

NORTH EAST RAIL STATEMENT

Our aspirations for rail improvements and investments over the next 15 years.



Foreword

The North East - the only area of the country with a positive balance of trade - has the capacity and credentials to play a much greater role in UK growth. Transport infrastructure, to include high quality, reliable and efficient rail links, is at the heart of achieving the North East's economic aspirations and in helping re-balance Britain's economy.

We are committed to having real and meaningful influence over the provision of rail services in the North East, across the wider North and in relation to the rest of the country. In this regard, the North East Rail Statement is an important statement of intent and sets out our aspirations for future rail improvements and investments, strongly linked to economic growth potential, over the next 15 year time horizon.

The current rail infrastructure and levels of services fail to provide the capacity to meet demand or enable us to fulfil our economic aspirations for this area of the country. Our priorities therefore are to seek ways of achieving improved rail connectivity, better journey times, frequency, punctuality, reliability, quality of rolling stock, station facilities and overall customer experience. We give focus to workable, practical interventions that will, or have the potential to, address barriers and constraints and deliver tangible benefits and improved outcomes.

We are keen to build on our existing relationships and ensure that we are in a strong position to work with the Government, Rail North, Network Rail, HS2, the rail industry and other partners to develop ideas and offer solutions that will deliver for the North East. We are confident that the experience, expertise and knowledge we have of our local areas can add real value to the considerations of national policy and decision makers and help foster a positive co-production approach.



North East economy and the national context

Britain needs to invest and export around the world. The North East needs reliable and affordable connections to external markets in order to maintain and improve its export performance - the only area of the country with a positive balance of trade.

As highlighted in both the North East LEP and Tees Valley LEP Strategic Economic Plans, there is compelling evidence that transport investment will make the maximum impact on productivity, job creation and GVA where it improves the North East's strategic connectivity.

Improved links that connect major economic centres and bring conurbations of strategic economic importance closer together will stimulate further economic growth.

Internationally, there is substantial evidence that supports the role of rail in underpinning growth and physical regeneration. Crucial to this, is achieving synergies and a robust fit between the characteristics and capabilities of rail and the connectivity issues to be addressed.

Through the North East LEP and Tees Valley LEP Strategic Economic Plans there are clear proposals for creating the right conditions for business growth and investment across their respective economic geographies, for developing skills and promoting employment opportunities. They are working hard to take forward ways of attracting new investment, supporting the start up of new businesses and supply chains, activity to develop research capabilities and learning, and the commercialisation of new products and processes. Our credentials in innovation, new ideas, cutting edge technologies and industries make the North East the place to invest and do business in. We have secured some phenomenal developments in engineering and advanced manufacturing, chemical, automotive, new and renewable energy, digital industries, life sciences and healthcare. By bringing together its competitive advantages, knowledge and expertise, the North East is extremely well placed to make a significant contribution to the economic prospects of the nation.

We recognise that frequent and reliable rail services fulfil an important societal role in enabling access to employment, education and training as well as social, leisure and healthcare amenities - in many cases linking areas of need with areas of opportunity. The North East is renowned for its cultural and tourist attractions of national and international significance as well as for its wealth of natural assets, including areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and World Heritage Sites. Fast, efficient, affordable and reliable rail services play a vital role in attracting visitors to the area, with economic benefits to the whole of the North East as well as to the national economy.

Through strong cross-party political leadership and support, we are adopting a strategic approach to making a compelling case for rail improvements and investment in support of our economic priorities, including tourism and business growth opportunities. In this context, our engagement with national decision-makers will continue to be of enormous strategic importance.



The East Coast Main Line is a key piece of infrastructure connecting economies along the entire length of the route and is vital to the competitiveness of the North East - now and into the future.

We are giving a strong focus to the new East Coast Main Line (ECML) franchise and are taking forward opportunities to best position the North East to benefit from investment in High Speed Rail. We are actively engaging with DfT, Network Rail and HS2 to highlight the importance of securing real and tangible improvements to the East Coast Main Line, the inter-operability of HS2 and conventional rail and the benefits to the North East of released capacity to the classic network arising from the proposed line of route for HS2 as far as Leeds.

Given the significance of the East Coast Main Line to the economy of the North East, ANEC has entered into a dialogue with all three shortlisted bidders for the next franchise period to outline North East priorities including improved journey times, improved connections, increased capacity, infrastructure investment, station enhancements, higher levels of punctuality, better passenger service experience and the importance of freight services. We welcome the Government's statement that potential operators will need to consider how they intend to use the latest high-tech trains to deliver more passengers to more of the

UK's largest cities faster and in greater comfort and how they will capitalise on investment along the route. The InterCity Express Programme provides a great opportunity to address the issue of ageing and unsatisfactory rolling stock and the investment by Agility/Hitachi Trains in the North East is a tremendous boost for the economy.

The introduction of new trains with concurrent benefits for customer experience, performance, timetable and journey time improvements are all key priorities for the North East. Given the quality of current rolling stock is reducing rapidly, it is critical that new InterCity Express trains, due to come into service in 2019, are introduced onto the North East section of the ECML at the earliest opportunity.

Capacity is a key issue given that on much of the rail network freight and passenger services share the same infrastructure. Projected growth in both passenger numbers and in freight tonnage means that investment in capacity is required to support growth of the North East's economy.

The next ECML franchise period can provide real scope for the successful operator to increase capacity. Along the length of the route there are a range of capacity constraints, some of which are long standing issues and others as a result of the

growth in services operating on the ECML. The combined effect of these is that they make the planning of timetables for long distance services in particular extremely complex.

Over the next 5 year period, there is a desire to deliver 7 long distance paths out of Kings Cross facilitating improved services to the North East and increasing capacity. Achieving higher speeds and shorter end to end journey times, investment in better service quality, punctuality, performance and passenger experience are also key priorities.

The importance of the ECML as a key economic driver cannot be understated. Improved links between the North East and Edinburgh and improved connectivity to the Leeds City Region and to the Midlands and London will bring major conurbations together and stimulate further economic growth. Supporting the development of freight to and from the region, including links with major ports in the North East, is also a key priority. Connections to the East Coast ports are vital for international trade to support a variety of manufacturing and production sectors.



The East Coast Main Line has suffered from a lack of investment, reducing levels of reliability and quality of service - which has been thrown into sharp focus by comparison with the level of investment in the West Coast Main Line. The North East Rail Statement supports the recent report commissioned by the East Coast Main Line Authorities Consortium aimed at encouraging investment and finding solutions that will deliver real improvements. As highlighted by ECMA, local economies served by the ECML rail corridor are valuable to the UK. It is estimated that the GVA of local economies in the East Coast corridor, including London, represents just short of a half of UK economic output (JMP Report commissioned by ECMA April 2014).

In this context, connections to London as a world city and global and financial centre remain hugely important. We are pressing, therefore, for faster journey times of 2h30 from Newcastle to London to be delivered in the next East Coast franchise, with associated journey time improvements for other key regional stations such as Darlington, Durham and Morpeth. Edinburgh is also a strong attractor and links between the North East and Scotland are important, given the North East's geographic proximity to the Border. The growth of the renewable energy, oil and gas sectors along the North East coast are increasing the need for improved connections from the Humber to the Tees, as well as from the North East to the Tay and northern Scotland, particularly to Aberdeen.

A growing biotech and life sciences sector in the North East is also creating demand for a new business to business connection from the region to the Cambridge R&D cluster. Important finance and business service sectors also require good business-to-business connections; these include London, Edinburgh and the Leeds City Region. Such improvements in connectivity are welcomed as enhancements to service provision and not at the expense of existing linkages.

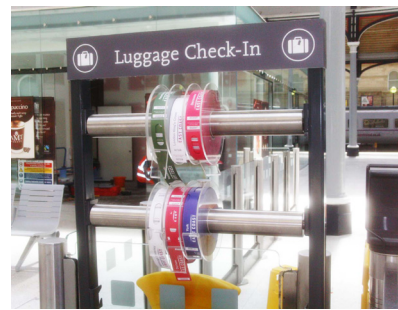
We believe that there is an overwhelming case for investment in the East Coast, given the benefits that will accrue from connecting economic clusters and places that have strong business connections.

For places not currently served by direct ECML services, improved connectivity is also a priority, particularly to London. As highlighted in the ICEC Franchise Invitation to Tender there are opportunities to provide a new direct link to London from Middlesbrough and to enhance connectivity between Sunderland and the capital. There is a compelling economic case for the introduction of new services to Middlesbrough, one of the largest urban areas in the country without direct rail links to London.

There is a positive economic case for an enhancement in service levels at Darlington and the introduction of new services to Middlesbrough which should both be included in the new East Coast franchise from March 2015.

Research shows that there will be a positive net benefit to the Tees Valley, both in terms of passenger numbers and GDP impact, if these improvements for Middlesbrough and Darlington are delivered, based solely on existing levels of demand.

The case is made even stronger when consideration is given to the significant employment, housing and education investment proposals planned across the Tees Valley. These are particularly pertinent developments, both in Darlington and Middlesbrough, very close to the rail stations, that will further boost demand for these improved rail services and add further weight for their inclusion in the new franchise.



Short Term Aspirations 2014 - 2016 (Control Period 5)

- Continue to actively engage with DfT and Intercity East Coast franchise bidders to seek journey time enhancements to 2hr30 from Newcastle, additional services and journey time improvements to Darlington, Durham, Sunderland, Newcastle and the Northumberland stations, and the introduction of direct services to Middlesbrough when the franchise is awarded later this year.
- Engage with the Network Rail Task Force set up to explore the interoperability of the future High Speed Rail and classic networks to ensure the North East shares the benefit of the investment.
- Support Network Rail's investment in the North East through Control Period 5 - such as introducing freight loops to ease capacity constraints between Northallerton and Newcastle, which will be key to supporting the planned growth in freight traffic and improving signalling to support various passenger enhancements. The North East will input into the Long Term Planning Process to seek continued investment in the ECML, especially to relieve the capacity constraints highlighted above, which may include the re-instatement of the Leamside corridor.
- Seek funding for Network Rail GRIP studies into providing a revised layout, including new platforms for local services, at Darlington station. The scheme would reduce performance risks to Long Distance High Speed services, enhance accessibility and multi-modal interchange and enhance the station's retail offer.

Medium Term Aspirations 2016 - 2019 (Control Period 5)

- Work closely with Network Rail to ensure the Darlington station scheme is included early within the CP6 improvement programme, as well as further works to relieve capacity constraints between Northallerton and Newcastle.
- Engage with the new East Coast Mainline franchisee to ensure the seamless introduction of additional services, station improvements, optimum connections with other rail services and the new North East - constructed InterCity Express Programme train fleet between 2018 and 2020.
- Continue to work closely with Network Rail to ensure that capacity improvements on the East Coast Main Line north of York are delivered in parallel with HS2 Phase 2.
- Engage with the DfT and shortlisted bidders for the Cross Country franchise, to seek improved rolling stock, journey times, optimum connections and additional services when the franchise is re-let in 2019.

Long Term Aspirations 2019 - 2029 (Control Periods 6 and 7)

- Continue to ensure that freight paths are protected throughout the North East as traffic from the major industrial centres increases. The North East will seek further implementation of W12 gauge clearance, providing accessibility between our container ports and inland terminals.
- Work with Network Rail to ensure that, by the conclusion of CP7, East Coast Main Line capacity is sufficient to support High Speed Rail connectivity to the North East with no detriment to existing services.



North East in a Rail North and wider northern context

Connecting cities and towns across the North is an imperative if we are to realise our vision for improving living, employment, leisure, social and healthcare opportunities for people, communities and visitors.

Rail connections have a crucial role to play in creating resilient and thriving economies and unlocking the regeneration opportunities across the whole of the Northern region, encompassing the North East, North West and Yorkshire/Humber areas. Smaller cities and towns that make up the conurbation and the widespread hinterlands that include local centres, rural and more isolated communities are also a priority.

The creation of City Deals within the Northern conurbation and the priorities of Local Enterprise Partnerships are building a momentum and focus on transport improvements in the North, which has a significant rail network. Served by three north/south inter-city lines and cross country and trans-Pennine corridors, it is an intersection of key national, regional and local flows. Its importance for freight as well as passenger services cannot be understated, given that over half the rail freight on the national network travels to, from or through the North.

The rail network in the North does not, however, perform well compared with networks in other parts of the country. As highlighted by Rail North in its Long Term Rail Strategy, weaknesses include poor connectivity between some of the North's urban centres and to other major cities in the country with journey times that are not always competitive with the car. Many trains, particularly those operating local services, are amongst the oldest on the national network and do not meet modern expectations or accessibility standards. Crowding is a problem on many routes, not just in traditional peak periods. To deliver real improvements and to enable the rail network in the North, including the North East, further investment is needed.

ANEC has welcomed the steps being taken by Government to engage with local authorities in relation to its stated long term plan designed to drive improvements to rail services and deliver on major projects that put passengers at the heart of a revitalised franchising system.

North East political engagement with the Leaders throughout the north of England, through Rail North, is an important focus and forum for us to discuss such opportunities for securing improvements and exercising greater influence over the provision of rail services that will benefit all our economies and communities. We anticipate that the issues,

objectives and priorities highlighted in our North East Rail Statement will inform and make a valuable contribution to Rail North propositions of pan-Northern significance. We are broadly supportive of the Rail North Long Term Rail Strategy and would want to see the North East Rail Statement embedded into the LTRS and to be used to establish investment priorities.

The Secretary of State for Transport announced at the end of last year that whilst the Government has formally reiterated support for the principle of devolution, an 'evolutionary' approach to devolution is now recommended, with DfT taking a significant role within the Rail North structure. We are actively engaging in this partnership through Rail North, including in relation to the Northern Rail and TransPennine Express franchises which form part of the scope of the DfT/Rail North Partnership discussions. We are pursuing the development of a North East Business Unit, in the context of the Partnership that positions the North East to best realise our rail investment aspirations and priorities.

In a national funding environment where there is a drive to reduce costs and focus on levels of service provision across the network, we will continue to make a strong case for the critical role the North East rail network plays in securing our economic future.



Short Term Aspirations 2014 - 2016 (Control Period 5)

- Engage with the DfT Electrification Task Force to state the case for the electrification of the ECML to Middlesbrough/Teesport route and seek its implementation in parallel with TransPennine electrification and the provision of improved journey times between Middlesbrough and York.
- Through membership of Rail North, develop the specifications for the Northern and TransPennine franchises jointly with DfT; seeking as a minimum:
 - The continuation of direct hourly Middlesbrough - Manchester Airport TransPennine Express services.
 - Introduction of a second hourly TransPennine Express service to Newcastle, at least one of which should connect to Manchester Airport.
 - Improved rolling stock on all Northern routes in the North East, removing 'Pacer' vehicles and providing greater capacity and on-board comfort.
 - Improved service frequencies on North East routes including Durham Coast, Tyne Valley, East Coast local services and on the inner Esk Valley route between Middlesbrough and Nunthorpe.
 - Extended hours of operation on the Bishop Line, Tees Valley and Esk Valley routes, facilitating at least one morning peak arrival into Middlesbrough and all year round Sunday services on the latter.
 - Commitment to support the NESTI initiative enabling ease of multi-modal travel.
 - An effective mechanism for monitoring the quality of delivery by the franchisee.
 - Meaningful local influence over the delivery of North East services through the creation of a North East Business Unit. This is considered particularly important as the opportunity now exists to review and update timetable patterns/connections to better meet the needs of the modern-day North East economy.
- Engage with the new ScotRail franchisee to develop cross-border linkages, particularly into Berwick and Carlisle for connections to Newcastle and the Tyne Valley.

Medium Term Aspirations 2016 - 2019 (Control Period 5)

- Work with Network Rail to develop and implement plans for the electrification of ECML - Middlesbrough/Teesport, enabling electric rolling stock to operate on the routes to London and Leeds/Manchester.
- Engage with the new Northern and TransPennine Express franchisees through Rail North and the North East Business Unit to deliver rolling stock improvements (through new or cascaded stock), enhanced services and capacity, to review the operation and plan the delivery of new timetables and services across the North East to ensure that the requirements of the modern day economy are more effectively met by rail in the future.

Long Term Aspirations 2019 - 2029 (Control Periods 6 and 7)

- On completion of the Darlington station scheme, work with the Northern franchisee to enhance service frequencies and connections on the Saltburn - Bishop Auckland line.
- Through Rail North and the North East Business Unit, prepare for potential full devolution of regional rail services for the next round of Northern and TransPennine refranchising.



North East in a regional and sub-regional context

Our overriding aim is to best position the North East to achieve sustainable improvement and investment in rail transport and connectivity - for passengers and freight - that will deliver significant economic and social benefits.

The Strategic Economic Plans of both Local Enterprise Partnerships in the North East are central to our thinking and approach, in a sub-regional, regional, national and international context. The North East LEP and the Tees Valley LEP both highlight the need for improvements in transport infrastructure and connectivity as a catalyst for connecting people, business and goods to markets and key employment sites, improving supply chains, job creation and enhancing employment opportunities. It is recognised that a good transport network is required to underpin the key growth sectors in the economy, enabling export-led growth, incentivising inward investment and attracting foreign direct investment.

North East LEP aspirations for rail include the improvement of within-region rail services, enhanced rail freight capability and faster rail journey times to other major UK cities such as London, Manchester and Leeds, as well as improvements to Newcastle Central Station - among other priorities.

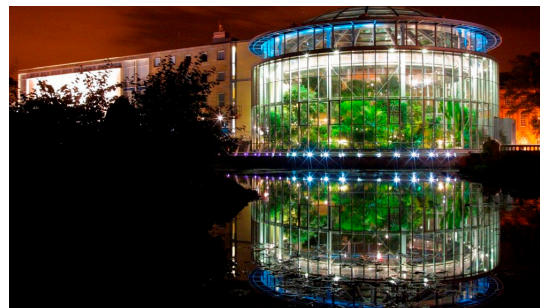
In the context of freight, the Tees Valley LEP's aspirations for rail include growing the container goods and bulk commodities logistics markets in particular to and from Teesport. In relation to passenger services, it focuses on maximising the economic potential of key rail assets such as Darlington station as a major interchange hub, as well as at Middlesbrough and Thornaby, retaining and enhancing strategic rail links including rail electrification to Middlesbrough/ Teesport, the upgrading of local rolling stock and the re-modelling of local timetables to better serve the Tees Valley economy and to improve rail connections. In respect of local stations, there is also a need for significant enhancements aimed at improving the overall customer and journey experience, including provision of adequate staffing levels and addressing Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliance issues.

The aspirations and interventions identified in the North East Rail Statement are a basis for articulating a clear vision for moving us from where we are now to where we want to be in the future. In designing the approach to the North East Rail Statement, we have given consideration to short-term (up to 2016) medium-term (between 2016 -2019) and long-term (beyond 2019) goals. We have also given close regard to rail industry planning timescales, including the next two 5 year

control periods and timescales for the various franchise renewal processes, including East Coast Main Line, Northern, TransPennine Express and Cross Country.

We are not limiting our aspirations to what can be achieved given existing constraints, but are giving energy and focus to what should be achieved to deliver our desired outcomes.

Such aspirations include a comprehensive programme for electrification fit for 21st Century rail travel; a new direct link from Middlesbrough to London, enhanced rail services between Sunderland and the capital and a new passenger service on the Ashington, Blyth, Tyne line. There is also a requirement for a package of infrastructure improvements on the Durham Coast to improve both capacity and speed along the route. In developing options for interventions that will deliver benefits and improved outcomes for people, businesses and economies, we have taken account of the quantum of the gap between what is currently provided and what is required both now and in the future. It is essential for the North East that criteria linked to delivering transformational economic change and growth are right at the centre of assessing the options for future rail improvements and investment.



Congestion is a critical issue to be addressed, given the overcrowding on trains to Newcastle, Middlesbrough, Darlington, the Durham Coast and Tyne Valley line during peak times. There are concerns that the existing over-crowding on Newcastle-bound trains is likely to worsen significantly, based on growth forecasts produced by Network Rail. In the Tees Valley area, the already high loadings around Middlesbrough mean that the forecast continued growth in passenger numbers will result in further crowding on peak services. We are concerned that failure to provide sufficient capacity to accommodate increasing demand will threaten economic growth and negatively impact on employment opportunities.

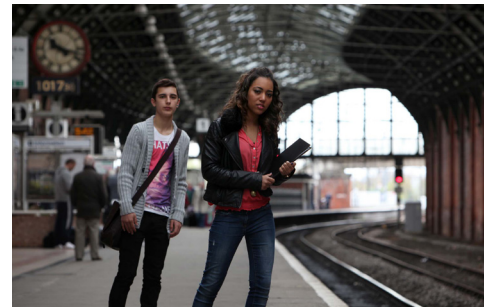
Short Term Aspirations 2014 - 2016 (Control Period 5)

The rail improvements we will seek to deliver through membership of Rail North, as outlined, will cover many regional and sub-regional short and medium term requirements. In addition we will also seek to progress the following:

- Work with Network Rail to develop further plans for investment at Newcastle station to enhance the ease of door-to-door journeys and introduce a southern entrance for access to the Stephenson business and leisure quarter.
- Seek funding to develop the case for the re-introduction of passenger rail services on the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne route, and seek a priced option in the Northern franchising specification to deliver the train service.
- Delivery of a new station serving Horden/Peterlee enhancing connectivity into Tyne & Wear and Tees Valley, giving greater access to employment centres.
- Work with Network Rail to enhance the case for the construction of new stations serving communities in Gilsland and Belford.
- Input meaningfully into Network Rail's Long Term Planning Process to develop the case for line speed enhancements and electrification of local routes in the North East.
- Deliver improvements to local stations to enhance accessibility and multi-modal interchange. A priority action is the delivery of above-ground improvement works at Sunderland station.
- Work with partners to ensure staffing levels and information provision at key stations are improved, or at least maintained at current levels.

Medium Term Aspirations 2016 - 2019 (Control Period 5)

- Work with Network Rail to implement the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne scheme and seek the reintroduction of services to the route through the North East business unit working alongside the Northern franchisee.
- Continue to press for further electrification of local lines, such as the Tyne Valley line.



Our aspiration for the future is a rail network that will help us realise our economic growth potential for the benefit of the whole of the North East.

Maintaining the status quo is not an option for the North East. Creating the conditions necessary for businesses to invest and grow as well as promoting enterprise, investment and the skills base to support economic development and regeneration in this area of the country is a key priority for councils, Local Enterprise Partnerships and business. The North East has always been at the forefront of innovation, with inventions that have shaped the world we know today. As we approach the 200th Anniversary of George Stephenson pioneering the world's first public railway between Stockton and Darlington, innovation and enterprise are as alive and important in the North East as they were then.

There has never been a more important time for us to engage with Government and the rail industry to inform future investment and infrastructure decisions over the next 15 years. We believe there are tremendous opportunities to work more closely together to deliver shared priorities that will stimulate national, northern, North East and local economies.

Association of North East Councils

Guildhall, Quayside, Newcastle upon Tyne. NE1 3AF

Tel: 0191 261 7388

Email: enquire@northeastcouncils.gov.uk

www.northeastcouncils.gov.uk

North East
Local Enterprise
Partnership



Tees Valley
Unlimited

ASSOCIATION OF
NORTH EAST COUNCILS

