of the North's passengers.

Key focus areas are:

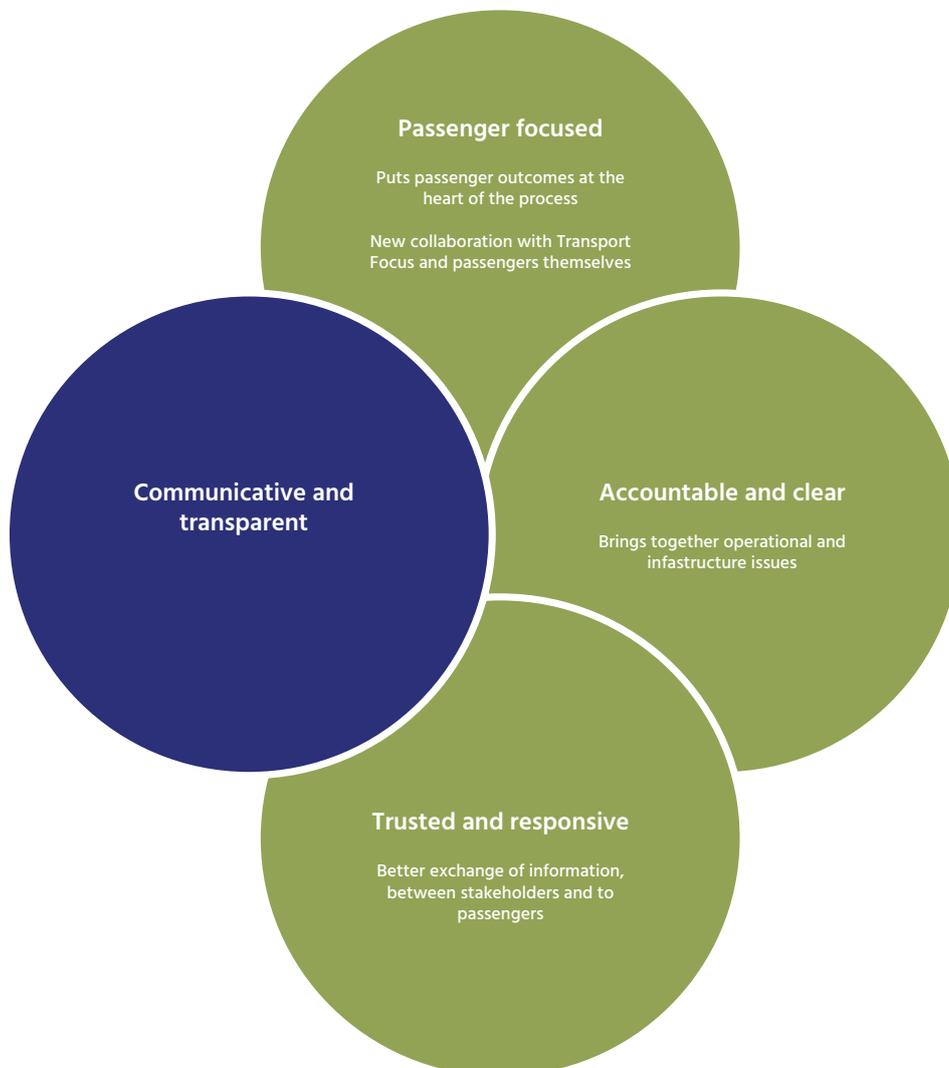


Although many of these changes can be made within the bounds of the current Partnership Agreement, these steps would also enable future changes and any further devolution.

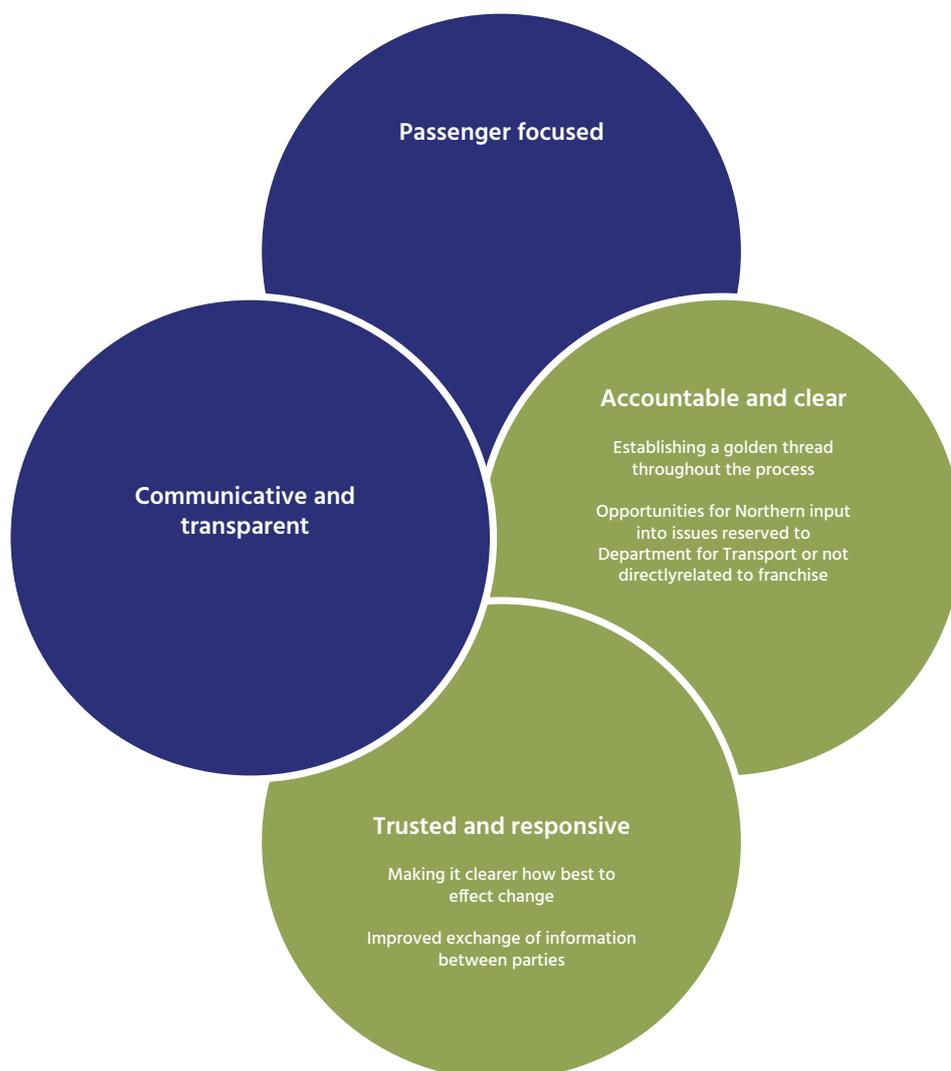
Immediate changes to be taken forward should be deliverable without amending current Partnership Agreement and Franchise Agreements

1. Work with TOCs on a new '**Passenger Promise**' to ensure **passengers are the central focus** of decisions by the rail industry and the Rail North Partnership. It will set out the standards and behaviours passengers can expect. This will include:
 - a. Developing new proposals for **improved passenger information**, to ensure communication is effective particularly during periods of disruption.
 - b. Giving passengers a stronger voice, by promoting and expanding opportunities for **passengers to engage with decisions** about their local services.

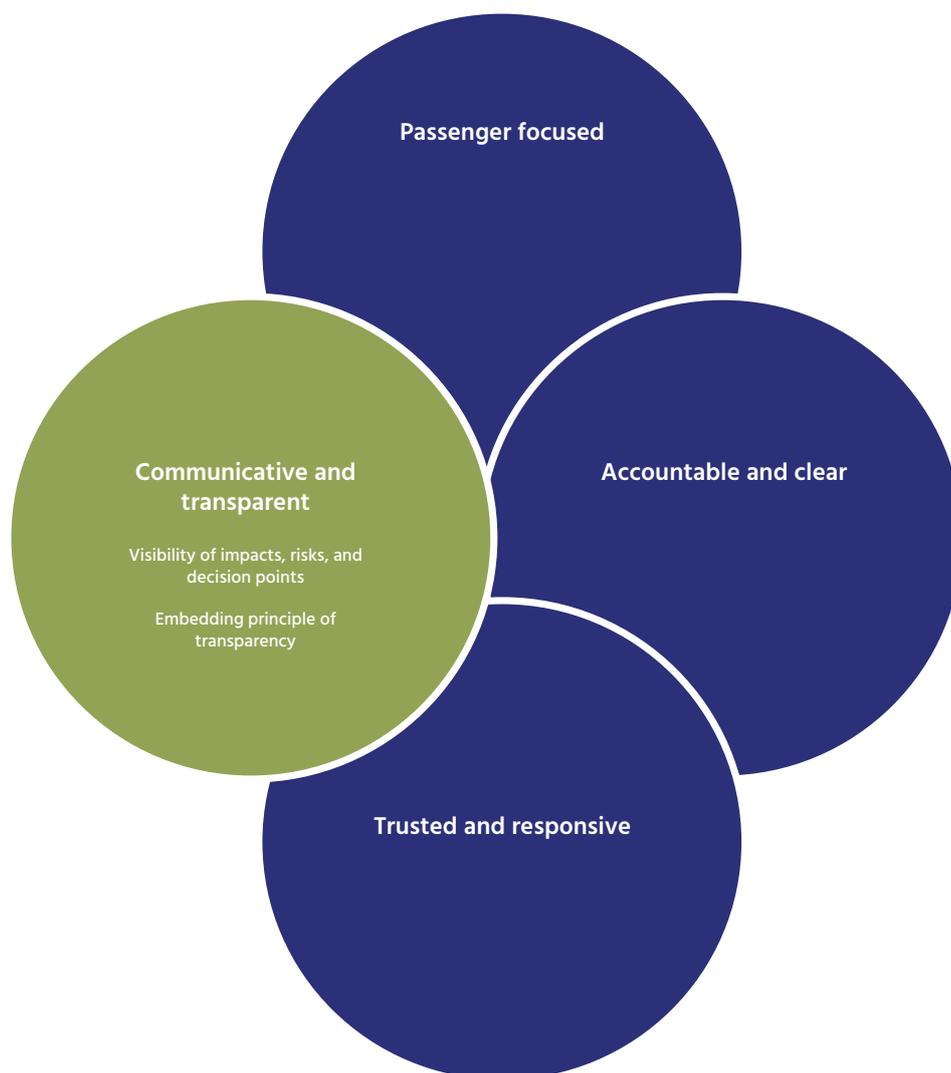
- c. A new collaboration between the Partnership and Transport Focus, as well as stronger links with businesses in the region, to seek out **opportunities to consider the passenger perspective** in decisions made by the Partnership and get better information on passenger perspectives to shape future plans.
- d. A regular sector-wide **snapshot of performance and passenger experience** enhancing existing reporting arrangements to ensure the impact is fully understood. This approach will bring together local intelligence, operational performance information, passenger feedback, and infrastructure updates, to consider future impacts on passengers rather than merely report historic operation, with suitable early warning systems for foreseen problems.



2. A package of measures to **provide greater political oversight of the decision-making process** within the Rail North Partnership. This will ensure there is a “golden thread” between political decision-making, implementation by officers, and outcomes for passengers. This will include:
 - a. Empowering political leaders to be responsible and accountable for strategic decisions that impact on services to passengers in the North, enabled by a **new formal scheme of delegations** to set out how and where key decisions are made.
 - b. A revised Terms of Reference for the Rail North Committee, setting out how meetings will operate, its role and remit reflecting the new scheme of delegations, and highlighting the ability to escalate matters within Transport for the North’s governance in order to **engage directly with Ministers** for the DfT.
 - c. **Direct reporting of the Rail North Partnership Board Members** who represent Transport for the North to the Rail North Committee, along with an explicit role for the Rail North Committee **Chair to give direction on behalf of Northern leaders to those Board Members** on urgent matters arising between meetings of the Committee.
 - d. An annual review of the Rail North Partnership arrangements jointly held by the Secretary of State (or relevant Minister) and Northern Leaders to establish a **forward look of the major risks, challenges, and priorities of the year ahead**, alongside use of provisions within the Partnership Agreement to have more frequent reviews if required.
 - e. Agreement of a new Memorandum of Understanding between the DfT, Transport for the North on behalf of Northern authorities, and Network Rail, to set out appropriate governance arrangements that are consistent with the ORR Inquiry and will **deepen collaboration, aid coordinated decision-making, and ensure that there is appropriate input from the North into all rail issues.**



3. Establishment of an **Information Protocol with a presumption of maximum transparency** while respecting legal and commercial constraints and respective accountabilities of the parties where necessary, including:
 - a. Access to **all appropriate information** needed for decision-making in line with the new scheme of delegations as per Recommendation 2, formalising the arrangement whereby reports, options and analyses are made available to DfT and TfN **jointly and in parallel by default**.
 - b. A review of **confidentiality provisions** to ensure as much information as possible is available to decision-makers consistent with the legal obligations in the Franchise Agreements and the DfT's other obligations.
 - c. A strengthened audit trail and **greater public visibility** regarding decisions made by the Partnership.



4. Development of an **Integrated Forward Plan** for the Rail North Partnership, reflecting the Passenger Promise and new scheme of delegations by establishing a collaborative work programme for the Partnership that brings together its delivery milestones and decision points joined up with the wider rail industry, covering:
 - a. A jointly developed **Communications Protocol** covering the Partnership, the TOCs and other industry players, to ensure **greater accountability** of TOCs to passengers through passenger communication that are clear, honest and insightful.
 - b. This Communications Protocol will reflect the obligations on the TOCs to **meaningfully engage on changes that impact on passengers**, including to the detailed timetable and the Train Service Requirement.
 - c. Progress against agreed benchmarks for **passenger-facing** measures in the Franchise Agreements, and the delivery of relevant elements of TfN's **Strategic Transport Plan**.

- d. A clear read-across with **TOCs' annual business plans**.
- e. A clear read-across to Network Rail's annual business plan. Additionally, a proposal for **Network Rail to provide a regular dashboard** that brings together progress on infrastructure and operational issues where relevant to RNP decisions. This mirrors the dashboard Highways England provides to the TfN Board.
- f. The **annual review** between the Secretary of State (or relevant Minister) and Northern Leaders discussed above

*...an Integrated Forward Plan
for the Rail North Partnership
reflecting the Passenger Promise
and new scheme of delegations by
establishing a collaborative work
programme for the Partnership....*

Worked Example of a Future Timetable Change

An assessment of how the revised arrangements would work in practice has been considered to test how the proposals address the issues and meet the objectives of the review.

For the purpose of this example it has been assumed that there are problems with a particular group of train services regularly causing commuters to be late to work. Under the revised arrangements there would be better visibility of the performance problems and concerns including the direct impact on passengers through a more detailed and granular performance report. These reports and dashboards would be part of the planned 'early warning system'. This should mean that issues are more visible to politicians and decision makers before they have chance to cause widespread disruption to passengers. Mitigations could be discussed with the Rail North Partnership and agreed with TOCs if there is a simple fix.

Recognising that some issues require more substantial operational changes which have to be properly planned in the system, it may be that detailed options to amend the timetable are needed. A more 'far-reaching' timetable improvement would be covered by the 'integrated forward plan' linking industry proposals with TfN's Strategic Transport Plan to demonstrate how the industry is working to support the North's wider transport and economic outcomes. This would set out why the change was necessary (e.g. to deal with operational issues, economic growth or the introduction of new rolling stock).

Once the need for change had been established, the scope and impact of the change would be considered. The new scheme of delegation would be used to determine where the decision needed to be made and the proposed 'Passenger Promise' would shape the level of consultation undertaken and information provided. For example:

- A change permissible within the train TOCs' Train Service Requirement (TSR) part of the contract would need no formal approval, but would be subject to local consultation.
- A change that requires a change to the TSR, but has no financial implications for the clients and no wider policy/network implications would, under the new scheme of delegation, need TfN approval only.
- A more substantial change with TSR and financial implications would need approval from both DfT and TfN as joint clients via the Rail North Partnership Board. DfT would need to agree the financial change (unless it was funded from local funds or savings elsewhere).

In any case, political leaders and the public would have visibility of the decision made. As part of the decision-making process (wherever it was made) there would be an assessment of the passenger impact of the decision.

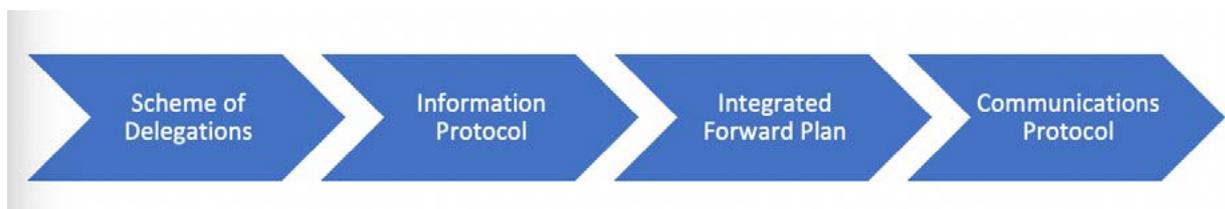
The RNP team would request proposals from the TOCs who would be responsible for developing proposals in detail and consulting passengers and stakeholders on the options.

Often timetable changes generate ‘winners and losers’ and additional costs as well as additional revenues and wider economic benefits. In the case of a potential change with significant potential impacts this is more likely (under the scheme of delegation) to be a decision for political leaders. In this case the information protocol would ensure that all information about the potential change is made available in parallel to both Northern politicians and DfT. Subject to the necessary legal confirmation under the Franchise Agreement, this would include information (such as commercial costs and revenues) covered by confidentiality arrangements.

Once a decision had been made on the amended timetable plan, the decision would be published to provide an audit trail and greater transparency for members of the public. An explanation of the changes and the potential impact of timetable changes would be clearly and openly communicated to passengers as set out in the communications protocol.

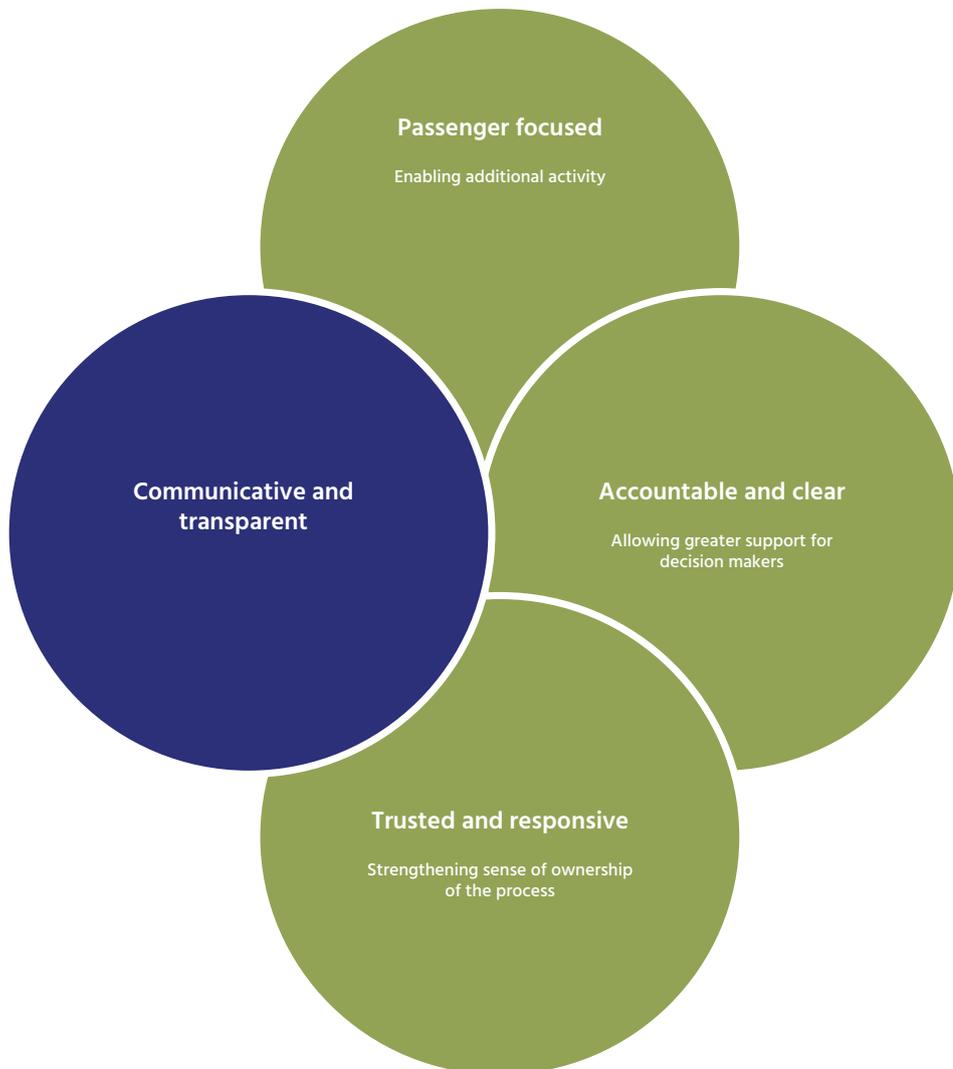
The process of developing and implementing a timetable can take up to a year so there would be regular progress updates during the process – including from Network Rail who are responsible for developing and implementing the operational timetables. During this period of development, issues can arise that require further consultation and discussion. In particular if risks to delivery of the desired outcomes or operational performance emerge, these would be flagged to politicians under the ‘early warning system’. This would ensure TOCs and Network Rail are challenged to provide mitigations and/or alternative solutions before the change impacts on passengers.

The result should be a better and more transparent change process that is clearly linked to passenger benefits. Passengers should have greater visibility of the process and ultimately benefit from a better planned service that more closely meets their aspirations. Politicians would feel greater ownership of the issue and solution and would be better able to respond to the needs of the communities they represent.



5. **Enhanced resourcing**, in terms of both adequate levels and effective use, of the Rail North Partnership, specifically:
 - a. **Additional resources** for the RNP team and TfN Strategic Rail team, recognising that as well as using and coordinating existing resources more effectively, there may be a need for an increase to deliver these recommendations. The DfT and Transport for the North are committed to working together to provide this resource, and will establish how this could be funded taking into account existing contributions from the DfT, TfN, support from TfN’s constituent authorities and the availability of future funding.
 - b. To further support the use and management of existing resources, **a member-officer code of conduct** for the Rail North Partnership and improved communications regarding the role of Rail North Partnership officers will be developed

Additional longer term considerations – those which would require changes to the relationship between the Rail North Partnership, the rail industry, local and national government.



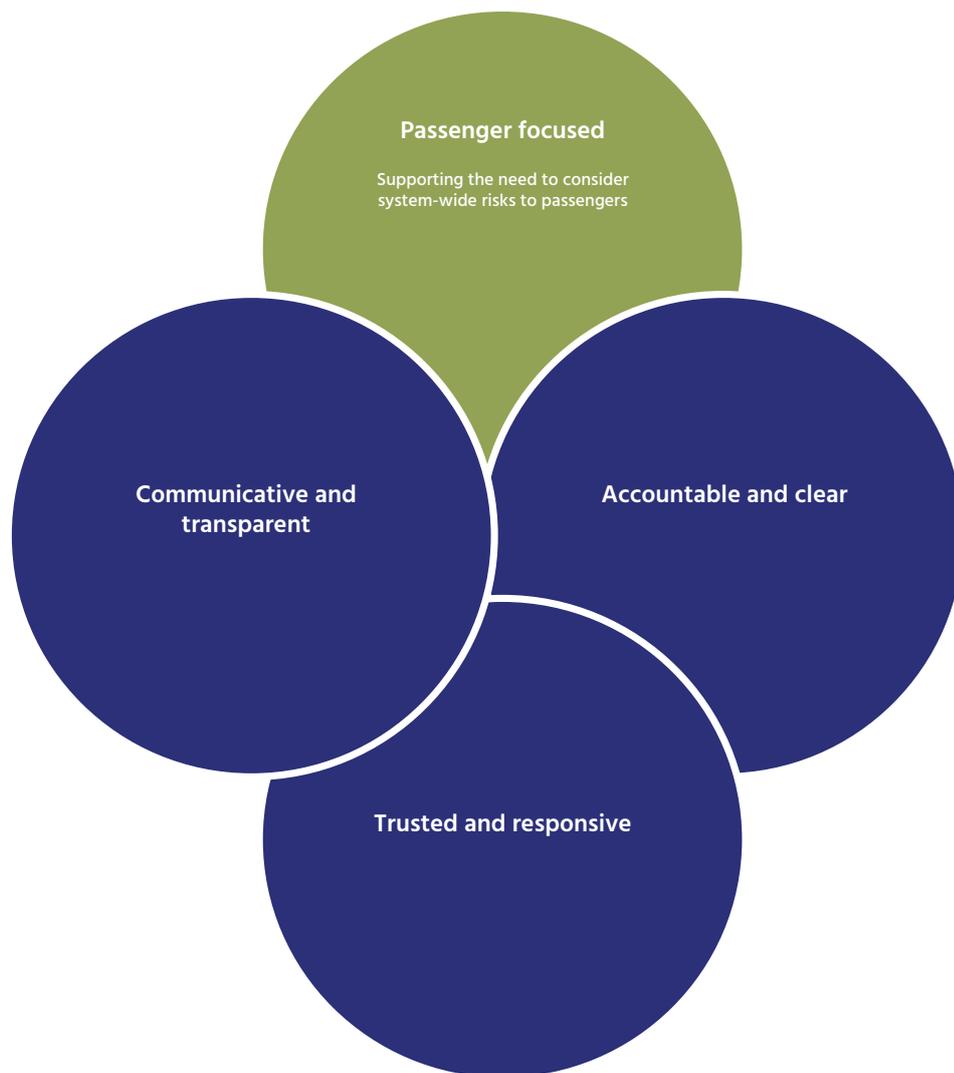
As previously discussed, the Williams Review has been established in order to investigate wider changes with regard to how the industry should work. In the circumstances it is agreed that making recommendations for more fundamental changes to the current arrangements and relationships would not be appropriate as these will be considered by the Williams Review and also would need to be consistent with whatever wider reforms to industry structure and commercial models begin to emerge.

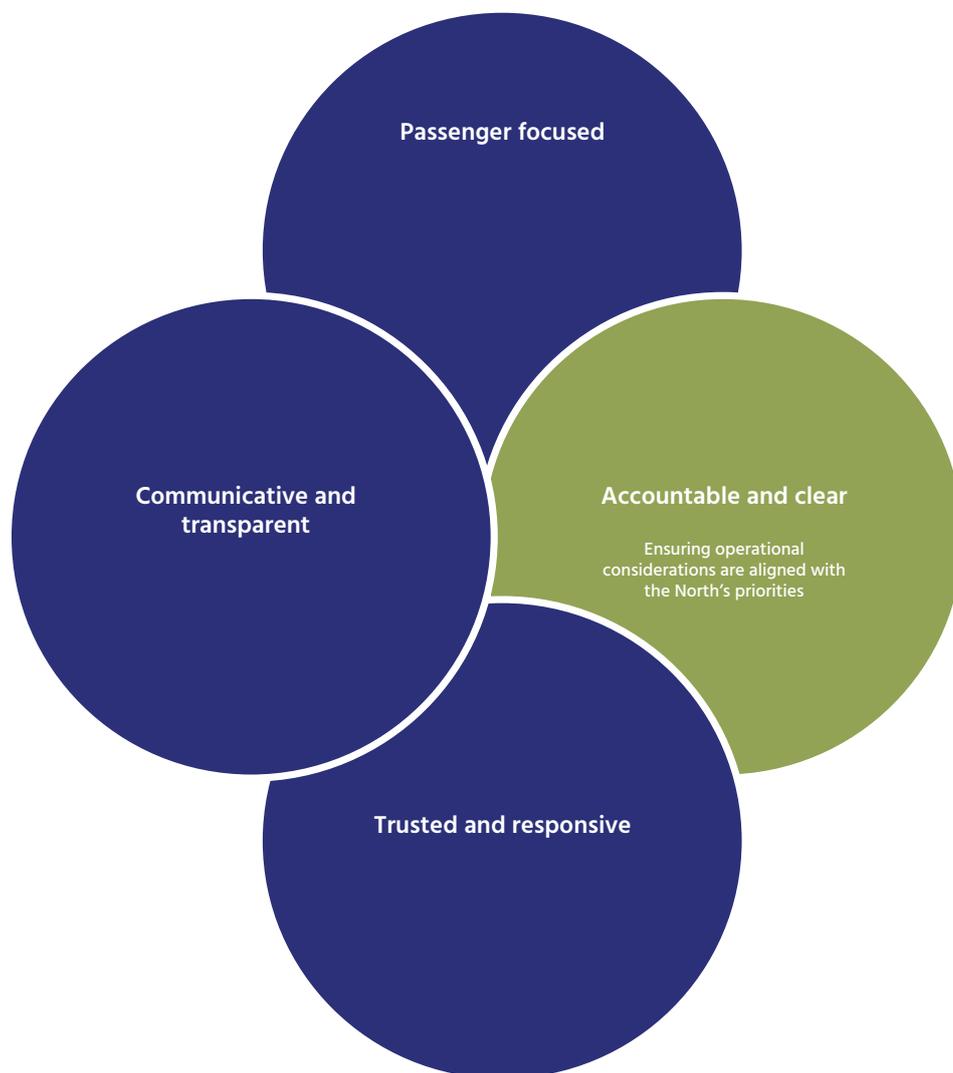
Transport for the North is starting work on a business case for the next phase of

devolved powers, reflecting the original aspiration for the North to assume full control of the process by the next franchising period, and will be feeding in to the Williams Review.

In addition, the Rail North Partnership Joint Review recommends that the following are considered by the Williams Review:

6. Whether and how a **more effective “guiding mind” for rail services in the North** that considers system-wide risks and issues can be put in place, and the extent to which devolved bodies could have a greater role in this.
7. Whether and how there can be a more explicit, integrated focus on the North by Network Rail together with **greater accountability to Transport for the North** as part of this.





8. Whether and how future rail services can be **integrated across track and train** (including how Network Rail and others will strengthen alignment between future service delivery and infrastructure availability) and **aligned with the North's aspirations**, as set out in Strategic Transport Plan produced by Transport for the North.
9. Whether and how **further devolution of rail responsibilities to the North** will operate within any emerging overall rail industry structure.

6 Action Plan

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

1. PASSENGER PROMISE

ACTION

Work with TOCs to produce a concise, accessible Passenger Promise, and develop proposals for promoting and expanding passenger engagement in decision-making, for discussion and agreement.

Invite TOCs to produce draft proposals for improved passenger information systems for discussion and agreement.

Invite Transport Focus to establish new ways of working, possibly through a Memorandum of Understanding to set out the terms (including specific reporting mechanisms).

Produce a performance snapshot for discussion and agreement. This will be impacted by the dashboard information made available by Network Rail

2. DECISION-MAKING

Develop a formal scheme of delegation. This will include, among other elements:

1. Role profiles for all relevant parties, setting out their responsibilities and relationships, in particular the Rail North Partnership Board Members and Chair, and the Rail North Committee Chair;
2. Consideration of where greater responsibility can be delegated within the framework of the current Partnership Agreement
 - a. from the DfT to the Rail North Partnership where there are no material financial consequences or risks for DfT,
 - b. to Northern leaders to enable them to be responsible and accountable for relevant choices, and
 - c. to Rail North Partnership officers in order to ensure the RNP Board retains a strategic focus.
3. A breakdown of what decisions are taken, when, by whom, and who should be consulted.

As part of Transport for the North's Constitutional Review currently being undertaken, a revised Rail North Committee Terms of Reference to allow for greater visibility and accountability between the Rail North Committee and Rail North Partnership Board.

This may include changes to meeting patterns to schedule alternating meetings – and

reflecting the Integrated Forward Plan – and the membership of the Committee to provide for TfN Partnership Board Members to formally attend in a non-voting, ex-officio capacity in order to enable direct reporting.

DELIVER THE RAIL NORTH PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REVIEW

Produce a draft Memorandum of Understanding between DfT, TfN, and Network Rail for discussion and agreement.

3. INFORMATION SHARING

Review the information sharing and confidentiality provisions within the bounds of the current Partnership Agreement and Franchise Agreements. This will reflect the new scheme of delegation, and will require the identification of different types of sensitive information currently used within the Partnership.

PRODUCE A DRAFT DECISION-MAKING LOG FOR DISCUSSION AND AGREEMENT

4. FORWARD PLANNING

Develop a draft Integrated Forward Plan, including a new Communications Protocol, for discussion and agreement.

This will reflect the new scheme of delegation, and will require coordination with Network Rail and the TOCs to ensure read-across with their business plans, as well as to request Network Rail provide an ongoing information dashboard and to agree the details of it.

5. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Establish the financial requirements of additional resources for the RNP team and Transport for the North Strategic Rail team to provide for the Recommendations. This may include some temporary resource to enable delivery, and will establish what the financial implications are for all partners.

Produce a draft member-officer code of conduct for discussion and agreement, similar to that used by Local Authorities, which addresses the need to more firmly reflect that the Rail North Partnership represents the interests of both Northern communities as well as the Government.

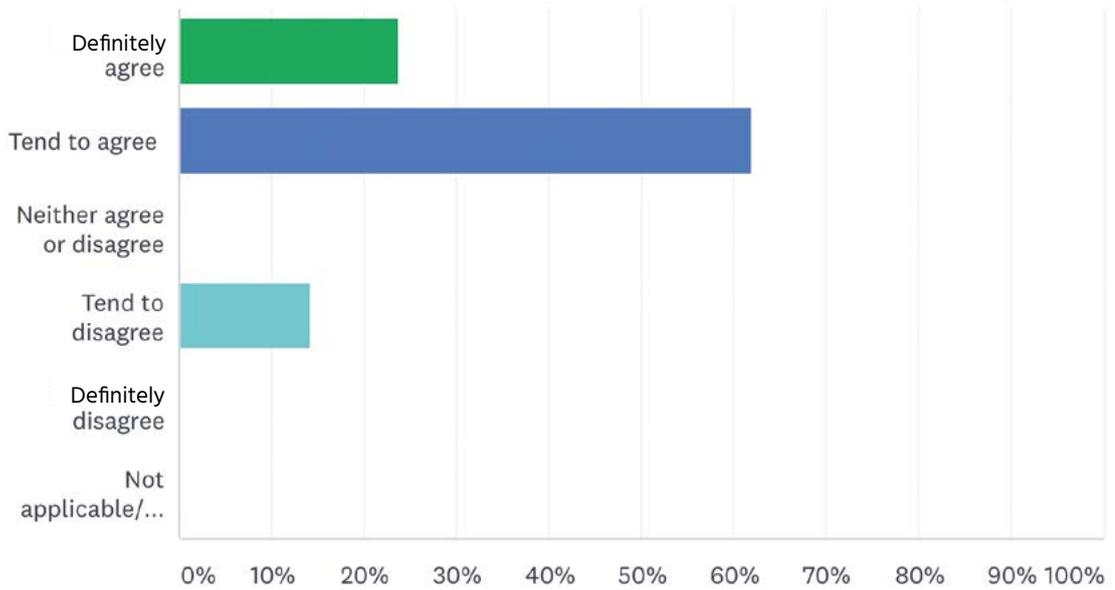
6 - 9. WIDER CHANGES

Develop a response to the Williams Review into the operation of the rail industry, reflecting the questions raised regarding the need for: a guiding mind on system-wide risk; greater Northern accountability of Network Rail; the reconfiguration of the rail franchises; and full devolution of responsibilities of the North.

Develop an evidence base with relevant information for the case for the North to assume full control of the franchising process.

1. I understand the governance arrangements in place to man...

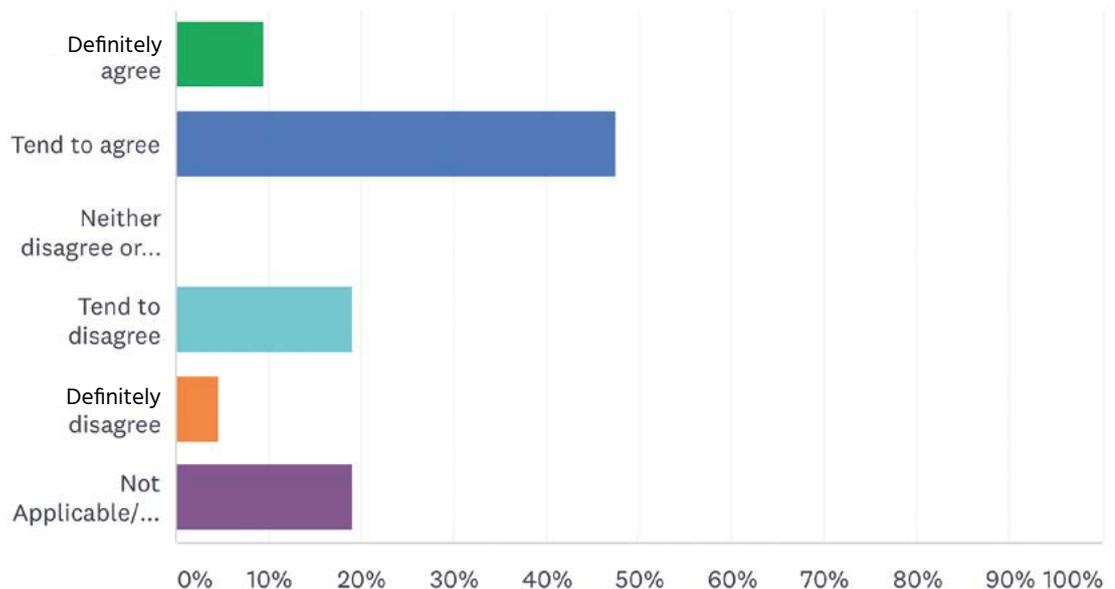
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Rail North Partnership Joint Review_Full

1a. Northern are effective at communicating to customers an...

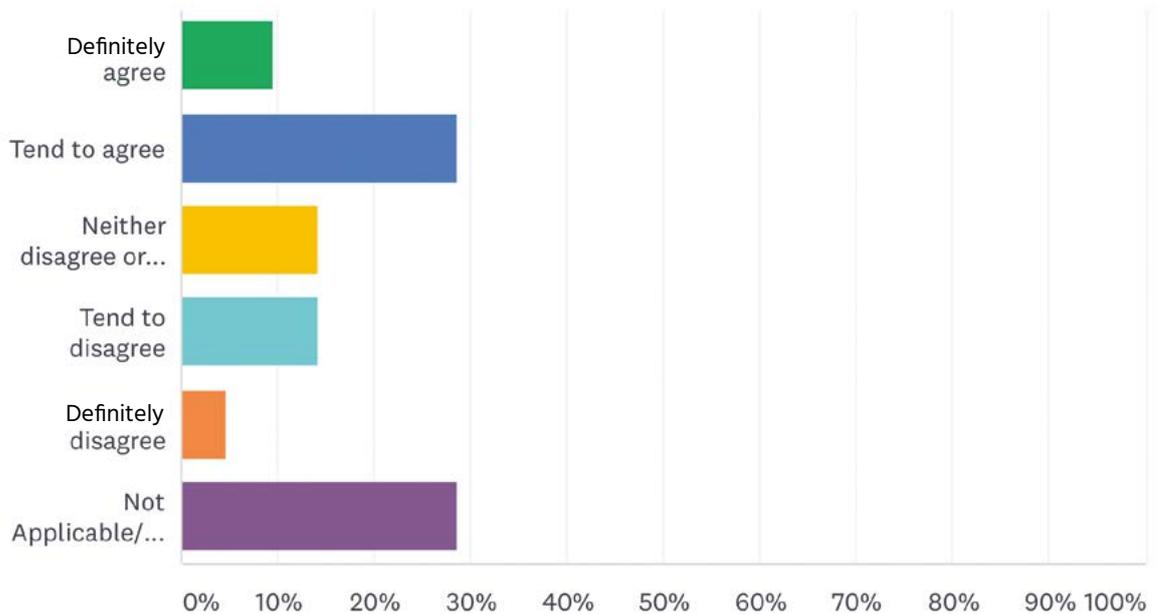
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Rail North Partnership Joint Review_Full

1b. TPE are effective at communicating to customers and stak...

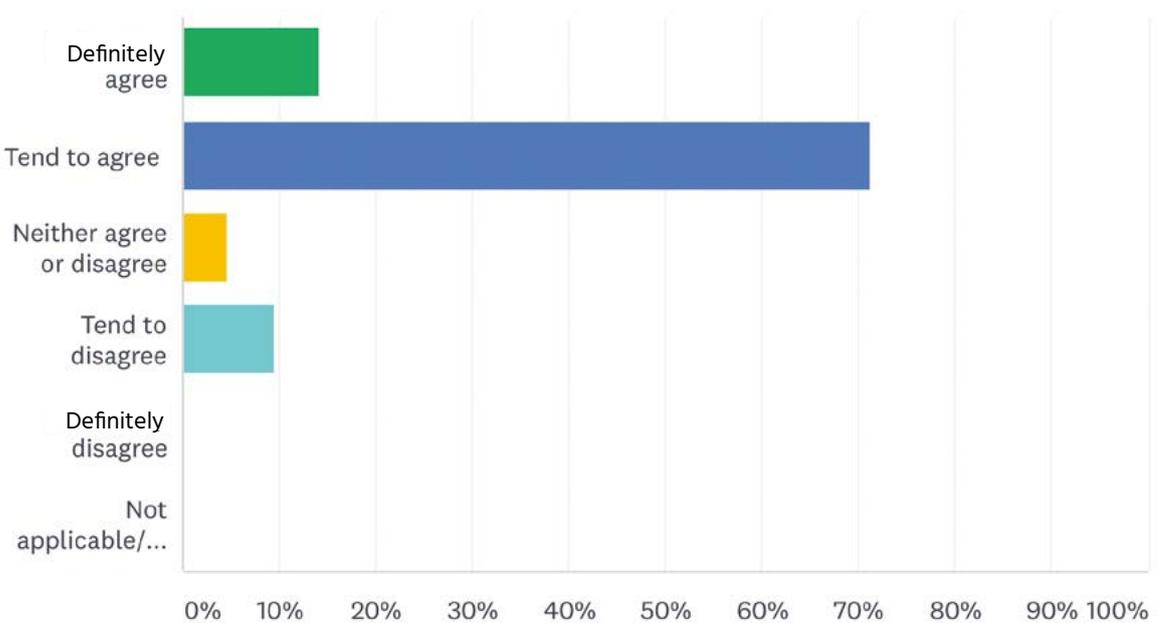
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Rail North Partnership Joint Review_Full

2. I understand the role my organisation has in the governanc...

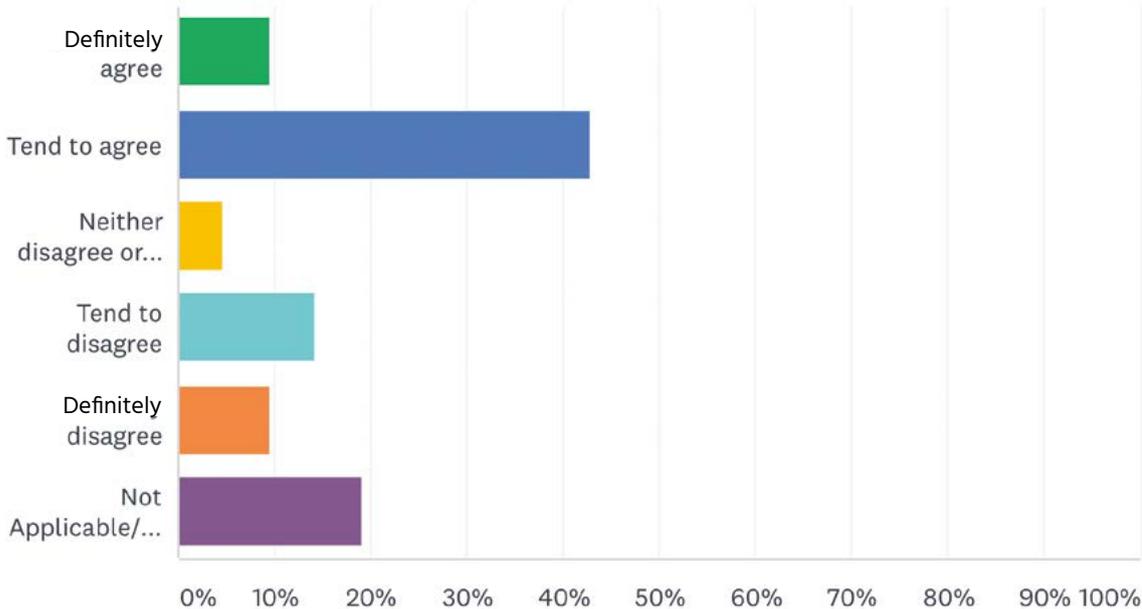
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Rail North Partnership Joint Review_Full

2a. Northern generally provides timely information to custom...

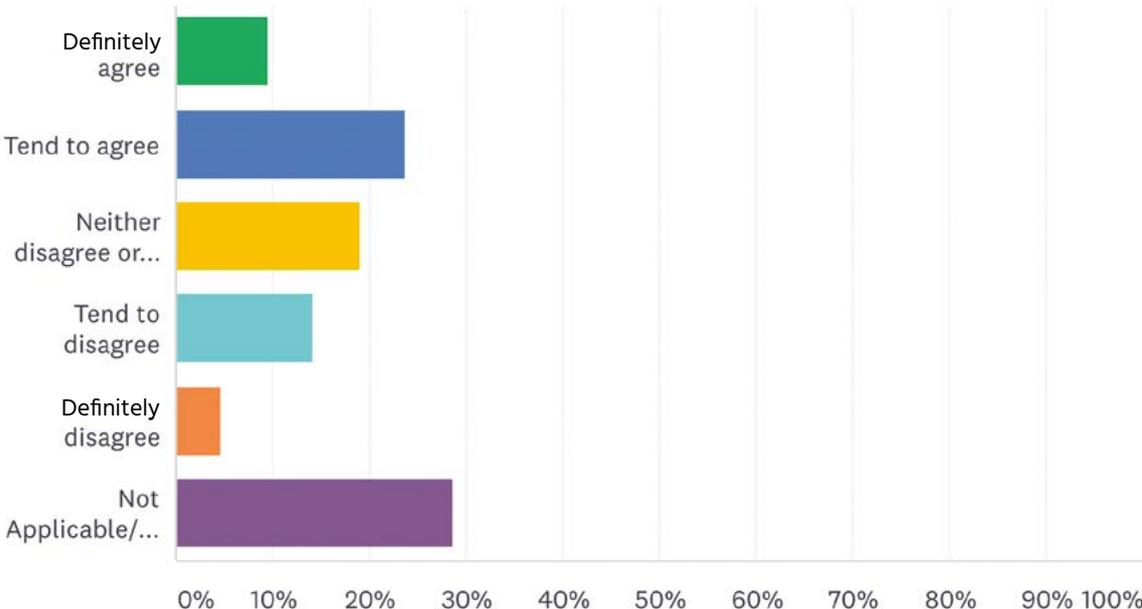
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Rail North Partnership Joint Review_Full

2b. TPE generally provides timely information to customers a...

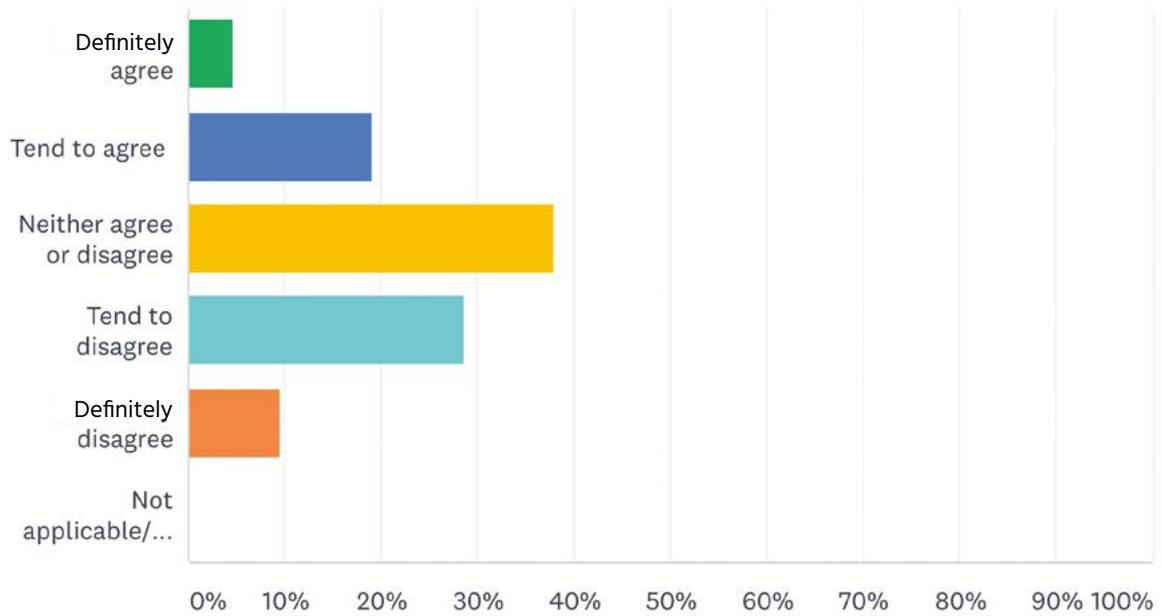
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Rail North Partnership Joint Review_Full

3.I am confident that these governance arrangements are effe...

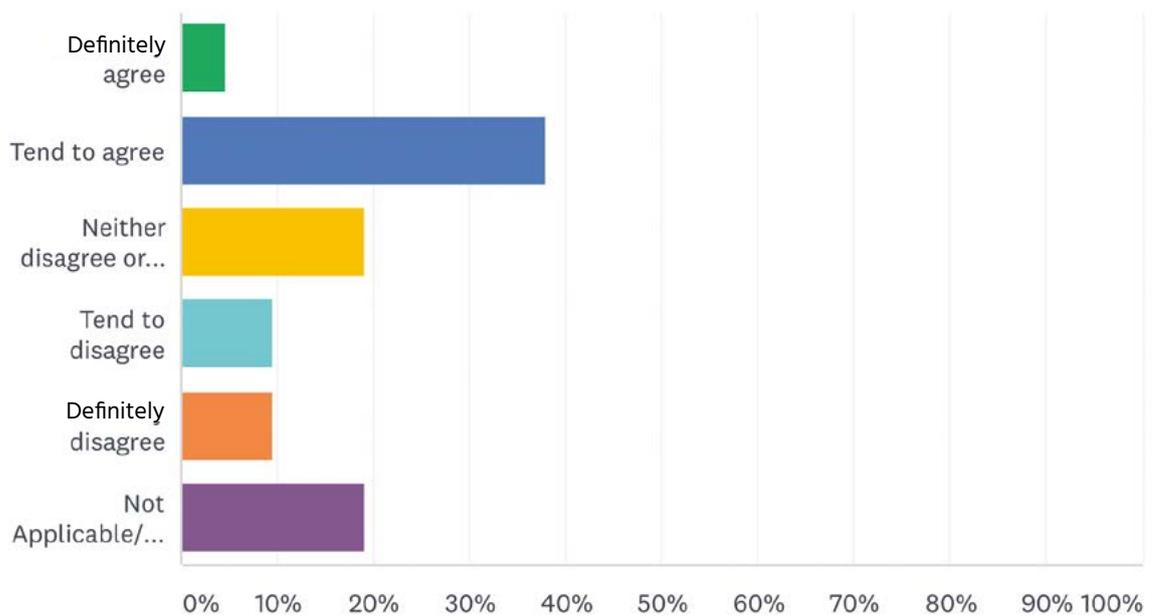
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Rail North Partnership Joint Review_Full

3a. I have confidence in the information provided by Northern

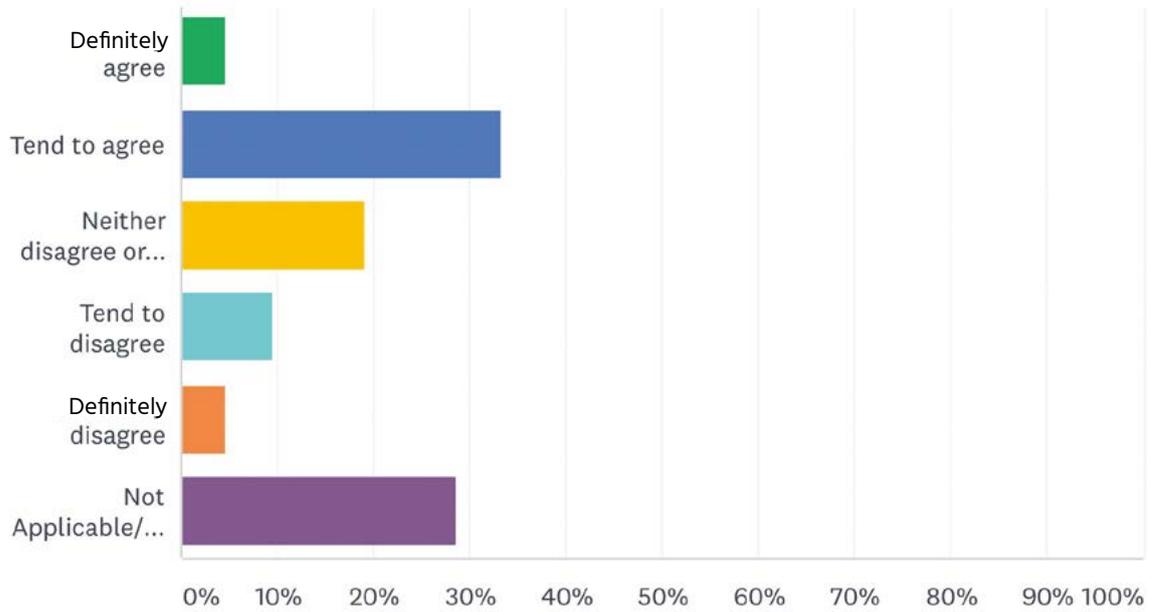
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Rail North Partnership Joint Review_Full

3b. I have confidence in the information provided by TPE

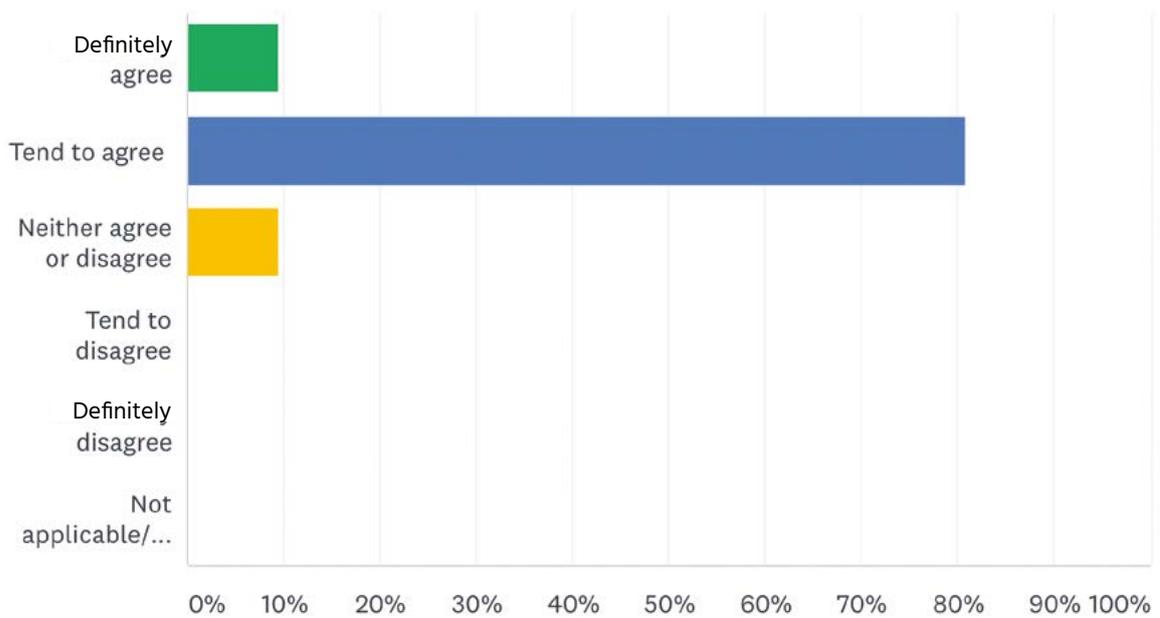
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Rail North Partnership Joint Review_Full

4. I generally have good relationships with the other organisa...

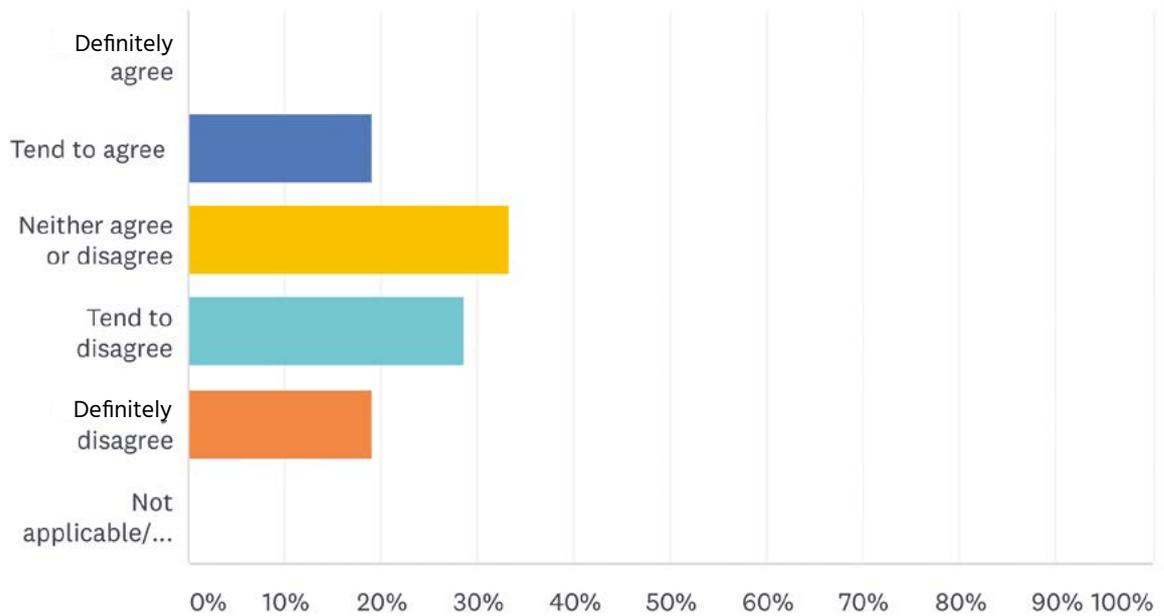
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Rail North Partnership Joint Review_Full

5. There is generally a smooth flow of information between th...

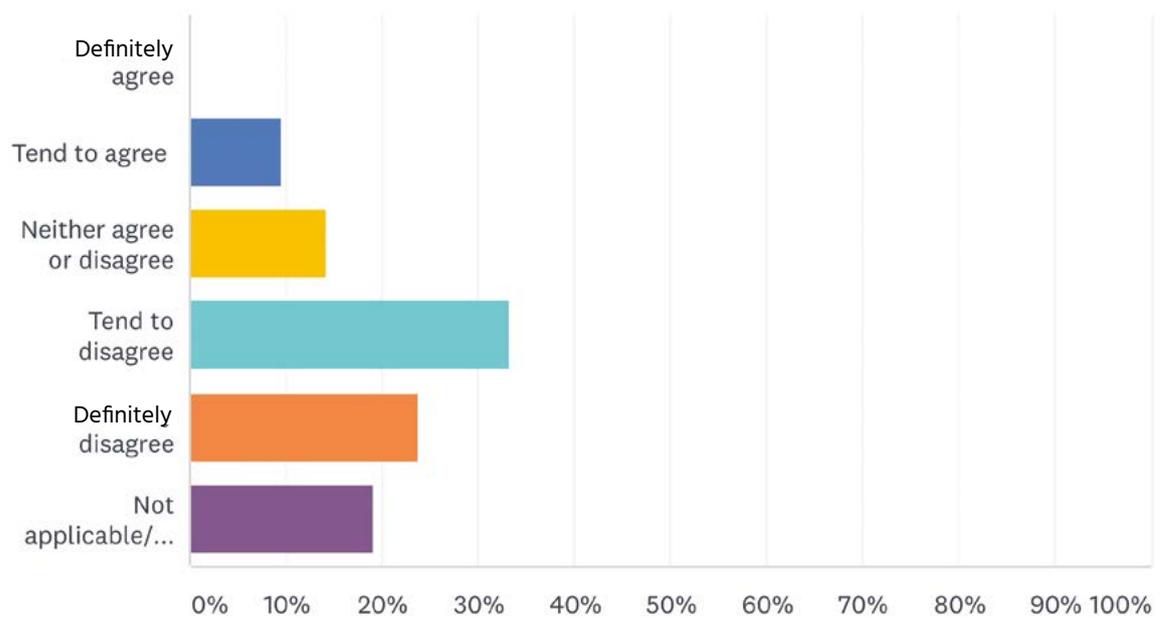
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Rail North Partnership Joint Review_Full

5a. Northern was effective at communicating to customers an...

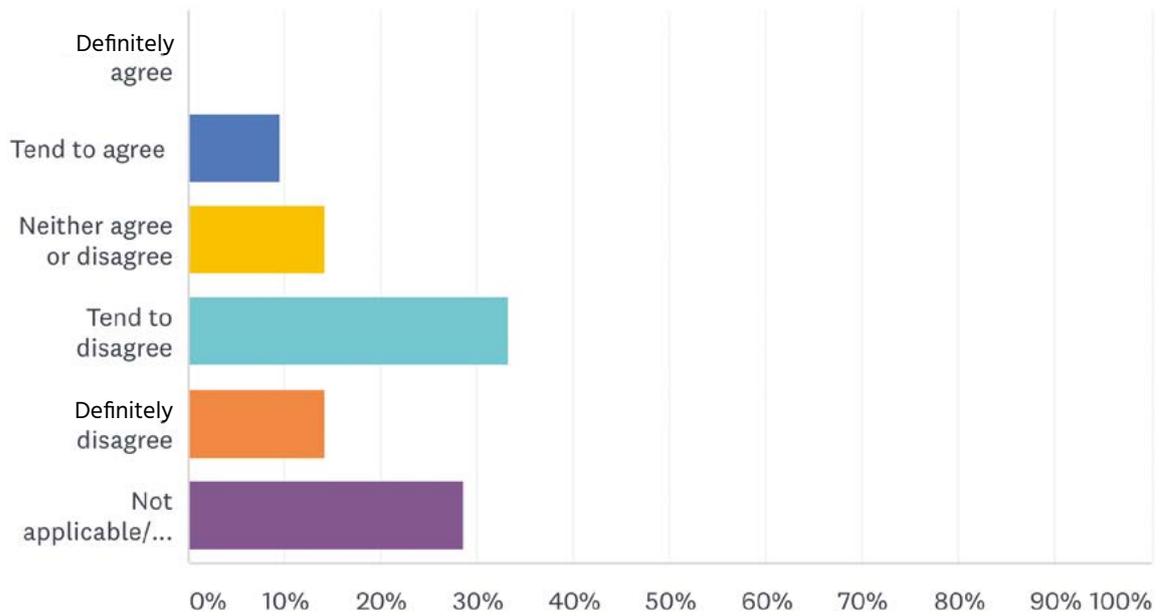
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Rail North Partnership Joint Review_Full

5b. TPE was effective at communicating to customers and sta...

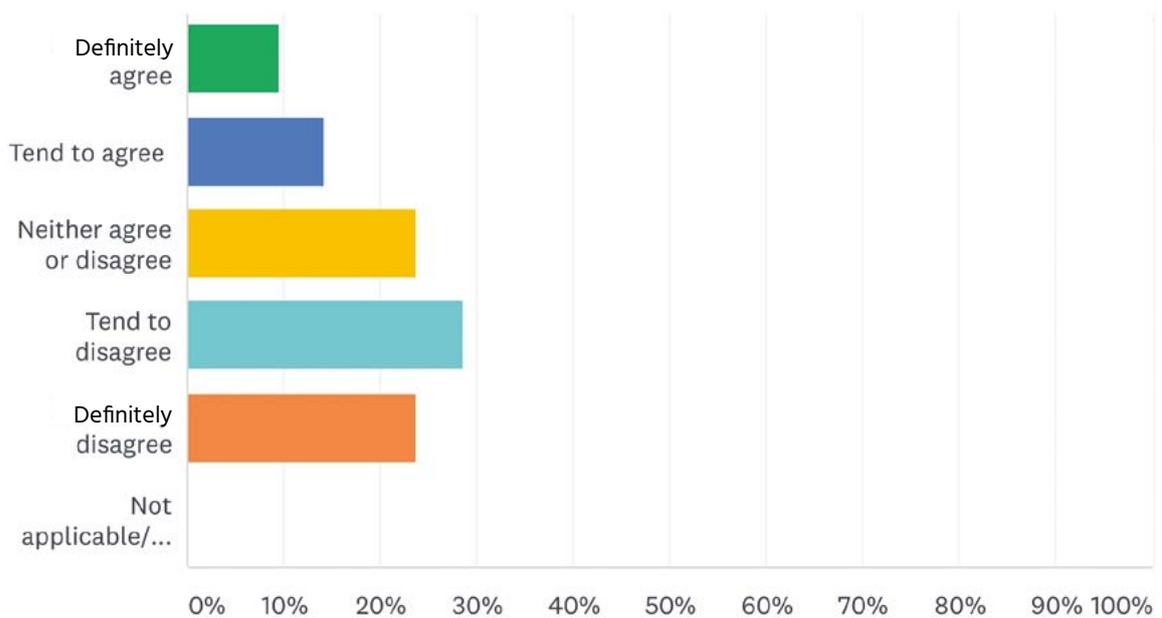
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Rail North Partnership Joint Review_Full

6.The current arrangements allow me an appropriate level of i...

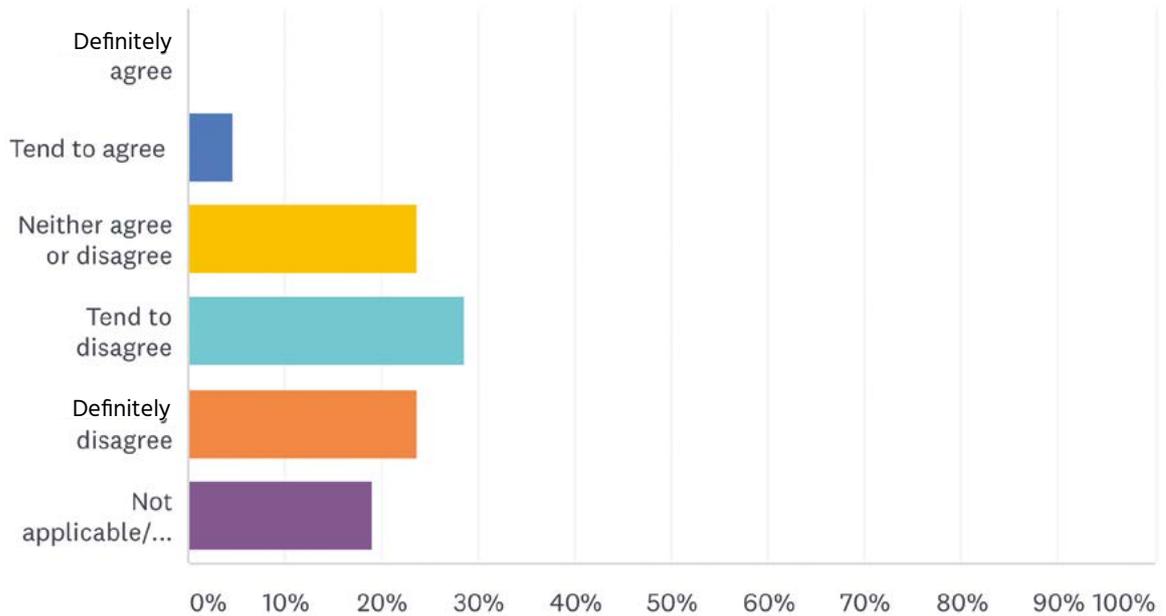
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Rail North Partnership Joint Review_Full

6a. Northern provided customers and stakeholders with timel...

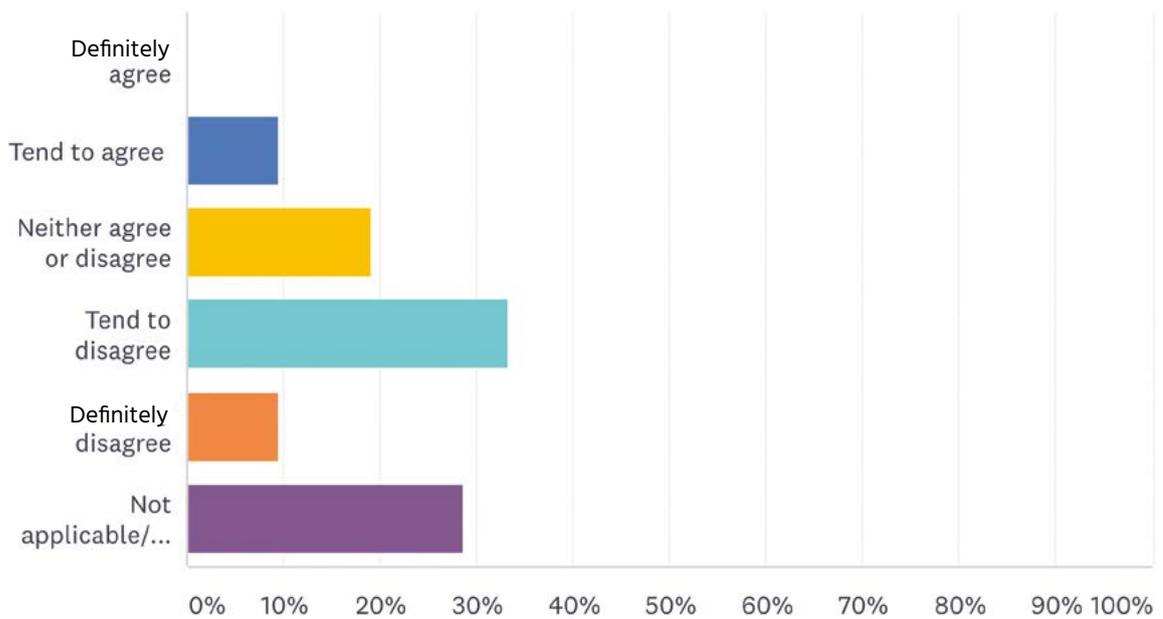
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Rail North Partnership Joint Review_Full

6b. TPE provided customers and stakeholders with timely inf...

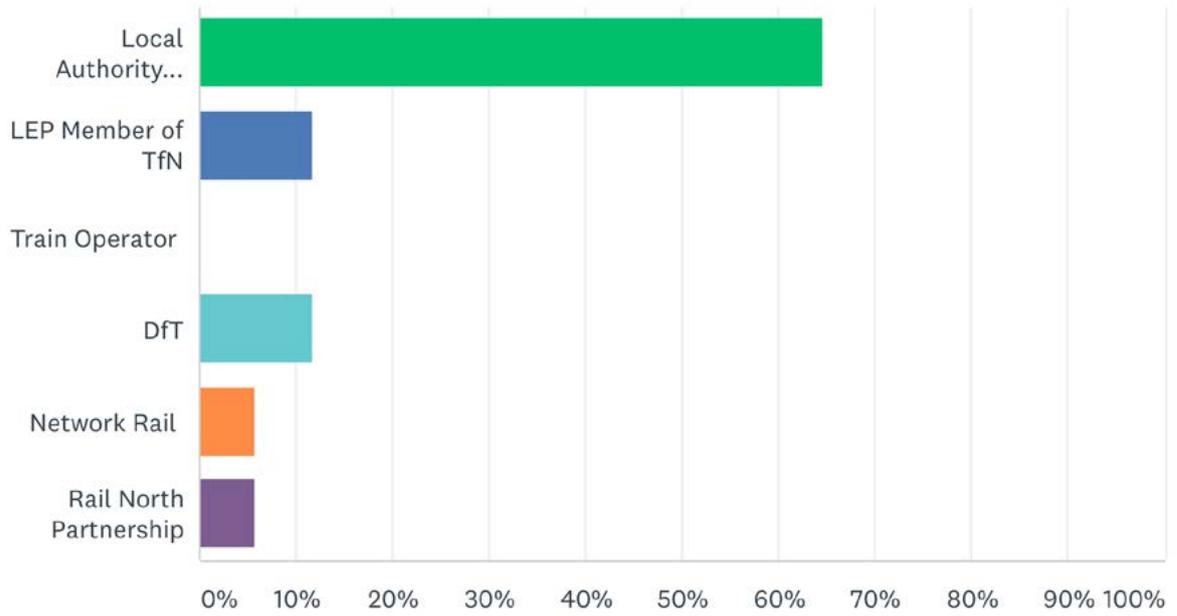
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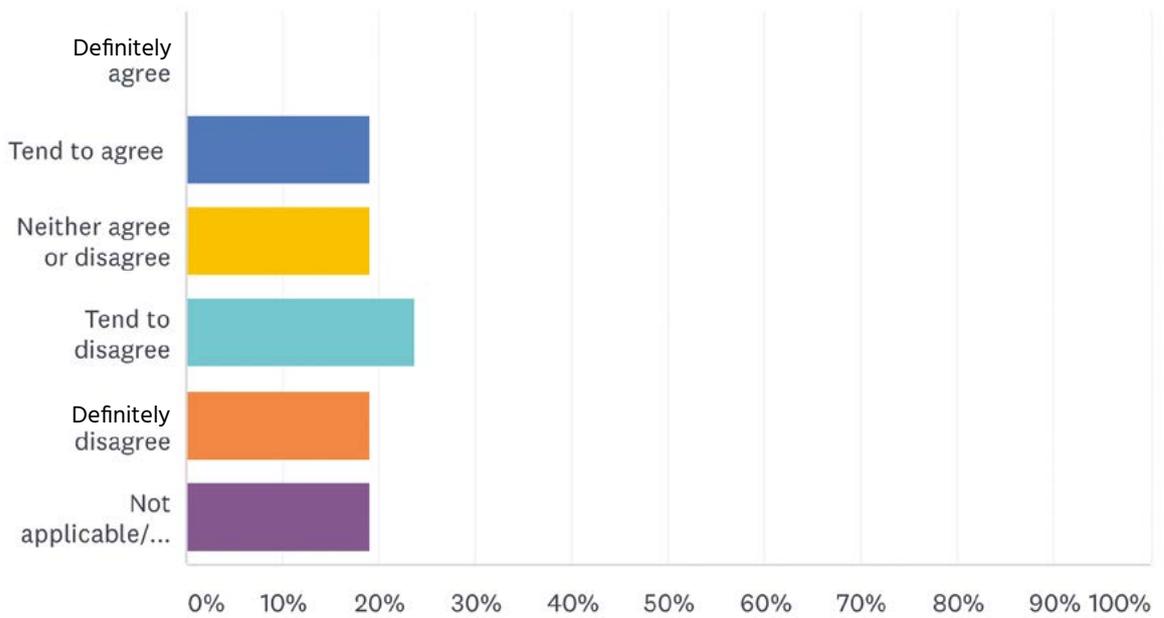
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Rail North Partnership Joint Review_Full

7a. I had confidence in the information provided by Northern ...

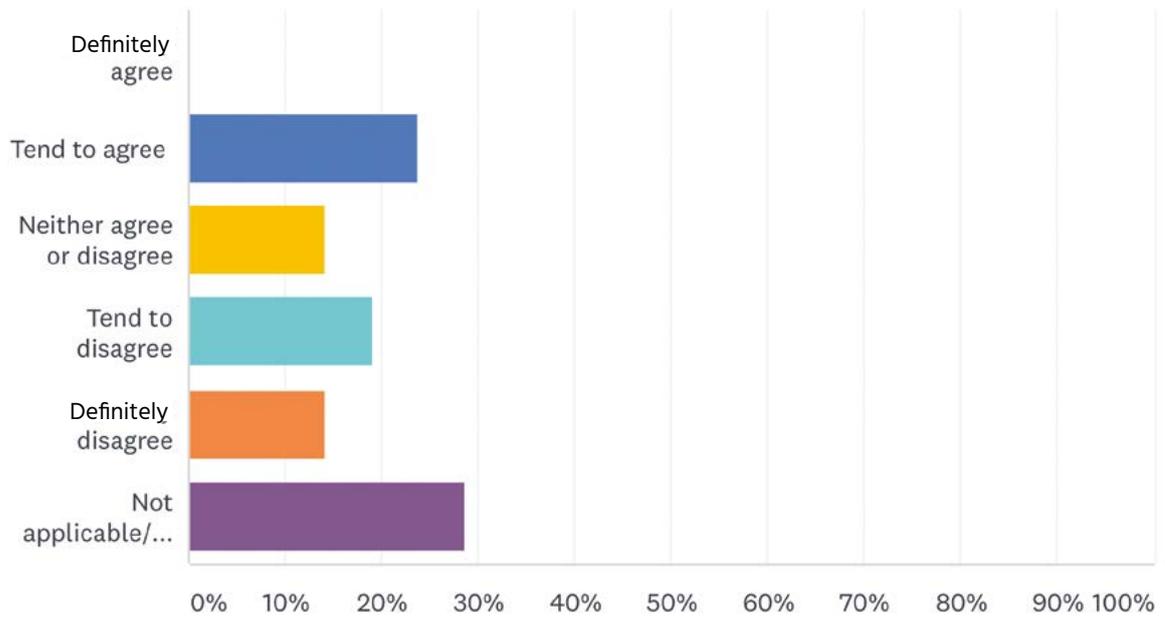
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Rail North Partnership Joint Review_Full

7b. I had confidence in the information provided by TPE durin...

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Rail North Partnership Joint Review_Full