

# A Case for Change

TfN Response to the Williams Review

17<sup>th</sup> September 2021



# Document details

## Document history

Version	Issue date	Description of changes
1.0	17/09/21	Well progressed draft following multiple rounds of comments – first version to be transferred to TfN template

## Reviewer list

Role	Name	Organisation	Role	Date

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# 1 Context

This document sets out Transport for the North's (TfN's) vision for a future relationship with the wider rail industry that plays to already established strengths, and maximises the opportunities arising from the Williams-Shapps Plan to benefit individuals and communities across the North of England. As the industry embarks on a period of transition to a new way of working, TfN stands ready to fulfil a critical role as a 'guiding partner', working collaboratively with the emerging Great British Railways (GBR) to deliver cost efficiencies while driving up standards.

TfN and GBR have many shared values and goals, with levelling up, decarbonisation and transformational growth all at the forefront of the agenda. In the same way that TfN has a statutory obligation to deliver the *Strategic Transport Plan* (STP), GBR will in turn be guided by their own Whole Industry Strategic Plan (WISP). For each to succeed against their respective remits, it is clear that the two documents need to be very closely aligned, with the rail elements of the STP effectively mirroring the Northern section of the WISP. A shared evidence base and stated list of agreed multi-modal priorities, underpinned by TfN's highly credible analytical framework, will allow the industry to operate in a strategic manner, targeting the investment and service improvements where they are needed the most.

TfN also brings unparalleled local knowledge and a breadth and depth of stakeholder relationships, both across the North of England, and with the other Sub-National Transport Bodies (STBs). Continuing in this liaison role will allow TfN to speak with a unified voice, giving GBR the opportunity to focus on supplementing local governance arrangements across the North, without the need for additional layers, and thereby allowing them to focus on their core remit of coordinating the needs of the entire network. The highly successful Rail North Partnership can carry through into the system of Passenger Service Contracts, giving a crucial degree of control and accountability to Northern leaders.

## 2 TfN's established model for success

Since its establishment as the first statutory Sub-National Transport Body (STB) in 2018, TfN has put forward a clear vision for transport across the North of England. Guided by the *Strategic Transport Plan (STP)*, one of TfN's most important roles is to speak with a unified voice for all local transport authorities, articulating the challenges faced by all transport users in the North on a day-to-day basis, and making the case for the investment required to make real transformational change.

When it comes to rail, TfN's statutory role has allowed it to play an integral part in driving the industry towards a network that is fit for purpose in the 21st century. Strategically, TfN continues to make the case for Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) as potentially the biggest step-change in rail connectivity in the North for generations, and the organisation has built an industry-leading analytical framework to forecast and demonstrate the associated benefits. Alongside this, the *Long Term Rail Strategy (LTRS)* sets out a 30-year vision for improving the North's rail offer to drive economic growth and prosperity, and underpins the work of TfN's Strategic Rail team.

In the more immediate term, merging with Rail North in 2018 has allowed TfN to work in partnership with the Department for Transport (DfT) to exert real influence over the two franchises that operated in the North, promoting outcomes that maximise benefits for passengers. Despite a number of significant challenges along the way, including the May 2018 timetable issues and the collapse of rail demand due to COVID-19, the Rail North Partnership continues to be held up as a successful mechanism for ensuring that industry is held to account on the day-to-day running of the railway, with the specific requirements of Northern residents placed front and centre when decisions are made.

Through these various roles and functions TfN has built up a series of well-established and multi-faceted relationships with key stakeholders across the industry, including Partner Authorities in the North, DfT and Network Rail. The existing structures and governance arrangements have allowed TfN to become an essential player in the delivery of rail across the North, filling a void in a region where a unified voice to address the overarching requirements of its many communities is essential. TfN has also demonstrated its operational agility and used its softer convening powers to lead the response to numerous challenges and short-term crises such as the COVID-19 related slump in passengers. While it is hoped that these challenges will become less significant and less frequent over time (as a result of a shift to a less reactionary model with a focus on long-term strategic planning), these relationships and established processes will allow TfN to continue to add significant value to the industry moving forward.

### **3 A new era for rail in the UK**

This is a time of significant reform in the UK in the rail industry. The recently released Williams-Shapps Plan White Paper has proposed a new public body, Great British Railways (GBR) that will own and operate the nation's passenger rail network. The paper "sets out a plan for a revolution on the railways in Great Britain... by replacing franchising, accelerating innovation and integrating the railways, we will deliver an efficient, financially sustainable railway that meets the needs of passengers and those who rely on rail on a daily basis". GBR will integrate the railways, owning the infrastructure, collecting fare revenue, running and planning the network, and setting most fares and timetables. The actual running of services will be sub-contracted to private companies under a concessionary model.

The White Paper offers many valuable proposals to deal with national rail challenges: flexible ticketing to cater for new post-COVID-19 travel patterns, better coordination with other forms of public transport, single national accountability through a 'guiding partner role' and bringing together track and train. Indeed, many of the Williams-Shapps Plan outcomes demonstrate strong alignment with TfN's own goals and ambitions articulated through the STP and LTRS. However, the paper lacks detail around the vital role that sub-national and local transport authorities can play in the shift towards a more outcome-focused railway. TfN welcomes the overarching principles outlined such as 'new partnerships with GBR's regional divisions that will give towns, cities and regions greater control over local ticketing, services and stations' – this is in line with TfN's current mandate and its activities supporting devolution where appropriate. To ensure that the valuable work that TfN has undertaken is not undone, particularly its mandated responsibility to deliver the STP, it is essential that TfN and GBR maintain a close working relationship, so that the unique requirements and strengths of the North continue to be brought to the fore of the restructured rail industry.

## 4 TfN's integral role going forward

This review, and TfN's response to it, represents a pivotal moment for the North to shape and influence the manner in which rail services will be managed and operated in the region for decades to come. It offers an opportunity for TfN to work with the Department for Transport (DfT) and GBR to place greater emphasis on passenger-focused outcomes across the North, and increased accountability and devolution where it is in local and regional interests.

It is crucial that local and regional leaders remain at the core of any reform to the nation's railways and have a strengthened role in overseeing each region's network. A national approach to railways should not represent a missed opportunity for further devolution. As per TfN's September 2019 submission to the Review, 'the fundamental outcome required from the Williams Review is a pathway to devolution that allows the North to take responsibility for the region's railways from central Government'. To this end, regional representation and collaboration between TfN and GBR is essential, both through participation at the strategic level (for example, the proposed independent advisory body) and engagement with the 'locally rooted' regional railways.

It will be important to ensure that the role of TfN is clearly understood and protected as part of the White Paper's reform. GBR is to have five regional divisions, with their own budgets and be responsible for operational matters, with key strategic decisions to be taken centrally. In order to ensure that the North's voice is represented in any national discourse, it is vital that TfN has a seat both on the North West and Central and Eastern Regions governance structures. The important role of TfN in acting as a broker between local transport authorities and national actors must be maintained, and the progress TfN has made developing a coordinated voice for the North must continue. A system where Northern concerns are only considered at the operational level cannot adequately solve existing problems; in fact, it is likely that existing problems which require more strategic, region-wide solutions will only be exacerbated. This also runs against one of TfN's key rail reform priorities: accountability to the public through a structure that demonstrates responsiveness to communities in the North.

It should also be noted that TfN are supportive of a move towards a Northern Route in the medium to long term to ensure maximum alignment with TfN's own geographic remit, removing some of the cross-boundary friction that is a by-product of the current regional split resulting from the dominance of London markets. In 2016, the Government-sponsored *Shaw Report: The Future Shape and Financing of Network Rail* recommended the creation of a Network Rail route for the North on the basis that it would bring a greater focus on improving the connectivity and performance of the rail network in the region. The White Paper similarly suggests that "For example, a new regional railway across northern England may be beneficial once Northern Powerhouse Rail transforms travel between major towns and cities across the Pennines." TfN will continue to make the case for a dedicated GBR Northern Region to be implemented as quickly as possible. The industry structural change that will flow from the White Paper is likely to be the least disruptive way of implementing this.

# 5 Four pillars of TfN success in the rail sector of the future

In exploring the future role of TfN within a restructured rail environment, four thematic ‘pillars’ have been identified:

- TfN as **a strategic partner for Great British Rail**
- TfN as **the lead on multi-modal strategy and investment priorities for the North**
- TfN as **the provider of evidence, data and strategic insights**
- TfN as **a unified voice for northern authorities, acting as the link between local devolution, integration and GBR's regions**

These pillars are not exhaustive; rather they attempt to bring together some of the main activities and indeed strengths of TfN, with respect to the proposed GBR. In this context, the pillars do not attempt to describe in detail the work that TfN conducts with other modes such as roads or activities around decarbonisation, where this does not intersect with rail strategy and management.

The different roles that TfN plays in the rail sector in the North are supported by its statutory objectives and the overarching principles of the organisation. While TfN does not work in isolation (collaborating with the non-statutory STBs around the country to ensure that the North’s rail operations are not at odds with those in other regions), part of its strength comes from being able to plan and provide a consistent service that functions across the different legislative and administrative boundaries of the North. This also ensures that there is a degree of central accountability for Northern concerns and decisions.

The following sections summarise each of the four pillars, considering both its current activities and how its role can be adapted to serve Northern communities in a restructured rail industry. There is particular focus on the *Strategic Transport Plan*, and how TfN can work with GBR to ensure that the commitments of this document are delivered to passengers and freight users in the North.

## 5.1 Pillar 1: Transport for the North as a strategic partner for Great British Railways

**TfN as a strategic partner for Great British Railways**

Given its existing capabilities, pre-existing relationships and the level of cohesion and trust that TfN has built with Northern stakeholders, TfN is well placed to assist GBR in understanding the requirements of the North, both from an operational and strategic perspective.  
- A single rail strategy for the North is required, with alignment between the Northern Strategic Transport Plan and GBR’s Whole Industry Strategic Plan

TfN’s overarching ambition is to ensure the provision of a transport system that enables the North to realise its economic potential, while also improving the built



and natural environment in the region. TfN's *Strategic Transport Plan* articulates how this may be achieved, and is a key tenet in the North's broader economic strategy. For these ambitions to be realised, it is essential that TfN and GBR work in unison for Northern communities, so that the broader strategy of GBR and how rail operations will look like going forward is better reflected. The Strategic Transport Plan (STP) is based on a strong body of evidence and sets out what is required of the rail network to support the broader transport system and enable the projected growth and 'levelling up' agendas of Northern localities. To address the imbalance in growth between the North and other regions of the UK, it is critical that the Northern STP continues to exist. Indeed, this is now a statutory requirement. Without one, activities such as those stemming from the Towns Fund, the Levelling Up Agenda and other such initiatives will not have a supporting transport system to enable full benefits to be realised. This will only lead to the transport system of the North being exposed as lacking after the fact. It is therefore important that there is effectively a single strategy for rail in the North which will be jointly expressed through the STP and GBR's WISP. Through collaborative working, these should be built upon a consistent evidence base, building on the strong foundations that TfN have built over recent years. TfN have already had positive engagement with the GBR Transition Team as this important work commences.

In terms of supporting the STP through operational elements, TfN's existing role and capabilities also prove invaluable. When developing the specification of future concessions, regional input is particularly valuable to ensure that investment in various modes of transport is complementary, considers both the passenger and freight element and meets sustainable transport goals. As outlined in TfN's Draft *Decarbonisation Strategy*, the role of rail is particularly important to meet Net Zero objectives. The reliability and provision of rail must be improved to promote further mode shift, particularly away from the road sector, where possible. This is even more important in the freight sector, and particularly valuable in the North, where East-West connectivity between key ports presents a valuable opportunity to remove freight off the road network yet still ensure goods get to and from international markets. This must all be implemented using evidence from TfN's Freight and Logistics Enhanced Analysis report and the STP, to support the objectives of the STP. Given TfN's ownership and accountability for the STP, it is also important that TfN has a continuing role in the oversight and management of concessions once they are let so that local needs can be reflected in the train service offerings.

The North cannot work in isolation to unlock its economic potential, and the rail sector is a clear example of where collaboration can drive improved outcomes. In order to ensure that the rail elements of the refreshed STP are delivered, GBR and its regions will need to work with TfN.

TfN's network of knowledge and relationships will also assist GBR with its mandate. Since inception, TfN has fostered strong relationships with Northern stakeholders. Crucially, it also maintains strong cross-border cooperation with other STBs like Midlands Connect, with whom a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed, to ensure that administrative borders do not lead to operational difficulties and challenges in the provision of services for communities. These existing relationships, capabilities and the trust that TfN has developed with these parties means that the organisation is very well placed to

assist GBR in understanding the multiple requirements of the North, both from an operational and strategic perspective.

In the short-term TfN stand ready to play a key role with the GBR Transition Team as responsibilities are transferred to the new organisation. TfN is uniquely placed as the most established of the Sub-National Transport Bodies (STBs) with a strong track record in strategic rail planning to assist in the reconciliation of the disconnect between the economic-led geography of STBs and the railway-led geography of GBR's Regions. Although TfN often works with other STBs, TfN has the strongest presence in its communities, with a strongly defined statutory status, democratic legitimacy and its analytical capabilities. These all underpin TfN's desired future role within the restructured rail industry.

Once GBR is up and running this could also include a level of accountability. There are many different visions for what increased accountability could look like:

- TfN can assist the proposed Strategic Board of GBR by providing insight at a region-wide level;
- TfN could provide a key role in GBR's transition team, given its current remit across regions and its experience in bringing together competing demands to form a cohesive transport strategy;
- TfN could represent the group of STBs, ensuring that the individual requirements of towns and localities meet intra-regional transport strategy, inter-regional requirements and finally the overarching goals of a national transport system. Again, TfN's strength here lies in its understanding of the requirements across modes, ensuring that GBR does not compete with other modes where it is not necessary; or
- TfN could have responsibility for ensuring that GBR's Regions (which are currently proposed to only deal with operational elements) work closely to ensure that the broader strategic requirements are also being met (bringing operational and strategic elements of the transport task together).

## 5.2 Pillar 2: Transport for the North as the lead on multi-modal strategy and investment priorities for the North

TfN as the lead on multi-modal strategy and investment priorities for the North

TfN can lead multi-modal strategy through the STP and use its analytical activities to assess funding requests to ensure they fulfil the needs of Northern communities - examining projects and proposals for duplication, assessing the role of *different modes* in meeting the overall transport task, having a degree of budgetary oversight to ensure that annual Northern requests are in line with available allocations

Given TfN's existing remit and its awareness of the pipeline of required projects and proposals in the North through its stakeholder and data driven roles, it is a logical next step for TfN to work on prioritising those investments. This is something that TfN is already starting to do, through the Investment Programme and analytical framework. It is important that role is retained and strengthened as TfN develops its future relationship with GBR. While consensus of transport

requirements is important, it is equally important that projects are prioritised, to ensure that precedence is given to those projects which have the greatest urgency and provide support to the most customers or to those who have limited accessibility and few alternative options.

This may mean that the timing for some funding requests is altered, with consideration to other schemes that may provide benefits to wider communities or unlock growth in specific areas. Ultimately, while City Regions will remain as they are, with their own multi-modal strategies, TfN and GBR will ensure that all projects meet the longer term, strategic transport requirements of Northern communities. If TfN was given some budgetary oversight, it can ensure that Northern requirements are already evaluated to a degree and do not conflict with other proposed projects in adjacent parts of the North. To this end, TfN is already moving towards a 5-year planning cycle, which aligns with Network Rail's existing cycles, providing greater ease in aligning processes.

Accordingly, it is useful for TfN to develop transparent criteria for investment prioritisation and ensure that both preliminary funding requests and new Northern projects adequately and appropriately fulfil the needs of the North. Given TfN's purview across modes, this is particularly important. Transport for London has demonstrated how an authority that assesses the role of different modes in meeting the overall transport task prevents duplication and provides better inter-modal connectivity.

### **5.3 Pillar 3: Transport for the North as a provider of evidence, data and strategic insights**

**TfN as the provider of evidence and analysis**

**TfN as a body that assists both local and national bodies with strategic insights that are supported by data and evidence.**  
*- which in turn informs evidence-based policy, information sharing (both between local authorities and in future, with GBR) and breaks down silos/stems the fragmentation of Northern authorities and transport bodies, including those who often have overlapping boundaries and remits.*

TfN has always placed a strong emphasis on ensuring that it is able to provide value to its stakeholders, by not only listening to local requirements and sharing this information with other Northern authorities, but also by analysing the data, extracting strategic insights, and providing this back to stakeholders to ensure that they are well informed. This enhances the ability of Northern authorities to develop more robust policy, that is informed by data, and enables transport policies that are economically sustainable in the long run.

TfN have invested in a powerful and wide-ranging analytical framework which is only just beginning to demonstrate its capability in the appraisal of transport schemes across the North. This analytical framework is already being used to support the development of rail schemes in the North and is valued as a reliable evidence base that is providing insights which were previously not available to Northern policymakers and operational partners. As this capability grows further, TfN aims to cement its position across the industry as a body which produces high-quality, impartial intermodal modelling outputs that carry real weight with funders and decision makers.

This will also help TfN and the rail industry as a whole work in a less reactionary manner, having visibility of potential issues and even potential structural

conflicts between stakeholders. Having this oversight will be crucial in shifting towards a more strategic and long-term mindset for the industry and will also prevent operational problems from occurring or lead to them being identified before they cause extensive problems (for instance, inputting a range of future demand scenarios where there is uncertainty – for example post-COVID recovery – to help to understand where future crowding and reliability hotspots may occur). By using this analytical framework, Northern authorities can both avoid duplication of efforts and prevent inefficient strategy and policies that then need to be undone or refreshed when the economic or community specific data is examined. This is a particularly valuable toolkit that TfN and GBR can use to assess the baseline before implementing any changes or reform into communities. TfN can provide GBR with these insights so that the evidence base across Northern communities is both consistent, well-articulated and well understood.

## **5.4 Pillar 4: Transport for the North as a unified voice for northern authorities, acting as the link between local devolution, integration and GBR's regions**

**TfN as the link between devolution, local integration and GBR's regions**

**TfN's role as a voice for Northern Authorities, working with both small and larger devolved authorities and stakeholders to clarify, prioritise and bring to the fore the collective needs of various communities and stakeholders in the North.**

*- including a voice for communities and authorities who do not traditionally have strong buy-in or interaction with Central Government.*

As demonstrated through the other pillars, TfN can play a key role in the devolution agenda by providing the much needed 'regional glue' as it works with the Mayoral Combined Authorities and other local transport authorities in collating and co-ordinating pan-regional intelligence and ensuring fair treatment for all. Devolved decision-making is particularly important, in both theory and practice\*. (*\*Devolved urban networks tend to have higher frequencies and much better off-peak services than those networks which aren't, citing just one example.*)

As a fundamental part of its remit, and to underline the value of a pan-regional view, TfN has worked extensively since its establishment to develop and foster relationships with other Northern Authorities, be they councils, local authorities, transport authorities or transport providers. In this time, it has developed strong relationships with these stakeholders and has an acute understanding of the sometimes-competing interests of different parties. TfN has worked with both small and large authorities, including those representing communities who do not typically have strong technical capabilities or capacities to assess and champion for transport needs, and those with traditionally limited interactions with Central Government. TfN is uniquely placed to continue to build these relationships, and to speak as the unified authoritative voice for transport needs across the North, while also supporting devolved authorities with their transport agendas. This key role to support both devolution and growth across the North will prove even more crucial in helping knit together initiatives as the Government's forthcoming Levelling Up White Paper is released, offering further autonomy to local leaders.

TfN will not only listen to, and collate the wide-ranging ambitions of Northern stakeholders, but will continue to have strategic conversations with partners about which concerns should be brought to different funding tables and central decision makers, and when these matters should be addressed. This will allow for a more coherent transport system to be developed; one that serves both intra- and inter-regional transport requirements appropriately. Given the complex political geography of the North, the 'cross-border' jurisdiction of TfN will continue to be particularly valuable in identifying and prioritising the collective needs of the North.

Rail North Committee members, including Mayors, have already identified TfN's role as an enabler for devolution – providing regional coherence but also assisting in resolving conflicting demands between Combined Authorities. In turn, TfN will also act as a bridge between devolved Combined Authorities, regional transport requirements and the new operational regions of GBR. It should be noted that any future transport governance arrangements will also have to accommodate the City Devolution Deals which have already been agreed by authorities.

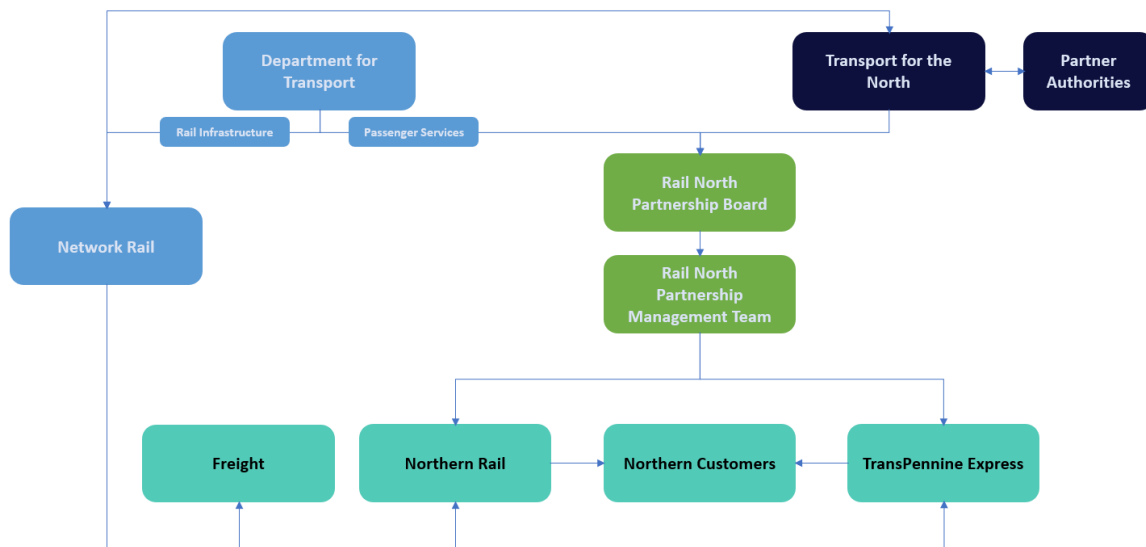
# 6 Embracing the opportunity

The four pillars identified above clearly demonstrate the role that TfN can play in the new industry structure, and the significant added value that successful integration will bring. As a relatively new organisation that remains agile enough to adapt to changing circumstances, TfN has a clear mandate to act in the interests of all rail users in the North and is ready to embrace the opportunity to work collaboratively with GBR and other industry partners to achieve shared objectives and ambitions. TfN’s strategic planning framework can supplement national interests to ensure past mistakes are not repeated, and that the Williams-Shapps Plan becomes the start of a long and successful era for the railway.

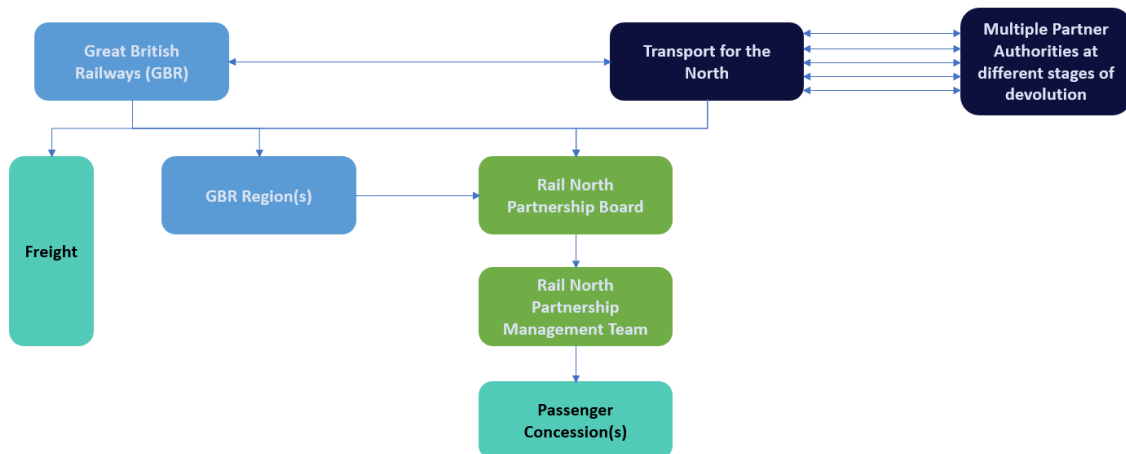
TfN have also begun mapping the Williams-Shapps Plan outcomes against its own objectives and ambitions. There are some strong areas of alignment, notably around delivering a modern passenger experience that is easy to access and use, innovative ways of working with the private sector to help drive cost-effectiveness, and increased speed of delivery and efficiency enhancements. These commonalities can be built upon to deliver change at a national level that also works for rail users in the North.

## 6.1 Enhancing existing relationships to add value...

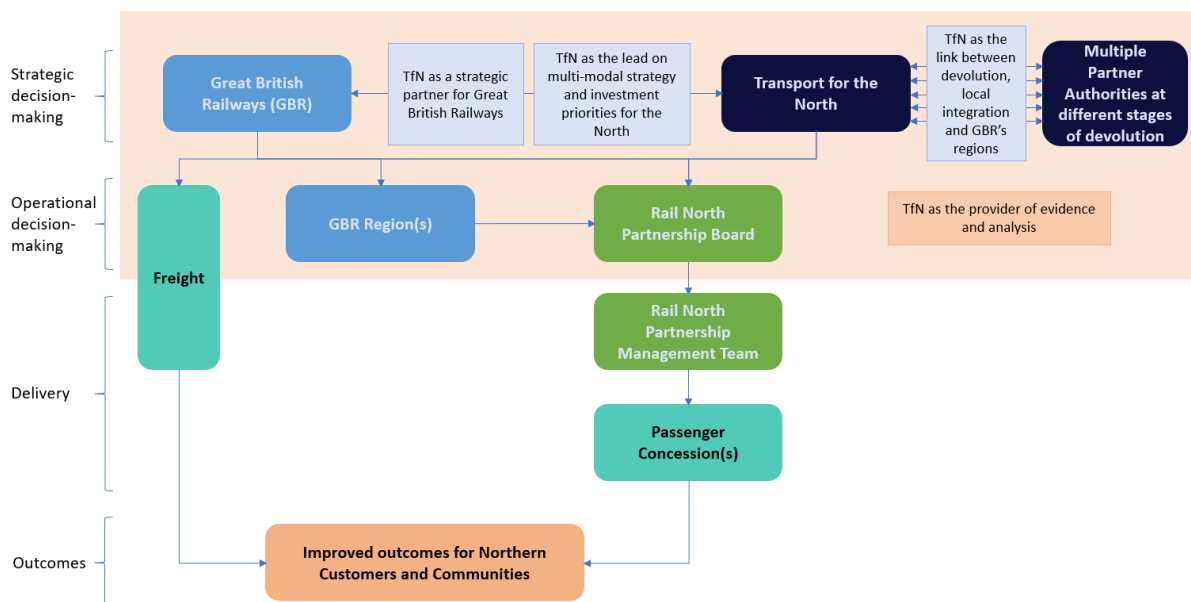
The below diagram provides a high-level summary of the existing rail industry structure, and TfN’s role within it.



The second diagram, below, highlights the simplified nature of the future structure of the industry, including TfN’s role in liaising with partner authorities across the North who will be embarking on devolution journeys at different speeds, and with different end goals.



The third diagram, below, highlights how the four pillars identified through this response will play a central role in TfN adding value. The diagram focusses on the operational elements of the industry, but with GBR taking on the responsibility for infrastructure from Network Rail, there are also significant opportunities for TfN to help shape the strategic pipeline of investment to align with local objectives and deliver enhanced outcomes for passengers. The large shaded orange box highlights the fact that TfN have the capability to support right across the industry with its extensive evidence base and renowned analytical framework.



## 6.2 ...while minimising risks

The outcome mapping exercise has also flagged some risks and challenges that need to be addressed in due course. For example, delivering a modern

passenger experience, particularly in the wake of a global pandemic that has 'reset' demand, while clearly the right thing to do, will be challenging as TfN and others look to enhance the cost-effectiveness of running the railway. Trade-offs will need to be clearly articulated and decisions made with full transparency and accountability. There will also be a need to balance the needs of private sector operators with the needs of customer and broader regional objectives. The premise of a financially sustainable railway could also prove challenging at a time when there is a need to address decades of underinvestment in the North. As post-COVID-19 demand rebuilds, and the new ways of working are implemented, there will be opportunities to make railways more financially sustainable with investment targeted in the right way to support wider agendas such as decarbonisation and supporting economic development.

It could also be perceived that the potential role of TfN dilutes the simple lines of accountability that the White Paper proposals are seeking to establish. However, this is where TfN's flexibility and deep understanding of Northern geography and politics can add richness and value. TfN's role will be different in different places, responding to local ambitions and needs. Where there is local ambition and capacity, most notably the larger Combined Authorities, TfN will avoid assuming the role as intermediary, and function primarily as the strategic unified voice. In areas where there is less local capacity for direct engagement with GBR, TfN's role will flex to offer a greater framework of support. This will ensure that the different and distinct roles of TfN and its Partner Authorities in relation to GBR will be clearly set out and understood by everyone, securing the required accountability.

Freight also has a critical role to play in the success of the railway, but once again this will lead to trade-offs with passenger services for space on a finite network.

Finally, the notion of a simpler industry structure which remains highly centralised for operational reasons will continue to pose a risk to the delivery of TfN's stated ambitions around passengers and communities. There needs to be decision-making and accountability at the local level to ensure the needs of these communities are fully understood and addressed. The challenge that TfN is ready to take on in its role in the new industry structure is to facilitate increased devolution and localisation where it is appropriate within the GBR structure and can support communities in maximising the benefits of their railways.



# 7 Summary

As has been demonstrated through the presentation of the four pillars, the well-established roles, and capabilities of TfN can be built upon to support the new national railway governance and operations. With a continued evolution towards stronger accountability and an established relationship with the new GBR, TfN can continue to deliver strategic guidance to the communities of the North and act as a key Northern resource and partner for GBR. As demonstrated throughout this response TfN carries out a number of unique roles and responsibilities that cannot be fulfilled by other industry players. The combination of strong analytical and technical capabilities, an intimate knowledge of the opportunities and challenges faced by communities right across its geography, and a strong democratic mandate through its partner authorities and board structure, TfN is committed to working closely with GBR to ensure the interests of all Northern rail users are considered as the industry moves through this transition period and beyond.

## TfN as a strategic partner for Great British Railways

Given its existing capabilities, pre-existing relationships and the level of cohesion and trust that TfN has built with Northern stakeholders, TfN is well placed to assist GBR in understanding the requirements of the North, both from an operational and strategic perspective.

- A single rail strategy for the North is required, with alignment between the Northern Strategic Transport Plan and GBR's Whole Industry Strategic Plan

## TfN as the lead on multi-modal strategy and investment priorities for the North

TfN can lead multi-modal strategy through the STP and use its analytical activities to assess funding requests to ensure they fulfil the needs of Northern communities

- examining projects and proposals for duplication, assessing the role of **different modes** in meeting the overall transport task, having a degree of budgetary oversight to ensure that annual Northern requests are in line with available allocations

## TfN as the provider of evidence and analysis

TfN as a body that assists both local and national bodies with strategic insights that are supported by data and evidence.

- which in turn informs evidence-based policy, information sharing (both between local authorities and in future, with GBR) and breaks down silos/stems the fragmentation of Northern authorities and transport bodies, including those who often have overlapping boundaries and remits.

## TfN as the link between devolution, local integration and GBR's regions

TfN's role as a voice for Northern Authorities, working with both small and larger devolved authorities and stakeholders to clarify, prioritise and bring to the fore the collective needs of various communities and stakeholders in the North.

- including a voice for communities and authorities who do not traditionally have strong buy-in or interaction with Central Government.