

North-West Regional Business Unit

The Case for Change, Roles and Responsibilities and Implementation

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1 Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this paper is to outline a more detailed proposal for the North-West Regional Business Unit (NWRBU) to support consideration by the Rail North Partnership (RNP) Board. The focus of this paper is to highlight:
 - a. the case for the North-West Regional Business Unit (NWRBU) including how it adds value to decision making on rail in the region;
 - b. the proposed roles and responsibilities of the NWRBU, how it makes decisions and how it fits into and enhances the existing governance structure of the Rail North Partnership (RNP) and Transport for the North (TfN); and
 - c. how the NWRBU will be delivered at no additional cost, critical success factors, risk management, mobilisation and timescales.
2. The definition of a Regional Business Unit is a group of two or more Transport for the North parties (members) formed to jointly oversee rail matters in their geographical areas. It is set out in the partnership agreement between the Secretary of State, Transport for the North and Rail North limited. As a result, this document should not formally be considered a business case under Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT) guidance as it does not constitute an investment decision. Nonetheless, the principles underpinning HMT business case development have been applied in the development of this proposal and the areas covered broadly correspond to 'strategic' and 'management' cases.

The Case for the NWRBU

3. The Williams Shapps Plan for Rail highlighted the failings of the current rail system and set out a plan to put customers (passengers and freight) at the heart of the railway as well as making it affordable for taxpayers. The review highlighted the importance of strengthening collaboration to improve the outcomes for passengers and for decision making to be linked as closely as possible to the customer. When established, Great British Railways (GBR) "will be made up of powerful regional divisions, with budgets and delivery held at the local level, not just nationally"¹. There is some uncertainty over the direction of future rail reforms. No matter what shape they take, it is more important now than ever that local views are reflected and action is taken to improve partnership working to address the challenges the rail industry faces.
4. The Williams Shapps Plan has led to initiatives to strengthen collaboration *within* Mayoral Combined Authorities on rail matters to later develop formal partnerships with Great British Railways (GBR). GBR transition team (GBRtt) is in dialogue with Mayoral Combined Authorities, including Greater Manchester, on longer term partnership arrangements post-rail reform. As a first step, Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) has put forward a proposal to establish a Greater Manchester Rail Board (GMRB) as part of its Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) 'Levelling up Trailblazer' submission in September 2022.
5. The travel to work area of Greater Manchester, however, encompasses the whole of the North-West region. Commuters and passengers to other city-regions in the North-West including Liverpool City Region are also reliant on using the rail network. Rail usage is relatively self-contained within the region with the vast majority of passenger journeys starting in the North-West also ending in the region. Further, the geography of the North-West corresponds to the way NTL's western rail operations are organised. **Rail matters, however, are not currently considered at the geographical level of the North-West despite the alignment with travel to work areas and rail operations.** Greater alignment between the geography of how people travel and governance structures for rail has the potential to improve passenger outcomes – whilst recognising that rail is a complex integrated system where there will be inevitable trade-offs.
6. To support the national agenda set out in the Williams Shapps Plan for Rail as well as delivering local and regional objectives, authorities in the North-West of England are committed to close partnership working to

¹ Great British Railways The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail, Secretary of State for Transport, May 2021, p. 40, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/great-british-railways-williams-shapps-plan-for-rail>

improve rail services in their region. The partnership includes Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, Lancashire County Council, Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen, Cumbria (representing the soon to be formed Cumberland Council, Westmorland and Furness Council), Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Warrington Borough Council, Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

7. All parties have decided to come together through the formation of a Regional Business Unit (NWRBU). This option has precedence as the North-East Regional Management Unit (NERMU) is part of the rail governance landscape in the North. Other bodies including the West Midlands Rail Executive are also present and have more formal duties over the specification of rail franchising in the region.
8. A spectrum of options were considered including more informal arrangements for collaboration as well as options that devolved further powers and accountabilities for rail services to the region. The more informal arrangements were not felt sufficient to meet the objectives of passengers and provide an impetus to collaborate whilst options involving greater formal devolution of responsibilities did not align with the present GBR agenda as indicated via engagement with GBRtt and DfT. The NWRBU that supports RNP and TfN is the preferred option on the basis that: it establishes a formal partnership between members thereby supporting the GBR and Devolution agenda by strengthening collaboration in the North-West. It also aligns better with existing governance structures as it will work closely with RNP and TfN.
9. The combination of initiatives at the Mayoral Combined Authority and North-West level will mean that there will be improved partnership working at the local and regional level. This will enable more effective and efficient collaboration with existing pan-Northern and national institutions to help ensure better outcomes on the railways for all.

The roles and responsibilities for the NWRBU

10. The proposal for the NWRBU has been developed through collaborative dialogue with stakeholders across authorities in the North-West, TfN, Rail North, GBRtt, Network Rail and DfT. The NWRBU will act as a key adviser to Transport for the North (TfN) and the Rail North Partnership (RNP) to help them execute their statutory duties including on rail infrastructure projects, train service specification/operations, fares and ticketing, stations, rolling stock and decarbonization, inputting at various stages of the contract management process with rail operators. It will represent 'one voice' for the North-West. The NWRBU will also help RNP manage stakeholders in the region and directly engage with Train Operating Companies (TOCs).
11. **The proposal for the NWRBU is not intended, however, to change existing responsibilities, accountabilities or risk allocations within the rail industry.** The NWRBU easily fits into existing governance structures as shown in Figure 5. The NWRBU will have a board that will consist of officer-level representatives of the member Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) and will be chaired by one of these members. The NWRBU will be a subset of existing governance arrangements for the RNP Board at the level of the North-West. There will be no change to the existing governance arrangements of the RNP. The NWRBU will reach a consensus position on rail matters for the North-West which will help advise RNP/TfN. It is proposed that the chair of the NWRBU will sit on the RNP Board alongside the other members.
12. The NWRBU Board will be chaired by officers. Political accountability will remain as it is today. All LTA members have political representatives to escalate issues as appropriate and pan-Northern structures such as the Rail North Committee or the TfN Partnership Board are also forums in which political representatives can share their views or raise concerns.
13. The NWRBU will also work closely with the governance at the LTA level including the proposed 'GM Rail Partnership Board'. The 'GM Rail Partnership Board' will be focused on aligning the rail network with the priorities of the GM region, with its purpose on integrating rail into GM's 'Bee Network' (Integrated Transport system) whilst the NWRBU is more focused on services which clearly transcend GMs boundaries and helping discharge the duties of the RNP and TfN with a North-Western perspective.
14. A series of worked examples have been developed around proposed responsibilities for the NWRBU to show how it could work with stakeholders in practice. This includes inputting into the train service specification, fares, performance and contract management and infrastructure. These worked examples can be found from paragraph 78 in the paper.
15. Partnership working between the NWRBU and TOCs will be crucial towards achieving the objectives of the proposal. The NWRBU will work collaboratively with Northern Trains Limited (NTL) and Transpennine

Express (TPE) to develop improved ways of working and look to engage broadly with other TOCs operating in the North West on a case by case basis. Existing governance structures for engaging with NTL and TPE in the region will be reviewed including the existing Central and West Business Unit Board. The objective is to find optimal arrangements for all parties that minimise burdens whilst ensuring that TOCs benefit from local input to help improve services and operations for passengers.

Implementation

16. **The NWRBU will be delivered at no additional cost to the rail industry in the North including to TfN, RNP and DfT and will take advantage of existing TfGM and other resources available in the North-West.** Initially, an RBU Manager will be appointed and will work with officers and specialist teams across the North-West on a range of issues including train services, fares, ticketing and infrastructure development.
17. The RBU Manager will coordinate input into relevant technical working groups and engagement with RNP contract managers and NTL and TPE on the development of their business plans. Additional resources will be pooled for specific projects as required.
18. The timeline for the NWRBU is for the proposal to be agreed in early 2023 followed by developing the formal collaboration agreement amongst members within the first quarter of 2023. Following that, the NWRBU governance will be set up and it will develop its plans for 2023 and beyond. As part of this process, a Business Plan for the NWRBU will be developed which will summarise the proposed activities for the NWRBU across the year including key outputs and outcomes. Key risks and mitigations have been outlined including on mobilisation, collaboration with TOCs and resources.
19. Indicative critical success factors have been developed which will form the basis of the NWRBU Business Plan with a focus on ensuring that the NWRBU brings forward meaningful proposals to improve rail in the North-West.

2 Objectives

20. The NWRBU will help to advise on the rail matters in the North-West including the delivery of reliable, resilient and high-quality rail services and infrastructure for passengers. It will ensure that the full value of investment in rail is considered including supporting wider priorities such as social inclusion, regeneration and development and decarbonisation.
21. The NWRBU will be set up to:
 - a. support TfN and RNP in executing their formal duties, with a specific focus on providing **specialist insight, advice and added value across the North-West region**
 - b. help support and **meet the needs of its customers**
 - c. to act as **influential / key partner across NW region**, working within the framework of the TfN / DfT Partnership Agreement
 - d. **consist of NW regional authorities**, enabled through a formal agreement between its members, enabling effective and agile decision making to the benefit of the region
 - e. provide more **cohesive, constructive, strategic and tactical/operational advice** to both TfN and RNP on management of rail contracts (TPE and NTL) and infrastructure schemes in the NW region
 - f. **Act as ‘one voice’ for the NW region** in our wider engagement with rail industry including with TOCs, GBRtt, Network Rail and wider industry stakeholders such as Transport Focus.
 - g. **Pooling existing resources and expertise to add value to the North-West**, and in doing so at no additional cost to the industry

3 The Case for Change: Why is the RBU needed?

Context – alignment with the GBR agenda and Trailblazer devolution deals

22. The Levelling-Up White paper highlights the importance of local collaboration for delivering improved local outcomes². It sets out an ambitious agenda for “Trailblazer deeper devolution deals” for Combined Authorities and greater devolution to county areas³. Urban and rural local authorities are directly accountable to citizens for economic development, planning, housing and local transport. Rail services interact with all these areas and play a critical role in people’s lives. The Levelling-Up agenda is an opportunity for local areas to bring rail closer to those impacts areas. The William-Shapps Plan for Rail envisions new partnerships between Great British Railways (GBR) and local government to give local leaders a greater say in how railways are run in their area including services, ticketing and stations⁴. It is vital that the local perspective is represented when decisions on rail services are being made and that the development of these services are aligned with these priorities.
23. In order that GBR’s regions can deliver at a local level they will need to work closely with local areas. The Levelling Up White paper says that priority for new rail partnerships with GBR will be given to places which develop devolution arrangements with directly elected mayors. The white paper adds that:
24. *“These partnerships will encompass the whole passenger offer and long-term strategy for railways in a local area. Depending on the needs and capacity of different areas, these could include the ability for local leaders to integrate ticketing and fares, control stations and buy additional services or infrastructure to achieve local transport and housing priorities more effectively”⁵*
25. To best leverage the transition to the new industry structure for rail, Combined Authorities such as Greater Manchester are pursuing ambitious proposals to enhance transport in their areas as part of their Trailblazer Devolution Deal. This includes developing a ‘Greater Manchester Rail Partnership Board’ to bring together stakeholders to maximise the potential of the rail network within the GM region. The Board has 5 customer pillars including fares and ticketing reform, infrastructure investment, accessibility and inclusivity, station development and regeneration and operations / transport integration.
26. Existing governance structures in the North of England for rail enables consultation at the Local Transport Authority (LTA) level and at the pan-Northern level through Transport for the North and the Rail North Partnership (RNP) Board. However, there is presently **a gap in governance at the regional level across the North-West**, and given the way existing rail services operate across the region, there is an opportunity to align best practice and expertise across the North-West. The perspective at the North-West regional level is crucial across areas where there are overlaps and potential synergies from greater collaboration. This includes the provision of regional rail services, performance and support for infrastructure planning and delivery. A key example includes ensuring that there is proper multi-modal integration between stations on

² The Levelling Up White Paper, HM Government, February 2022, p. 137, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom>

³ The Levelling Up White Paper, HM Government, February 2022, p. 235, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom>

⁴ Great British Railways The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail, Secretary of State for Transport, May 2021, p. 38, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/great-british-railways-williams-shapps-plan-for-rail>

⁵ The Levelling Up White Paper, HM Government, February 2022, p. 180, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom>

the national rail network and the local transport network which the NWRBU and boards at the MCA level are ideally placed to advise on.

27. It is for this reason that authorities in the North of England have come together to explore opportunities for greater partnership working through the formation of a Regional Business Unit (RBU). RBUs are defined in the Partnership Agreement between the Secretary of State for Transport, Transport for the North (TfN) and Rail North Limited, as a group of two or more TfN parties formed to jointly oversee rail matters in their geographical areas⁶.
28. The authorities who are part of this partnership in the North-West include Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, Lancashire County Council, Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen, Cumberland Council, Westmorland and Furness Council⁷, Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Warrington Borough Council, Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.
29. The NWRBU builds on both the Levelling-Up agenda with 'Trailblazer Devolution Deals' and the GBR agenda by strengthening coordination and collaboration on rail management in the North-West. Better collaboration, accountability and decision-making on rail at the local level through initiatives like the 'GM Rail Partnership Board' will only help to strengthen collaboration between local areas across the North-West. The combination of these initiatives will mean that there will be improved partnership working at the local, regional, pan-Northern and national level that will help ensure better outcomes on the railways for all. This will help support wider economic and social objectives including access to opportunities for all.
30. It should be noted that there continues to be uncertainty over the implementation of the Williams Shapps Plan for Rail as well as the scope and timetable for the formation of GBR. The NWRBU will need to be flexible and adaptable as the future structure of the rail industry takes shape and it is more important than ever to ensure that local input is fed into the decision-making processes.

Geography and Rail Usage

31. The North-West of England has a complex rail network that provides access to, from and between major population centres and their hinterlands, international gateways, rural communities and logistics centres. An overview of the geographical scope of rail in the region is provided in Figure 1 below – this is still an indicative map at this stage and subject to further detailed work.

⁶ Secretary of State for Transport and Transport for the North and Rail North Limited Partnership Agreement, p. 5

⁷ Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council are the two new unitary councils that replace the current Cumbria County Council and six district councils in Cumbria.

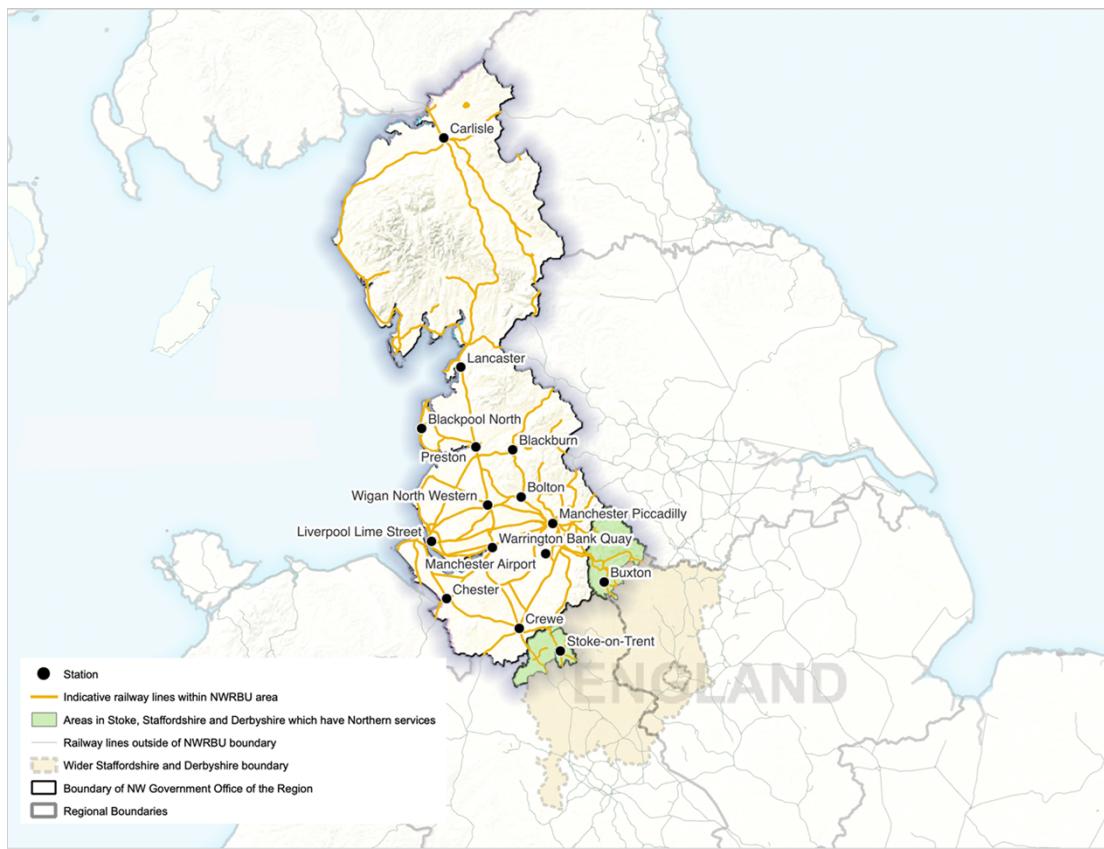


Figure 1 Indicative map of geographical scope of NW RBU⁸

32. Although extensive, the network is mainly a mixed-use, predominantly two-track railway, with all types of passenger and freight services often utilising the same track. It is this characteristic which acts as one of the key limiting factors to the planning and delivery of rail services in the North-West. Despite this, rail use in the North-West has grown significantly and continues to be at the heart of both the levelling up agenda and responding to the climate emergency and the Paris agreement on decarbonisation. Improving rail services in the area will be an important part in supporting the UK's plan to become a net-zero country by 2050 and with Liverpool City Region targeting 2040 and Greater Manchester's plans to become net zero by 2038.
33. The travel to work areas for some areas in the North-West extend well beyond their administrative boundaries. Figure 2 shows that the travel to work area for Greater Manchester extends across a significant portion of the North-West region. There is therefore a high proportion of passengers in the North-West that are commuters. According to the ORR, in 2020-21 just under 80% of the journeys on the rail network in the North-West take place wholly within the North-West rather than to or from other regions⁹. Even prior to the Covid period this was around 72% in 2019-20. This is one of the highest rates in the country which indicates that rail travel in the region is relatively self-contained. Out of the 46 timetabled routes on the Northern franchise network, around 30 start and end either wholly or mostly within the North-West region¹⁰.

⁸ Developed in QGIS using data from the ONS Open Geography Portal and Open Railway Map December 2022, available at <https://www.openrailwaymap.org/>

⁹ Rail usage 2020-21, Office of Rail Regulation (ORR), February 2022, available at: <https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/statistics/usage/regional-rail-usage/>

¹⁰ Based on a desktop review of the service groups in the current Northern operating contract and an evaluation of which services fall wholly within the North West of England.

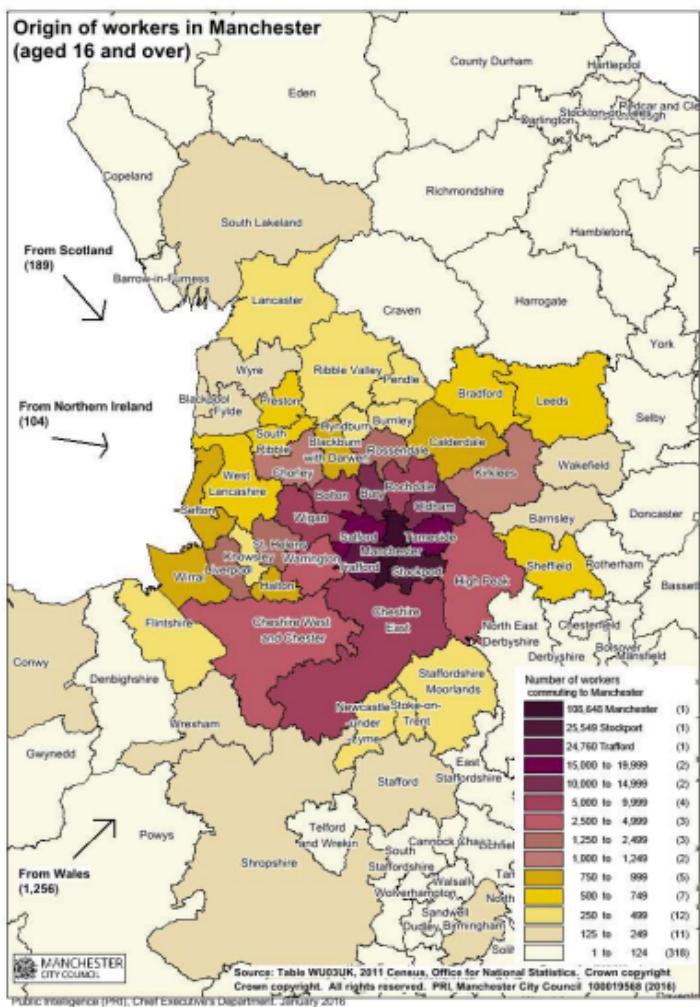


Figure 2 Travel to Work Area for Greater Manchester¹¹

34. As a result, there is a strong alignment between the proposed geography of the RBU and the way rail services operate in the North-West. Further, the geography of the North-West corresponds to the way NTL's western rail operations are organised. This alignment means that there is a strong incentive to consider the provision of rail services from the perspective of the North-West.

Existing arrangements

35. In terms of services, responsibility for the management of the two major rail contracts that operate in the North of England including Northern and the Transpennine Express (TPE) rests with the Rail North Partnership (RNP) Board¹². The membership of the board consists of TfN, the Secretary of State for Transport and 3 TfN nominated members to represent the Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) and Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs) in the North. Key responsibilities include managing and agreeing the train service requirements, oversight of performance and approving plans for Service Quality Programmes. The RNP are supported by a dedicated management team consisting of commercial managers to manage the day-to-day running of the two franchise agreements as well as personnel for handling change management, planning and investment¹³.
36. The partnership agreement between TfN, Rail North Limited and the Secretary of State specifies that decisions taken by the RNP Board are reached by majority¹⁴. Decisions are only valid if the board members

¹¹ 2011 M06 Census analysis of UK origin-destination data, Manchester City Council, available at: <https://bit.ly/3B0AX8a>

¹² Secretary of State for Transport and Transport for the North and Rail North Limited Partnership Agreement, 6.1.1

¹³ Secretary of State for Transport and Transport for the North and Rail North Limited Partnership Agreement, 7.4

¹⁴ Secretary of State for Transport and Transport for the North and Rail North Limited Partnership Agreement, 6.7

representing the Secretary of State and TfN agree¹⁵. Ultimately, the Secretary of State has duties for rail franchising under the Railways Act 1993 and decisions taken by the RNP Board are treated as an informed recommendation to the Secretary of State¹⁶.

37. Individual LTAs can provide input, mostly at the strategic level, through their membership of the RNP Board. There are two representatives at the RNP board that represent city-regions and county authorities respectively. Individual LTAs (referenced as TfN Rail authorities) can propose Franchise Output adjustments via TfN to the RNP including changes to train service requirements or rail fares if they are cost neutral and do not increase the risk for the Secretary of State¹⁷. To date though this has not happened as most changes impact multiple LTAs and it is complex to put proposals forward without the relevant formal collaborative structures in place. TfN also have limited funding to support the development of these types of proposals.
38. Inevitably, there will be trade-offs in a system as complex and interdependent as rail and the RNP Board plays a crucial role in bringing together perspectives at the local, pan-Northern and national level. Given the vast geographical scope of the North, the challenges for TfN and the RNP in coordinating different stakeholder perspectives whilst engaging and managing the TPE and Northern franchises are considerable. Across 25 authorities it can be difficult to maintain engagement and keep track of local issues which can sometimes mean that local knowledge and expertise is not fed into the management of the railways which impacts the quality of rail service operation and management. This has reduced the ownership and accountability at the LTA level for the decisions made by the RNP.
39. In terms of the development and delivery of infrastructure proposals in the North, TfN coordinate and engage with LTAs on proposals and work with Network Rail and other stakeholders. There are similar challenges for TfN in coordination across a large geographical area. For example, planning in relation to blockades and possessions for infrastructure as well as customer communications and stakeholder management could benefit from greater input from the perspective of the North-West. Clarification and formalisation of the North-West's role could better facilitate the flow of information from a local to regional and national level. This could improve the alignment of proposals to local economic ambitions and the development of mitigation proposals that integrate with the existing transport network (such as rail replacement services). It could also allow the task of engaging with the public to be shared.
40. Greater initial coordination across the smaller and more integrated geography of the North-West could help tackle these challenges. This includes on issues such as train service requirements, fares, operational performance which could benefit from more specialist advice and detailed knowledge that is available at the local and regional level. Greater discussion and collaboration within the North-West could manage trade-offs and enable the North-West to speak with one voice. This could help support TfN, the RNP, TOCs and Network Rail as well as help individual LTAs in the North-West feel more engaged in the overall process and achieve best outcomes for all parties.
41. Examples of issues that could benefit from prior coordination at the regional level of the North-West are set out in the paragraphs below.
42. **Train Service Requirements:** Rail service provision has a significant socio-economic impact at a local and regional level in terms of connecting people with places and opportunities, encouraging, active and inclusive lifestyles and supporting vibrant communities. It can often dictate the viability of housing development, the accessibility of key workers to jobs and the location decisions of businesses. It is important for these factors to be present in the decision-making process and in influencing any proposals to change service specification. At present, however, there is limited opportunity for direct dialogue and collaborative working between LTAs and TOCs – for example, when the Business Plan for the franchise is being developed. In practice, it could be difficult for TOCs (particularly those that cover larger geographical areas) to coordinate input across many different LTAs. Engagement at the regional level of the North-West could provide a good balance as train service proposals could be coordinated, trade-offs could be managed in advance and TOCs can more easily collaborate with the region to enhance the train service.
43. **Fare adjustments:** Whilst LTAs can put forward proposals for fare adjustments to the RNP Board, as fare adjustments have wide ranging implications, collaborative working between LTAs and TOCs are vital to develop viable proposals. Collaborating at the level of the North-West would allow easier engagement with TOCs (or in the future GBR if they take on this responsibility) on fare adjustment proposals, greater

¹⁵ Secretary of State for Transport and Transport for the North and Rail North Limited Partnership Agreement, 6.9

¹⁶ Secretary of State for Transport and Transport for the North and Rail North Limited Partnership Agreement, 6.13

¹⁷ Secretary of State for Transport and Transport for the North and Rail North Limited Partnership Agreement, 15.1

efficiencies in the analysis supporting fare adjustment proposals, the ability to manage trade-offs and being able to pool together funding provision for fare adjustments. This should improve the quality of proposals put forward to the RNP Board for consideration.

44. **Performance Monitoring:** The RNP monitors the performance (including operational performance, customer and service quality, business / financial performance, and compliance with business plan commitments) of the Northern and TPE franchises at the pan-Northern level to ensure that contractual compliance is being achieved. The performance is inevitably monitored at the pan-Northern level which allows potentially significant variation in performance across specific geographies in the North. There is limited transparency of contractual targets, train service and operational performance data, especially at more granular geographical levels. Greater collaboration by LTAs in the North-West will provide additional support to RNP in ensuring contractual compliance and monitoring performance. This would allow performance to be monitored at a more granular level and support RNP to hold operators to account more effectively to improve passenger outcomes.
45. **Development and Delivery of Infrastructure:** The benefits of national rail projects can be maximised if they are aligned with local and regional plans. TfN play a key role in facilitating the input of LTAs into the development of major rail projects. Prior coordination at the North-West level could improve collaboration for infrastructure development. This includes coordinating more detailed considerations around integration with local infrastructure, managing priorities and developing mitigations around short-term disruptions.

Options

46. The areas of the North-West have considered a range of options for collaboration from informal arrangements to more formal options. These options are summarised in Table 1 below. They have been evaluated on a criteria that draws from the objectives set out in Section 2 above with some adaptations. The criteria includes whether the options:
1. help meet the needs of customers;
 2. allow the North-West to be an influential partner;
 3. allow the North-West to speak with one voice by providing cohesive advice;
 4. fit the current industry structure and help support TfN / RNP;
 5. is aligned with the GBR and devolution agenda; and
 6. can be delivered at no additional cost to the industry.

Table 2 below summarises the results of this analysis.

Table 1 Options to improve collaboration on rail in the North-West

Partnership Arrangement	Role / Responsibilities
Improved collaboration between LTAs and industry	Under this option LTAs in the North-West would work directly with the rail industry including Northern and TPE, GBR (once established) as well as continuing with existing arrangements on rail services and infrastructure via TfN and RNP. This would enable the industry to benefit from the specialist insight and advice that LTAs can provide. With collaboration strengthened <i>within</i> local authorities, for example through the GM Rail Partnership Board, LTAs would be better equipped to hold the industry to account. However, this option on its own does not strengthen collaboration between partners in the North-West and does not enable them to speak with one voice. As a result, it does not meet the objective of providing more cohesive and constructive advice to the industry as coordination within the North-West is not facilitated with this option.
Voluntary partnership between NW LTAs and	Building on the previous option, to improve collaboration a voluntary partnership between areas in the North-West could be considered to coordinate on rail matters and support TfN / RNP. The voluntary partnership could allow more cohesive advice to emerge from the North-

collaboration with industry	West. However, without any formal agreement in place, the partnership could be more easily undermined and may lack the ability to be an influential partner in the region. This could affect the clout of such an arrangement particularly when engaging with TOCs and other industry stakeholders such as Network Rail, Rail Delivery Group, Transport Focus etc.
Formation of NWRBU to work with industry and support TfN / RNP	The formation of an RBU between LTAs in the North-West would deliver the benefits of the previous two options whilst ensuring that a robust legal agreement is in place setting out the framework for collaboration. The RBU would provide the impetus for collaboration between areas in the NW, would be more resilient to changes in priorities or political representation at the local level and therefore have much greater clout when engaging with the rail industry. This would allow the North-West to better collaborate to meet the needs of customers whilst supporting TfN and RNP in executing their statutory roles in service specification, fares, performance monitoring and consultation. The formation of the RNP does not, however, change existing duties, accountabilities and risks within the rail industry. Therefore, it easily fits within the existing structure of the rail industry and will be relatively simple and quick to implement. It will also be more flexible and adaptable to future changes in the rail industry as the rail reform agenda takes shape.
NWRBU take on RNP formal duties including franchise specification and contract management (West Midlands model)	This option would go one step beyond the previous option and provide formal duties to the NWRBU on franchise specification and contract management – likely to be shared with RNP and TfN. This option could help better meet customer needs in the North-West as the NWRBU would have direct influence over specification. It would also improve transparency and accountability of rail services in the region. By having formal duties, the NWRBU would become a more influential player. With both Northern and TPE being pan-Northern franchises under the current franchise mapping this option would create additional interfaces in the current industry structure. It would require small adjustments to existing responsibilities, accountabilities and risks. Whilst this makes it more difficult to implement in the short-term than the RBU, the proposed change in structure is relatively minor and it could still be made to fit with existing governance. This is very similar to the current model in the West Midlands today so there is precedent for these arrangements. If the Northern franchise were remapped to have a separate operator for the North-West, the case for this option would become even stronger.
Full devolution – NWRBU becomes franchising authority	Enabling NWRBU to become a formal franchise authority would arguably be the most effective way to meet the needs of customers in the North-West as the majority of responsibilities for rail services would be devolved under this model. Direct responsibility and accountability would provide the greatest potential to improve services in the region with the policy levers belonging to the NWRBU. However, it would involve a very significant increase in the risk taken by the NWRBU, would require industry restructuring (including franchise remapping) and the devolution of funding responsibilities from DfT. This would increase complexity in the current industry structure and would take time to implement. GBRrt have indicated through engagement that this option would not align with their current policy agenda.

47. The option for the formation of the NWRBU provides the appropriate balance between a formal partnership that provides the impetus to strengthen collaboration between LTAs in the North-West passengers whilst not requiring any major changes to existing accountabilities and risks in the industry – thereby not increasing complexity.

Table 2: Options for greater partnership working (green represents that objective is met, amber that objective is partially met and red that objective is not met – the ticks and the crosses show the extent to which the option either meets or does not meet the objective)

Option / Objective	Helps meet Customer Needs	Enables NW to be influential partner	Enables NW to speak with one voice	Fits current industry structure with TfN / RNP	Aligned with GBR and Devolution agenda	Delivered at no additional cost
Improved partnership between LTAs and industry	✓ / X	XXX	XXX	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓✓
Voluntary partnership	✓ / X	XX	XXX	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓✓
Regional Business Unit (RBU) to support TfN/RNP	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓✓
RBU with franchise management duties	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓ ¹⁸	✓ / X ¹⁹	X
NWRBU as franchising authority	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	X	X ²⁰	XXX

The added value of a North-West RBU

48. The formation of the NWRBU is intended to enhance partnership working on rail across the North, its added value includes:
 49. **Provide more cohesive and constructive advice to support TfN and RNP on rail services and fares:** The NWBRU can work closely with its members to collectively shape the strategic direction for rail in the North-West. This includes developing proposals for franchise adjustments on rail services and fares. These proposals can combine LTA aspirations whilst ensuring that trade-offs within the region are made to ensure the best overall outcome for all areas. Analytical work and evidence can be commissioned by the NWRBU to bring together the regional benefits that can save time and resources compared with LTAs all conducting their own independent analysis. The NWRBU can also more easily work collaboratively with TOCs without creating an additional burden and by being in the inner circle on business planning processes it can add value through consideration of subsidising services. This will enable more cohesive and constructive advice to support proposals for franchise change to be provided to TfN, RNP and DfT for formal consideration.
 50. **Help communicate issues and priorities for the North-West region:** The NWBRU can work more closely and regularly with its LTA members to understand LTA priorities and issues, draw out the implications regionally and develop and shape a strategy for the North-West that brings together these perspectives. This includes consideration of all service types including to metropolitan, suburban, rural and coastal areas. This will help support TfN and RNP as the NWRBU can do some of the 'heavy-lifting' with engagement and

¹⁸ Would require minor adjustments to industry structure

¹⁹ Uncertainty over scope of GBR agenda

²⁰ DfT have indicated this does not align with their agenda

ensure that more members feel empowered by the process. NWRBU can then provide more coherence on priorities and issues to TfN and RNP on the perspective of the North-West allowing the region to have greater impact and influence. It can also share the duties of communicating to the public and planning for disruption in relation to the rail network including provision for alternative services that are better integrated with the local transport network.

51. **Share expertise in the North-West and provide more specialist insight into rail issues to support TfN and RNP:** LTAs bring detailed knowledge of their local areas and expertise in housing, planning, local transport and socio-economic development. The planning and development of the rail network requires this insight and the NWRBU can be used as an effective vehicle to collate this expertise – this is in-line with the agenda in Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail. Some LTAs for example have significant responsibility for running bus, metro or tram services in their areas and as such they bring significant strategic and operational expertise to running a complex, multi-modal transport network whilst being accountable to the public. As different LTAs will have varying capabilities in different areas, the NWRBU provides a forum to share expertise, learn best practice and develop capability for rail planning and development in the region. Further, performance on the rail network can be monitored at a more granular level and tracked more effectively. This includes understanding the implications of disruption, service patterns, punctuality and infrastructure provision on local economic development. In turn, the NWRBU can more easily collaborate with TOCs, TfN and RNP to ensure this insight is fed into the decision-making process.
52. **The pooling of resources to support the development for innovative proposals:** The development of proposals to improve services for passengers and infrastructure including initiatives such as smart ticketing may require additional funding and support to develop. LTAs, as agents of local authorities, have access to a wide variety of funding sources to help develop and deliver these initiatives. This includes direct local taxation, central government grants and land value capture options such as the Community Infrastructure Levy that could allow the development of future additional housing and growth in land values to fund service enhancements and infrastructure improvements. The NWRBU allows the pooling of resources relative to the benefits of proposals in different areas to provide funded proposals to TfN and RNP Board for further consideration.

Case studies

West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE)

53. West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE) was established in December 2017, a partnership of 16 local transport authorities. Although its formal status is less than five years old, the relationship with DfT is nearly 10 years old, and was formalised via a Collaboration Agreement.
54. WMRE has joint responsibility for overseeing rail services running within the region along with the DfT. In particular, it oversees (with the DfT) specific parts of the operations of the train operating company West Midlands Trains, which commenced operations on the West Midlands Railway franchise in December 2017. The geography of the WMRE is designed to be in line with the travel to work area of the West Midlands that rail services help enable – which provides a similar context to the North-West.
55. It is important to emphasise WMRE's remit differs from Transport for the West Midlands (TfWM), which is responsible for transport within the smaller West Midlands metropolitan area, and WMRE's geography extends well beyond the West Midlands to include Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Northamptonshire and Worcestershire. A total of 14 local authorities (plus 2 affiliate member local authorities) are represented on its board which is chaired by the mayor of the West Midlands CA.
56. WMRE's role includes:
 - a. Specifying and managing the West Midlands Railway franchise contract (one part of wider WMT contract which also includes the London North-Western Railway), including setting performance targets and agreeing timetables
 - b. Upgrading and building new stations on behalf of TfWM
 - c. Supporting improvements for passengers and freight services
 - d. Planning future network improvements

- e. Involvement in various joint industry partnerships including West Midlands Grand Railway Collaboration and the West Midlands Station Alliance.
57. WMRE published their first Rail Investment Strategy in 2019. The strategy explains plans to improve rail services and stations. It includes short, medium and long-term plans up to 2047.
58. WMRE are part of the West Midlands Stations Alliance (WMSA). Through the WMSA, work to improve stations in the region. The Alliance works with Network Rail, West Midlands Railway, community groups, and local authorities to identify and secure funding, agree station improvements, and maintain stations efficiently.
59. The Grand Railway Collaboration (GRC), which also acts as the rail industry's West Midlands Supervisory Board, brings together the West Midlands Rail Executive, Network Rail, passenger and freight operators and other rail industry partners. The regional rail network is complex, with multiple train operators. The GRC gives it a governance structure.
60. The GRC's current priorities are to:
- a. provide a safe regional rail network
 - b. assess what the network needs in future
 - c. make sure timetables meet customer needs
 - d. ensure a consistent customer experience across the West Midlands
 - e. improve connections with other modes of transport, making it easier for customers to complete their journey.
61. The WMRE demonstrates the potential of local areas having a greater say in the management of rail services. Although the WMRE ultimately holds greater levels of responsibility than what is being set out at this stage for the NWRBU, this provides a good benchmark, as well as potential opportunities for further development in the future.

North-East Regional Management Unit (NERMU)

62. The North-East has developed a RBU, NERMU, with a role to; have greater influence over the delivery of rail services in the North-East of England; to deliver high quality integrated local services in line with the vision of Rail North's Long Term Rail Strategy and the North-East Rail statement; and to facilitate and stimulate economic growth and social cohesion. The North-East RBU has worked closely with stakeholders in the region to coordinate policy in the North-East and work with RNP, TfN, Network Rail and TOCs to optimize the effective delivery of rail services under the Franchise agreement.
63. The North-East RBU consists of a board which is responsible for approving the business plan for the RBU, approving proposals to the RNP Board and endorsing key appointments. The Steering Group is responsible for executing the Business Plan including making recommendations to the Board. Through the RBU, the perspective at a North-Eastern regional level is developed and represented across the rail industry. The creation of regional units in the North and Midlands has improved rail governance in these regions and reinforces the need to also address the gap in the North-West with how rail matters are considered. Views of stakeholders and engagement process

Views of stakeholders

64. Extensive engagement on the role of the NWRBU has been conducted with all of the LTAs in the North-West, TfN, RNP, DfT, NR, GBRtt, NTL, TPE, West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA), Transport for the North East (TfNE) and West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE). TfGM have led the engagement and letters of support for the proposals have been received from Lancashire County Council, Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen, Cumbria (representing the soon to be formed Cumberland Council, Westmorland and Furness Council), Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Warrington Borough Council and Derbyshire.
65. The letters of support have outlined a strong desire for the creation of the NWRBU noting:
- a. The need for greater local input in planning for rail matters and having greater combined influence for the North-West on the development of future rail services and infrastructure

- b. Consideration of rail matters should account for the wider benefits of rail in supporting regeneration and development, inclusivity and addressing climate change
- c. The need for the NWRBU to ensure an inclusive approach to making decisions with consideration of all journey types including those made to rural and coastal areas
- d. Caution over taking on further financial risk (particularly for smaller LTAs) and limitations on resources

4 Roles, Responsibilities and Governance

Proposed roles and responsibilities

66. The roles and responsibilities for the NWRBU have been developed in a series of collaborative workshops with officials from the authorities that are proposed members of the NWRBU. There has been positive reception all round and a strong commitment from LTAs in the North-West to proceed with the establishment of the RBU.
67. It should be noted that in formulating the role for the NWRBU, the key principle has been that there are **no changes to the risk, responsibilities or accountabilities for the way rail services are governed in the North of England**. All NWRBU are members of the Franchise Management Agreement and are represented via three TfN appointed members on the RNP board. The NWRBU is designed to support TfN and the RNP in executing their formal duties and close partnership working with both organisations is envisioned. The NWRBU will only advise on matters relevant to their geographical area.
68. It is also intended that NWRBU should be 'future-proofed' to evolve into alternative partnership arrangements, especially as part of the ongoing Rail Reform and Devolution agendas.
69. The role is proposed across the following areas set out below including supporting franchise management of rail services and supporting the development of rail infrastructure. The NWRBU will work with TfN to refine and evolve ways of working together utilising existing structures.
70. **Support TfN on infrastructure:** Provide advice to TfN (relevant to the NWRBU area) to support its statutory partner role on infrastructure (priorities, schemes and projects), including data, technical studies, evidence-based advice and local / regional consultations. Work collaboratively with TfN to provide advice that can maximise potential for the NW region. For example, replicating / formalising a role for NWRBU similar to TfGM's role in the Manchester Recovery TaskForce to address the poor performance of the rail network in the Manchester area, working alongside TfN, DfT, TOCs, Network Rail and any other relevant party;
71. **Advise on TOC Business Plans:** Advise RNP in the development and agreement of Operators Annual Business Plans and Business Plan Commitments, working within the affordability envelope set by Secretary of State;
72. **Advise RNP on service specification and fares:** Provide advice across a range of areas relevant to the NWRBU area, specifically those identified in 'TfN matters' within the RNP Franchise Agreements but broadly covering train service specification/operations, fares and ticketing, stations, rolling stock and decarbonisation;
73. **Support NTL/TPE franchise management:** Embedded into RNP team to provide support and advice on contract management / annual business planning process collaboratively. For agreement between NWRBU and RNP, however this would be intended to include;
 - a. defined, dedicated resources from NWRBU members to provide support and advice relevant to the NWRBU area e.g. development of proposals / business cases, or preparation of performance improvement / action plans;
 - b. sharing of data, systems integration (where feasible);
 - c. aligned governance, regular meetings, consistent reporting approaches (dashboards, KPIs etc.);

74. **Put forward Output Adjustment proposals:** Ability to propose / put forward Passenger Service Contract Output Adjustment proposals (this specifically covers train service specification and fares within RNP Agreement), subject to RNP Board approval and funding / risk conditions.
75. **Put forward contract variation proposals:** Ability to put forward further contract variation proposals (in addition to those above), subject to RNP Board approval and funding (e.g. sourcing direct or third party funding) / risk conditions (e.g. financial risk on payback assumptions).
76. **Monitor and scrutinise NTL/TPE performance:** Support RNP's contract management processes, monitor and scrutinise ToC performance / contract compliance. Share data analysis, information, studies to support RNP's role and to identify opportunities for improvements.
77. **Stakeholder management:** Act as extension of RNP in the management of stakeholders within NW region, as well as direct engagement / relationship with Operators to share information, ideas, opportunities (noting formal contract management sits with RNP). The focus of TOC engagement will primarily be NTL and TPE as RNP has formal responsibilities for contract management of these operators. It is acknowledged, however, that there will be a need to interact with other TOCs and the NWRBU will engage openly with these operators on any shared issues. There are precedents for such informal collaboration between regional transport bodies and train operators, notably in the West Midlands and at Transport for London.

Worked Examples

78. To provide additional insight into how the role described above could work in practice, a range of worked examples have been developed across roles including inputting into the train service specification, making targeted fares adjustments, performance issues / contract compliance and NWRBU support for TfN.

Input on the Train Service Specification

79. A flowchart of this process is presented in Figure 3 below. Throughout the year the NWRBU will gather views on the current train service in the North-West from its member LTAs. This could include understanding LTA service aspirations, areas of capacity constraints and services that are of vital social and economic importance. This approach reflects the significant changes to the train service specification process following the end of rail franchising and move to Annual Business Planning.
80. Once the formal process for defining the Train Service Specification begins with the RNP issuing the RfBP to TOCs (with a target budget envelope), it is proposed that the NWRBU holds dialogue with TOCs. The nature of this dialogue would include options on current and future timetable options given the parameters set out in the RfBP. It is important that a transparent relationship with TOCs is established and the required data is shared. The dialogue should be constructive and collaborative with operators and would be an ongoing process through the whole year. Examples of what could be discussed include:
- a. *Evidence for Service Enhancements:* The NWRBU can work with its member LTAs to identify the economic, social and environmental evidence base for supporting the provision of enhanced service patterns to support TOC proposals. The NWRBU would work with LTAs as a key quality assurance partner and ensuring that the evidence base is robust. This would help funnel the information for consideration by TOCs in an appropriate format. For example, this could include evidence of new or planned housing developments which could support the case for improved service provision at stations to help passenger growth of the franchise, local-regional economic growth and decarbonisation. It can then work with TOCs collaboratively to deliver these aspirations with the train service including consideration of:
 - i. Stopping patterns and service frequencies at individual stations, including at 'low use' and 'new' stations;
 - ii. Passenger capacity / rolling stock requirements;
 - iii. First and last trains (including overnight services to/from Manchester Airport), evenings and weekends;
 - iv. Services varying by seasonality and special events;
 - v. Maximum journey times; including with an interchange;
 - vi. Key interchange requirements (rail/rail and multi-modal);

- vii. Services to be provided during infrastructure maintenance / enhancements and other disruptions (e.g. keeping alternative routes open, diversion of rail services and additional stops, replacement road services and maximum journey times);
 - viii. Running later services on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, reducing peak services between Christmas and New Year and starting services later on certain routes on New Year's Day; and
 - ix. Sporting events, exhibitions and other attractions generate significant additional demand on an ad-hoc basis.
- b. ***Managing trade-offs:*** changes to services can sometimes disadvantage some passengers whilst benefitting others, as a result, the NWRBU can coordinate work to assess the impacts on all passengers and ensure that any potential adverse impacts are proportionate and mitigated. The NWRBU can then work with TOCs to relay this evidence and understand any other trade-offs with service enhancement. This may include service rationalisations to match changing demand patterns and economic development. This includes working collaboratively with TOCs to influencing services to meet existing and forecast demand on a route-by-route basis, with calling patterns adjusted as necessary to provide an appropriate balance between:
 - i. Peak Vehicle Requirement;
 - ii. journey time requirements between major centres; and
 - iii. requirement to provide public transport journey opportunities from each location.
- c. ***Feedback on public response:*** proposed changes in service should be tested in public so that passengers and their representatives can comment and offer their views on what is proposed. The NWRBU can give support to TOCs to understand the local stakeholder and passenger response to any train service proposal changes which would be collated by member LTAs. This can help anticipate any issues that TOCs may encounter with passenger groups and the NWRBU can support this engagement process.
81. Following this process, TOCs put forward timetable proposals as part of the ABP process and NWRBU can support RNP with review, feedback and further iterations if required.

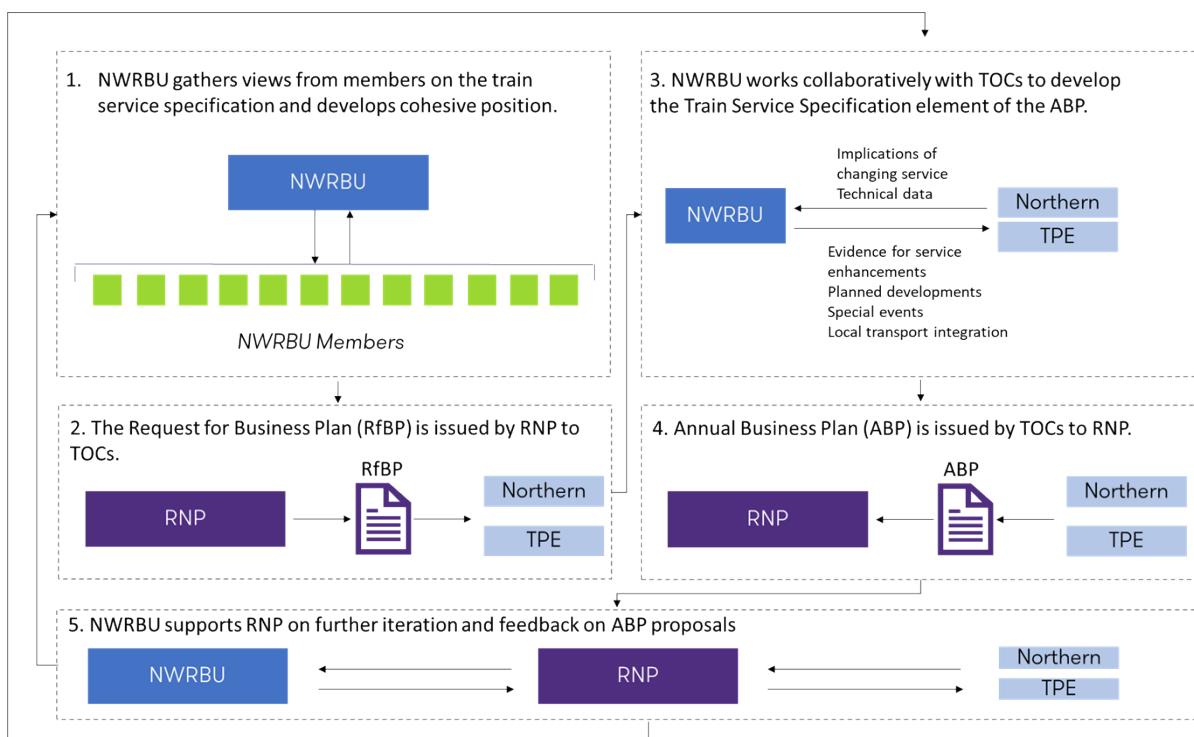


Figure 3 Flowchart of Train Service Specification worked example

NWRBU put forward proposal to make targeted fares adjustments within region into RNP board

82. NWRBU can work closely with members to undertake a full review of regulated fares for journeys made within the NWRBU. This will require data to be provided by TOCs via RNP. Analysis on fares usually requires complex technical modelling work to be conducted. The NWRBU can coordinate this analytical work on fares across authorities in the region and there can be efficiencies in this process compared to individual LTAs commissioning their own analysis. The NWRBU could also take advantage of more specialist skills on fares analysis situated in individual LTAs for the benefits of the region as a whole.
83. Using this analysis, the NWRBU can develop business cases setting out proposed targeted fares adjustments. Examples include helping to address fare anomalies in the North-West. The business cases will set out the strategic rationale for the proposal as well as the economic and financial impacts. It can also set out recommendations as to how the proposals will be funded if they increase subsidy and the NWRBU can help pool resources across members to provide a sustainable funding stream. Examples of the types of issues that could be considered include tackling the cliff-edge on fares that occur at PTE boundaries.
84. Any proposal would be submitted to the RNP Board for approval and the NWRBU on implementation, timescales and additional resourcing support.
85. Key issues that the partnership will seek to investigate include how rail fares and fares policy can be adapted to achieve more efficient use of North-West rail capacity. The current fares structure has many anomalies and the work of the partnership will need to address this. In order to provide input into this area, NWRBU will work to develop a base fares and ticketing position. Through the partnership it would need access to all relevant data and information relevant to the customer proposition and to identify the issues and complexity across the region. Access to data will mean that NWRBU can develop robust propositions with which to engage with stakeholders (GBR, DfT, HM Treasury).

NWRBU support RNP in working with TOCs on potential emerging performance issues / contract compliance

86. It is proposed that NWRBU works closely with RNP, to obtain full access to contractual targets and train service / operational performance data (e.g. including the Public Performance Measure (PPM) which is a key measure of punctuality that is important for service quality to customers, Time to 0 and Time to 15 minutes late at all stations, cancellations, short formations). The NWRBU can work with RNP to ensure that data is obtained at the appropriate geographical scope and format, to give enough granularity for assessing operator performance within the North-West. This does not infer generating new sources of data.
87. The NWRBU can work with its members to conduct its own analysis on this data including the emerging areas of risks, concerns, or trends in performance. For example, if certain routes were having major reliability issues that were impacting customers or there were wider operational issues including stabling, depot and driver availability issues. In the medium term, more regionally focused or defined action plans for performance could be developed with the RNP. The NWRBU can work closely with RNP to undertake service level performance reviews and support TOC interventions, to understand any emerging issues causing declining or ongoing poor performance and to support stakeholder engagement on resolving performance issues. It can also provide informed advice on Service Quality Improvement plans and Joint Performance Improvement Plans (JPIPs) to help address these issues and any other mitigations to ensure improved, stable performance.
88. The dialogue will be structured, regular and ongoing with transparent approaches to collaborative initiatives that can be escalated if and when necessary through the joint RNP and Rail Industry partnership governance arrangements.
89. An example of how this could work in practice is set out below for a local service improvement on a particular line to combat poor performance:
 - NWRBU identifies an issue through analysing detailed performance data
 - NWRBU officers work directly with Northern on possible solutions, but all agree a significant change is needed
 - NWRBU provides advice to RNP that options for change should be formally requested
 - Options are provided back to RNP and shared with NWRBU and TfN as there are implications beyond the NWRBU boundary

- NWRBU come to a common view on the preferred option including dealing with any funding implications and work with RNP to validate the preferred option
- TfN consults its members outside of NWRBU (as the NWRBU view is already known) and prepares a report for Rail North Committee with a recommendation
- RNC comes to a view on the preferred option and this is put forward to the RNP Board for approval – TfN members of the board support the RNC preferred option.

NWRBU support TfN (e.g. on TRU / NPR / HS2 and other major schemes) with technical / planning support during implementation to maximise benefits and to mitigate impacts during construction

90. NWRBU can support TfN as an adviser or a representative by taking a formal role in project governance during the detailed stages of infrastructure project development. This includes the development of business cases, detailed design and implementation and during delivery.
91. Examples of the role that NWRBU can take includes coordinate and facilitate input from NWRBU members which utilise their expertise. Examples include analytical data provided by NWRBU to TfN on housing, local economic strategies, impacts on local transport and accessibility. This will help present a more holistic picture of the benefits of infrastructure projects.
92. NWRBU can also provide input into construction and delivery planning including blockades and possessions strategy, how mitigations such as rail replacement services should integrate with local transport and supporting stakeholder management activities (including lineside neighbours).

Impact on TOCs

93. To ensure that the NWRBU can effectively achieve its objective, collaborative working between the NWRBU and TOCs is essential. This will require dialogue and openness and transparency in information and data sharing between the NWRBU and TOCs.
94. LTAs and TOCs already collaborate on a range of matters relevant to the contract. There are regional directors within the Northern and TPE franchise who engage with LTAs. Much of the dialogue is informal and there is not always structure to the engagement process. For example, there is currently a Central and West Business Unit Board that is attended by NW LTAs and stakeholder engagement managers in Northern and TPE. These meetings are infrequent and often the dialogue is one-way with TOCs providing an update. There are no formal mechanisms to raise concerns, propose solutions and work collaboratively.
95. It is important that these proposals do not impose an undue burden on TOCs who already have a wide range of critical responsibilities. The NWRBU is intended to replace existing ‘engagement’ arrangements. As noted above, the NWRBU will help coordinate the views of LTAs in the North-West and interface with TOCs at key touch points in the Annual Business Planning process working closely with RNP. The objective will be to enhance existing ways of working and bring more formality and clarity over the engagement process between NW LTAs and TOCs. This will improve the more ad-hoc approach that currently exists.
96. During the mobilisation period we will engage with NTL and TPE to define the most appropriate ways of working. This may include the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the NWRBU and NTL/TPE to formalise the relationship. We are committed to regular evaluation of any new ways of working developed and we will set a review point as part of our annual business planning process to evaluate how effectively collaboration with all parties is working and make any additional changes.

Proposed governance structure for the RBU

97. It is proposed that the NWRBU governance will be a subset of the governance structure used for the RNP Board. A key principle of governance is that it is inclusive and that members are consulted on key proposals that impact their areas. The TfN and the RNP Board operates based on voting shares for different LTA members depending on the relative population of each area. For example, in the TfN constitution there is a voting matrix for the TfN constituent authorities highlighting their share of votes for Rail North²¹. This is based on the percentage share of rail passenger revenue in each constituent authority. The matrix is also

²¹ TfN Constitution, Appendix 2, The Voting Matrix, p. 120

used for TfN funding contributions. A subset of the same matrix could be used for the NWRBU specifically. The NWRBU will reach positions on rail matters through consensus.

98. The NWRBU will have a board that will consist of officer-level representatives of the LTA member authorities. It will be chaired by a senior representative of one of these authorities. It is intended that the chair of the RBU board will also be a member of the RNP Board and will act on behalf of TfN when undertaking their role on RNPB. We will work with TfN on the best approach to adapt the membership of the RNP Board to include a representative of the NWRBU. The board will be responsible for formulating the objectives of the NWRBU, define its roles and responsibilities, plan the scope of the NWRBU activities and milestones for next year and monitor progress against these plans. The NWRBU will also be supported by a dedicated RBU Manager who will implement the NWRBU's agenda as set by the board and work closely with LTA members, RNP, TfN, TOCs, NR and any other relevant party.
99. If differences in views arise between members of the NWRBU, these will be discussed in detail internally with NWRBU members to reach a resolution. Similarly, if differences arise between the NWRBU and TfN then it is expected these will be discussed in detail. The NWRBU will work closely with RNP/TfN throughout the process and an open and transparent dialogue will take place. This includes providing RNP/TfN with early sight of the NWRBU's position on relevant rail matters. Through this dialogue, the NWRBU can better understand the impact of its intended proposals on the rest of the TfN membership and can have further discussions with NWRBU members to make them aware of the implications and manage any trade-offs.
100. As noted above, the NWRBU Board will be officer-led. Political accountability will remain as it is today. All LTA members have political representatives to escalate issues as appropriate and pan-Northern structures such as the Rail North Committee or the TfN Partnership Board are also forums in which political representatives can share their views or raise concerns.
101. The NWRBU will also interact with governance at the LTA level including the GM Rail Partnership Board. The GM Rail Partnership Board will be focused on aligning the rail network with the priorities of the GM region. This includes integrating the rail network with the local transport network in the region. The NWRBU is more focused on rail services which clearly transcend GMs boundaries and helps discharge the duties of the RNP and TfN with a North-Western perspective (including on train services, rolling stock, fares adjustments and TOC operational and customer performance review / monitoring) and supporting regional infrastructure proposals.
102. The intention is that, while the GM Rail Partnership Board may influence the NWRBU, and vice versa, they are managed / governed independently of one another. This recognises their key differences in attendees, geography and remit. But establishing both and aligning practices and principles (across all stakeholders) will be key to ensure the industry and wider transport network is pulling together as one in the interests of the customer.

How the NWRBU fits into the existing RNP / TfN governance structure

103. As noted earlier, there are no proposed changes to existing roles, responsibilities, accountabilities or risks from the proposal for a NWRBU. As a result, the NWRBU seamlessly fits into TfN and RNP existing governance structures. It is intended that the chair of the NWRBU will sit on the RNP Board alongside the other members. It will also participate in relevant technical working groups including direct engagement with RNP contract managers on operational issues, collaborative working with TfN on infrastructure issues and directly with TOCs on influencing the business plan for Northern and TPE. The role of the NWRBU and how it fits with TfN and Rail North as well as LTAs are summarised in the diagrams in Figure 4 and Figure 5 as well as Table 3 below.

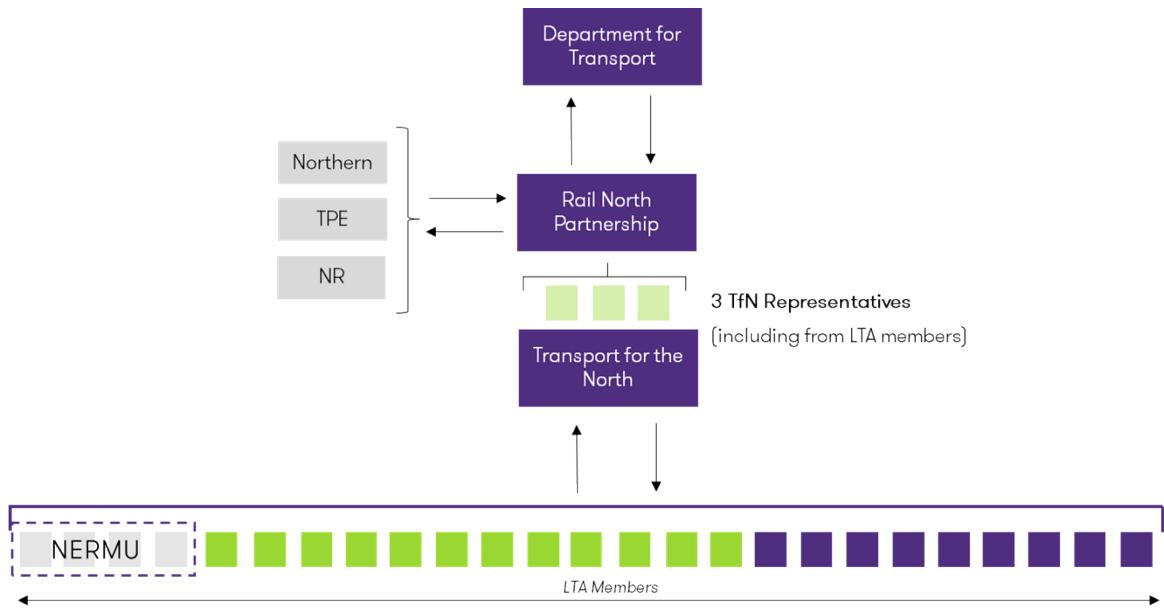


Figure 4 Current industry structure

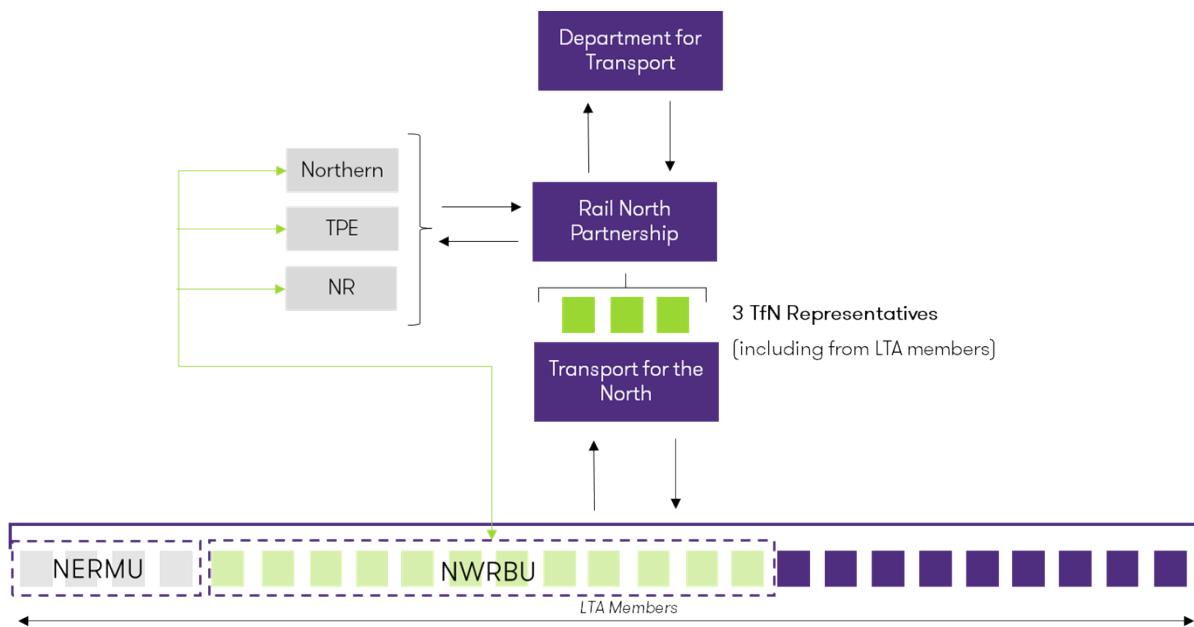


Figure 5 Industry structure with NWRBU

Table 3 Overview of the roles and responsibilities of LTAs, NWRBU and TfN / RNP

Role Type	LTA Current Role	Proposed NWRBU Role (to support LTAs and TfN / RNP)	TfN	RNP
General (data sharing, transparency, governance, decision making)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Constituent member of TfN (one of 25) but with no direct powers to influence strategic rail matters ▪ Limited access to data / information under current arrangement with further access by request through RNP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Works collaboratively with RNP and TOCs on data and evidence base with LTA members ▪ Sits on the RNP Board as one of the 3 x TfN representatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Responsible for the Statutory Strategic Transport Plan for the North ▪ Work with TOCs, Network Rail and DfT to share data and draw conclusions to inform policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with NTL/TPE, Network Rail and DfT to share data and draw conclusions to inform the contracts with NTL/TPE
Train Services (specification, short term planning, operational management)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Potential to engage on funding additional services, although no input on a broader basis into Northern's Annual Business Planning process ▪ Limited input into short term planning, wider timetable planning, and operational matters, except as part of stakeholder forums ▪ Undertake feasibility studies to support locally developed schemes and/or lobbying / influencing the rail industry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advise on Train Service Specification in TOC business plans working directly with operators and RNP and feeding input from LTAs ▪ Work in collaboration with RNP to manage contracts including performance ▪ Coordinate operational issues for LTAs to RNP to raise with TOCs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inputting into the Train Service Specification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managing and agreeing the overall Train service Specification alongside the Secretary of State
Stations (station management, improvements, customer service, transport integration)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contribution directly to station improvements (passenger facilities, accessibility improvements, car parks / park and rides, new stations). ▪ Informal alliances on stations with Network Rail, TOCs. ▪ Limited involvement in station management / operational matters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordinate LTA perspective on station improvement, management and funding on behalf of RNP / TfN to influence franchises and support infrastructure development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TfN coordinate station improvements proposals as part of wider infrastructure enhancement schemes being developed as part of the Strategic Transport Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ RNP manage station management and proposals for improvement with Northern and TPE.

	<p>(where there is huge opportunity to improve transport integration, for example)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Funding and support for Community Rail Partnerships 			
Ticketing / Fares (fares setting / products, integrated ticketing, ticketing enhancements)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can propose Fare adjustment proposals to the RNP board ▪ Subsidise concessionary fares ▪ Some city-region authorities manage / co-manage (with Northern) a number of multi modal products (e.g. Wayfarer, PlusBus & SystemOne) ▪ Limited opportunities for wider engagement on ticketing enhancements – act as a stakeholder within forums with RDG ▪ Smart ticketing across City-region's own modes (e.g. Metrolink / Merseyrail). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coordinate input and analysis across North-West LTAs on proposals for fare adjustments including business case development. ▪ Work with TOCs to access data and scrutinise fare adjustment proposals ▪ Propose fare adjustment to the RNP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ TfN can proceed with a Fares Change if the Secretary of State confirms that ▪ he does not believe that this will or may impose any adverse financial consequences on him. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Considers proposals for fares adjustments in terms of impact on the rail contracts with Northern / TPE and from a business case perspective
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Significant investment in coordinating and securing funding to deliver rail schemes in the LTA area ▪ Some involvement in strategic rail investment schemes e.g. as part of TfN governance ▪ Limited involvement in decision making on prioritisation of schemes (through TfN Statutory Partner role) and / or funding for rail improvements– these are all made at a regional and national level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate input and analysis across North-West LTAs to support TfN on infrastructure projects to feed into business case development • Support TfN in inputting into the implementation of infrastructure projects including on construction and delivery plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TfN develop the statutory Strategic Transport Plan to coordinate infrastructure development in the North of England and make the case to government for funding • TfN is a Statutory Partner on rail investment in the North of England. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and input impact of infrastructure proposals on service specification and operational ability of TOCs

5 Implementation

Resource and financial requirements

104. The NWRBU will be funded within existing budgets of its LTA members. A full-time RBU Manager will be appointed to coordinate the work of the RBU. This role will be hosted by TfGM but will represent all NWRBU members and will be accountable to the NWRBU Board. The RBU will be supported by a wider pool of resources within the Rail Team in TfGM and from other LTA members. To support NWRBU workstreams, specialist advice will be sought from LTA members with the greatest capabilities in those areas. This will allow all members to benefit from best practice capability in the North-West.
105. Depending on how future responsibilities evolve, resources could be funded or pooled from LTA members or other sources depending on requirements. For example, to develop business cases for service enhancement and fares there is capability available within the North-West that could be deployed for this purpose.
106. For any subsidy implications that arise from proposals (via business cases) that are put forward, the NWRBU will work with its members to consider what resources could be pooled or consider alternative sources if sufficient funding was available. This is consistent with the approach of the RNP Board where franchise adjustment proposals can be put forward which are financially neutral or have funding allocated.
107. Table 4 below highlights how NWRBU activities will be funded.

Table 4 Overview of how activities will be funded

Activity	Potential Funding sources / options
Set-up of RBU	Funded within existing budgets
Day-to-day running and management of RBU	Funded within existing budgets
Development of business cases for service enhancement and fare adjustment proposals	Funded within existing budgets
Potential subsidy implications of service enhancement or fares proposals	NWRBU will consider pooling long-term financial resources from LTA members or other sources if sufficient funding is available. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis and is consistent with the RNP approach of franchise output adjustments remaining financially neutral or with funding provision being in place.

Proposed approach to contractualisation

108. A range of options have been considered to implement the contractualisation of the NWRBU. To formalise the relationship at a high-level, the option of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) amongst the NW LTAs could be considered. MoUs generally do not imply legal commitment. Usually, they set out the objectives of the RBU and the principles by which the parties to the MoU would collaborate. This would set a baseline for engagement and cooperation for NW LTAs on the RBU. As the agreement is higher level and principle based, it may be easier to sign-off and agree compared with other more formal agreements. However, because MoUs are lighter-touch agreements that are often not legally enforceable, this type of agreement

could be more easily ignored and does not provide as strong an impetus for collaboration on the NWRBU. This may compromise the objectives of enabling the NWRBU to speak with ‘one voice’ for the region and the resources and capabilities at its disposal.

109. A more formal and binding approach would involve NW LTAs signing up to a Collaboration Agreement. The agreement would set out in more detail the intended role and governance of the NWRBU and the responsibilities and obligations of the signatories of the agreement. Collaboration Agreements have significant precedent in the rail industry and has been the contractual approach used by Rail North, TfN and the Secretary of State for the management of the two Northern Rail franchises. As the agreement would have a more solid legal foundation it will provide a stronger incentive to collaborate and would also make it more resilient to changes in the political environment. This is preferable to a more high-level Memorandum of Understanding agreement which would be a looser partnership with less obligations and binding commitments.

Critical Success Factors

110. To determine whether the NWRBU has been successful in delivering its objectives, a range of critical success factors have been developed. These factors will be closely monitored by the NWRBU Board which will ensure that the RBU is on track for achieving them.

111. These factors are outlined in detail in Table 5 below.

Table 5 Critical success factors

Key Critical Success Factors	Description
Collaboration, Representation and Consensus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">LTA members feel involved, represented and influentialThe NWRBU helps streamline existing governance and management arrangements.The NWRBU forges consensus and manages trade-offs to provide cohesive adviceThe NWRBU is able to foster collaborative relationships with TOCs to feed into the Annual Business Planning process for the franchisesThe NWRBU develops a collaborative relationship with Network Rail and other stakeholders including Transport Focus.RNP and TfN feel supported in executing their formal duties
Development of train service and fares proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The NWRBU delivers meaningful proposals to the RNP Board to improve outcomes for rail passengers including train service specification changes or fare adjustment proposals. This includes putting forward business cases or analytical evidence to support decision-making.Quick-wins and incremental proposals for service improvements and fare simplification are developed
Performance monitoring and contractual management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The NWRBU plays an active role in monitoring performance, raising issues and ensuring contractual targets are metData sharing between the NWRBU, RNP and TOCs is transparent
Impact and Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The NWRBU is an influential player in the region. It is trusted as providing ‘one-voice’ to the North-West, viewed credibly by key partners and stakeholders in region including TOCs, RNP and TfN

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adds value (rather than complexity) to the process of managing the rail services in the North, and has a collaborative relationship with Northern and TPE that allows transparent data sharing, the development of proposals to improve the train service and simplify fares and allows operators to be held to account for performance.
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Risk Management

112. The NWRBU will follow TfGM's Risk Management framework and it is intended that the NWRBU Board will oversee the risks and mitigations with the RBU Manager monitoring on a day-to-day basis.

113. An initial risk register has been developed for the NWRBU which will evolve as the implementation processes commences. This is set out in Table 6 below.

Table 6 Risk Register

ID	Risk description	Likelihood	Impact	Owner	Accountable	Mitigating Actions
1	A collaboration agreement is not agreed by June-23 deadline delaying the formation of the RBU and impeding its ability to influence the ABP process for TOCs	Low	Medium	RBU Manager (currently TfGM rail team)	RBU Board	<p>Significant engagement with partners in the NW has already taken place and will continue in relation to the role of the RBU. Workshops will be organised for early next year to begin the process for contractualisation.</p> <p>It is likely that the collaboration agreement will be similar to previous agreements and therefore it is unlikely there will need to be complex legal drafting.</p>
2	Adequate resources are not available for the NWRBU to fulfil its role	Medium	High	RBU Manager (currently TfGM rail team)	RBU Board and LTA members	<p>A mobilisation plan has been developed and TfGM will soon begin the process of recruiting the RBU Manager and choosing representatives for the RBU Board. There are options to pool available expertise across LTAs in the North-West especially from authorities such as TfGM and Merseyrail which have significant expertise and resources.</p>
3	TOCs are not cooperative with the RBU compromising the ability of the RBU to influential rail services and fares	Medium	High	RBU Manager RNP	RBU Board RNP Board	<p>The RBU will work collaboratively with RNP and TOCs to develop a formal planned process of engagement touch-points which align with the Annual Business Planning process. This will bring predictability and structure to the process and should therefore ease the process of</p>

						engagement. If sufficient collaboration is not being achieved then the RBU will escalate to the RNP Board and leverage political channels.
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Timescales and Mobilisation

114. The following are the proposed timescales for the immediate next steps for the NWRBU:

- a. The proposal for the RNP Board will be submitted for approval in January 2023.
- b. Between January and March, LTAs within the North-West region will develop the partnership agreement to form the RBU.
- c. Beyond April, the NWRBU will develop a ‘business plan’ for the year including the key objectives, deliverables and milestones it should deliver in the year. The RBU Board will hold the RBU Manager to account for the delivery of this plan.

115. The mobilisation plan for this is set out in Table 7 below.

Table 7 Mobilisation plan

Workstreams	Resources / Owners	Timescales
Collaboration Agreement Legal to develop agreement framework / structure Agree / populate clauses / schedules Issue first draft of Agreement Discussion / Dialogue Finalise Agreement	Led by Legal and Commercial Advisors (Grant Thornton) Input from NWRBU members	Est. completion June-23
Governance Arrangements Governance Arrangements – agree decision making processes and voting rights Meeting Frequency and Terms of Reference Establishment of Boards and Working Groups Papers / Processes KPIs / Reporting How fits / aligns with RNP governance etc.	TfGM Lead Support from NWRBU members	Est. completion May-23
NWRBU ‘Business Plan’ Workshop specific priorities / objectives for NWRBU (internally and with rail industry partners) Agree priorities, objectives and specific action plans (incl roles and responsibilities) into a dedicated NWRBU ‘Business Plan’ Agree monitoring and reporting against Business Plan	Led jointly by NWRBU members Input from TfN, RNP, ToCs, NR to ensure alignment	Est. completion May-23 Ongoing monitor / review thereafter
Geography Develop precise mapping / geography definitions Common understanding of service group in NW scope Agree cross-boundary processes	TfGM lead	Est. completion April-23
People / Resources Agree NWRBU member roles / responsibilities and any management arrangements (e.g. working groups) Appoint RBU Manager	TfGM lead	Est. completion June-23

Working with Rail Industry Partners (incl TfN, RNP, ToCs and NR) Agree principles for data sharing, alignment of governance and reporting, agree processes for feeding into TfN / RNP responsibilities (e.g. Annual Business Planning process) Agree data sharing / reporting with ToCs/NR and terms of engagement	TfGM lead	Est. completion May-23
Other Areas Comms / Marketing / Branding (tbc) Wider engagement with other rail industry partners / stakeholders	TfGM lead	Est. completion latter half of 2023 (not required for NWRBU 'go live')

Appendix

North West Regional Business Unit Member – Letters of Support

Simon Elliott
Transport for Greater Manchester
2 Piccadilly Place
Manchester
M1 3BG

[INSERT DATE]

RE: North West Regional Business Unit – WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL Letter of Support

Dear Simon,

Further to positive discussions held to date on the establishment of a North West Regional Business Unit (NWRBU) created under the existing Rail North Partnership (RNP) framework, we are pleased to confirm our support in principle. We understand that Transport for Greater Manchester, on behalf of the local authorities and Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) across the North West of England, are submitting a formal proposal to the RNP Board requesting approval to establish the NWRBU and that this letter will be included in the proposal to demonstrate our support.

Our support is based on our current understanding of the role and purpose of NWRBU, namely:

- The NWRBU will consist of up to 12 local authorities and MCAs across the North West of England
- The NWRBU's purpose is to support TfN and RNP in executing their formal duties, with a specific focus on providing specialist insight, advice and added value across the North West region
- The NWRBU is to act as influential / key partner across NW region, working within the framework of the TfN / DfT Partnership Agreement
- The NWRBU will provide cohesive, constructive, strategic and tactical/operational advice to both TfN and RNP on management of rail contracts (TPE and NTL) and infrastructure schemes in the NW region
- The NWRBU will act as 'one voice' for the NW region in our wider engagement with rail industry e.g. NR and Operators

Similarly, our support is also based upon our current understanding of the anticipated commercial and management arrangements, including:

- The NWRBU will be enabled through a formal agreement between its members (which will be developed and entered into following approval of the proposal), including clear governance and management arrangements.
- The NWRBU will formally meet periodically (aligned with TfN / RNP's governance) with clear ToR to be developed
- The NWRBU will be resourced by member organisations, with centrally appointed NWRBU manager(s) to manage governance and interactions with TfN, RNP and industry partners e.g. TOCs, NR
- The NWRBU will be embedded into TfN and RNP processes to facilitate effective collaboration, e.g. dedicated resources, sharing of data, IT systems integration (where feasible), and alignment of governance / reporting
- There is no formal transfer of risk, responsibility or accountability as all NWRBU members are already members of the RNP Partnership Agreement. The NWRBU will feed into existing RNP governance arrangements. It is therefore assumed there is no change to existing governance or decision making powers (including voting rights).
- All TfN and RNP responsibilities, accountabilities and duties remain as today

Subject to the proposal being approved by at the RNP Board, we intend to become a member of the NWRBU and enter into an agreement between NWRBU members. We look forward to working with you on this, the establishment of the NWRBU, and on delivering positive outcomes for the region during 2023 and beyond.

Kind Regards,



Steve Hunter
Transport for Warrington Service Manager
Warrington Borough Council



Simon Elliott
Transport for Greater Manchester
2 Piccadilly Place
Manchester
M1 3BG

Date: 06 January 2023
My Ref:
Please ask for: Martin Kelly
Direct Dial: 01254 588686
Email address: martin.kelly@blackburn.gov.uk

Dear Simon

RE: North West Regional Business Unit – Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council Support

Further to positive discussions held to date on the establishment of a North West Regional Business Unit (NWRBU) to be created under the existing Rail North Partnership (RNP) framework, we are pleased to confirm our support in principle.

We understand that Transport for Greater Manchester, on behalf of the North West of England Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) and Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs), are submitting a formal proposal to the RNP Board requesting approval to establish the NWRBU and that this letter will be included in the proposal to demonstrate our support.

The move towards the creation of Great British Railways (GBR) presents a significant opportunity for North West of England LTAs to come together as partners to influence the future planning of rail. We feel that the NWRBU's creation will provide additional local input to the existing RNP framework, forming the basis for stronger relationships between LTAs, RNP, TfN and in the future, GBR. We agree that the NWRBU's establishment would deliver additional regional benefits giving LTAs enhanced influence in rail matters and building on well-established arrangements with TfN.

The NWRBU's common aims are of particular importance to Lancashire and Blackburn with Darwen. The need for a greater, combined influence cannot be underestimated and we see additional input and focus on the North West's transport issues as being key to the development of future rail infrastructure and services.

Martin Kelly – Strategic Director for Growth and Development
3rd Floor, One Cathedral Square, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 1EP

Given the current financial climate, assuming further financial risk is not feasible for the Council. Furthermore, the current Central Government "red lines" regarding provision for additional power devolution, or finance at the present time, are noted.

Our support is based on our current understanding of the NWRBU's role and purpose, namely:

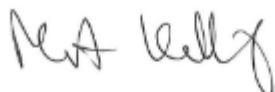
- The NWRBU will consist of up to thirteen North West of England LTAs and MCAs
- The NWRBU's purpose is to support TfN and RNP in executing their formal duties, with a specific focus on providing specialist insight, advice and added value across the North West region
- The NWRBU is to act as influential / key partner across the North West region, working within the framework of the TfN / DfT Partnership Agreement
- The NWRBU will provide cohesive, constructive, strategic and tactical / operational advice to both TfN and RNP on management of rail contracts (TPE and NTL) and infrastructure schemes in the North West region
- The NWRBU will act as 'one voice' for the North West region in our wider engagement with the rail industry e.g. Network Rail and Operators
- The NWRBU will be inclusive, strongly representing and advocating for the needs of all parts of the North West region
- The NWRBU will have governance arrangements that are inclusive and allowing a strong voice for all parts of the North West region

Similarly, our support is also based upon our current understanding of the anticipated commercial and management arrangements, including:

- The NWRBU will be enabled through a formal agreement between its members (which will be developed and entered into following the proposal's approval), including clear governance and management arrangements
- The NWRBU will formally meet periodically (aligned with TfN / RNP's governance) with clear Terms of Reference to be developed
- The NWRBU will be resourced by member organisations, with centrally appointed NWRBU manager(s) to manage governance and interactions with TfN, RNP and industry partners e.g. TOCs and Network Rail
- The NWRBU will be embedded into TfN and RNP processes to facilitate effective collaboration, e.g. dedicated resources, sharing of data, IT systems integration (where feasible), and alignment of governance / reporting
- There is no formal transfer of risk, responsibility or accountability as all NWRBU members are already members of the RNP Partnership Agreement. The NWRBU will feed into existing RNP governance arrangements. It is therefore assumed there will be no change to existing governance or decision making powers (including voting rights)
- All TfN and RNP responsibilities, accountabilities and duties remain as today

We look forward to continuing to work with you on the proposals and to develop a collective agreement between all NWRBU members, so that we can deliver positive outcomes for the region during 2023 and beyond.

Yours sincerely



Martin Kelly
Strategic Director for Growth & Development

Martin Kelly – Strategic Director for Growth and Development
3rd Floor, One Cathedral Square, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 1EP

Blackpool Council

Date: 9th January 2023

Simon Elliott
Transport for Greater Manchester
2 Piccadilly Place
Manchester
M1 3BG

Our Ref:
Your Ref:
Direct Line: 01253 476176
Email: david.simper@blackpool.gov.uk

Dear Simon,

RE: North West Regional Business Unit – Blackpool Council Letter of Support

The council is pleased to confirm its support in principle for the establishment of a North West Regional Business Unit (NWRBU) to be created under the existing Rail North Partnership (RNP) framework. It is understood that Transport for Greater Manchester, on behalf of the local authorities and Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) across the North West of England, is submitting a formal proposal to the RNP Board requesting approval to establish the NWRBU and that this letter will be included in the proposal to demonstrate the council's support.

This support is based on a current understanding of NWRBU's role and purpose, namely:

- The NWRBU will consist of up to twelve local authorities and MCAs across the North West of England
- The NWRBU's purpose is to support TfN and RNP in executing their formal duties, with a specific focus on providing specialist insight, advice and added value across the North West region
- The NWRBU is to act as influential / key partner across NW region, working within the framework of the TfN / DfT Partnership Agreement
- The NWRBU will provide cohesive, constructive, strategic and tactical/operational advice to both TfN and RNP on management of rail contracts (TPE and NTL) and infrastructure schemes in the NW region
- The NWRBU will act as 'one voice' for the NW region in our wider engagement with rail industry e.g. NR and Operators

Similarly, the council's support is also based upon a current understanding of the anticipated commercial and management arrangements, including:



Communications and Regeneration www.blackpool.gov.uk
Growth and Prosperity
One Bickerstaffe Square
Blackpool, FY1 3AH

Blackpool Council

- The NWRBU will be enabled through a formal agreement between its members (which will be developed and entered into following approval of the proposal), including clear governance and management arrangements.
- The NWRBU will formally meet periodically (aligned with TfN / RNP's governance) with clear Terms of Reference to be developed
- The NWRBU will be resourced by member organisations, with centrally appointed NWRBU manager(s) to manage governance and interactions with TfN, RNP and industry partners e.g. TOCs, NR
- The NWRBU will be embedded into TfN and RNP processes to facilitate effective collaboration, e.g. dedicated resources, sharing of data, IT systems integration (where feasible), and alignment of governance / reporting
- There is no formal transfer of risk, responsibility or accountability as all NWRBU members are already members of the RNP Partnership Agreement. The NWRBU will feed into existing RNP governance arrangements. It is therefore assumed there is no change to existing governance or decision making powers (including voting rights).
- All TfN and RNP responsibilities, accountabilities and duties remain as today

Subject to the proposal being approved by at the RNP Board, the council intends to become a member of the NWRBU and enter into an agreement between NWRBU members. The council looks forward to working with you on this, the establishment of the NWRBU, and on delivering positive outcomes for the region during 2023 and beyond.

Yours sincerely,

David Simper

David Simper
Group Leader (Transport Projects)



Communications and Regeneration www.blackpool.gov.uk
Growth and Prosperity
One Bickerstaffe Square
Blackpool, FY1 3AH



Working for a brighter future together

Westfields
c/o Municipal Buildings
Earle Street
Crewe
CW1 2BJ
thomas.moody@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Date: 22 December 2022

Our Ref: TM/MM

Simon Elliott
Transport for Greater Manchester
2 Piccadilly Place
Manchester
M1 3BG

North West Regional Business Unit – Cheshire East Council Letter of Support

Dear Simon,

Further to positive discussions held to date on the establishment of a North West Regional Business Unit (NWRBU) created under the existing Rail North Partnership (RNP) framework, I am pleased to confirm support in principle on behalf of Cheshire East Council. We understand that Transport for Greater Manchester, on behalf of the local authorities and Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) across the North West of England, are submitting a formal proposal to the RNP Board requesting approval to establish the NWRBU and that this letter will be included in the proposal to demonstrate our support.

Our support is based on our current understanding of the role and purpose of NWRBU, namely:

- The NWRBU will consist of up to 12 local authorities and MCAs across the North West of England – including Cheshire East Council
- The NWRBU's purpose is to support TfN and RNP in executing their formal duties, with a specific focus on providing specialist insight, advice and added value across the North West region
- The NWRBU is to act as influential / key partner across NW region, working within the framework of the TfN / DfT Partnership Agreement
- The NWRBU will provide cohesive, constructive, strategic and tactical/operational advice to both TfN and RNP on management of rail contracts (TPE and NTL) and infrastructure schemes in the NW region

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All other enquiries 0300 123 5500

www.cheshireeast.gov.uk

- The NWRBU will act as 'one voice' for the NW region in our wider engagement with rail industry e.g. NR and Operators
- The NWRBU will make all reasonable endeavors to take into account the policy priorities and views of the participating Local Authorities in the conduct of its business.

Similarly, our support is also based upon our current understanding of the anticipated commercial and management arrangements, including:

- The NWRBU will be enabled through a formal agreement between its members (which will be developed and entered into following approval of the proposal), including clear governance and management arrangements.
- The NWRBU will formally meet periodically (aligned with TfN / RNP's governance) with clear Terms of Reference to be developed
- The NWRBU will be resourced by member organisations, with centrally appointed NWRBU manager(s) to manage governance and interactions with TfN, RNP and industry partners e.g. TOCs, NR
- The NWRBU will be embedded into TfN and RNP processes to facilitate effective collaboration, e.g. dedicated resources, sharing of data, IT systems integration (where feasible), and alignment of governance / reporting
- There is no formal transfer of risk, responsibility or accountability as all NWRBU members are already members of the RNP Partnership Agreement. The NWRBU will feed into existing RNP governance arrangements. It is therefore assumed there is no change to existing governance or decision making powers (including voting rights).
- All TfN and RNP responsibilities, accountabilities and duties remain as today

Subject to the proposal being approved by at the RNP Board, Cheshire East Council intends to become a member of the NWRBU and enter into an agreement between NWRBU members. We look forward to working with you on this, the establishment of the NWRBU, and on delivering positive outcomes for the region during 2023 and beyond.

Yours sincerely,



Tom Moody
Director of Highways & Infrastructure
Cheshire East Council

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Cumbria County Council

Economy and Infrastructure • Cumbria House • 117 Botchergate
Carlisle • Cumbria • CA1 1RD
T: 01228 606060 • F: 01228 606060 • E: angela.jones@cumbria.gov.uk

Simon Elliott
C/O Transport for Greater Manchester

Letter sent via email

21 December 2022

Dear Simon,

RE: North West Regional Business Unit –Letter of Support

Further to ongoing discussions held to date on the establishment of a North West Regional Business Unit (NWRBU) created under the existing Rail North Partnership (RNP) framework, we are able to confirm our support in principle.

We understand that Transport for Greater Manchester, on behalf of the local authorities across the North West of England, are submitting a formal proposal to the RNP Board requesting approval to establish the NWRBU and that this letter will be included in the proposal to demonstrate our support.

We feel that the creation of the NWRBU will provide additional local input to the existing RNP framework and form the basis for stronger relationships between LTAs, RNP, TfN and in the future, GBR. We agree that the establishment of the NWRBU would deliver additional benefits for the entire region giving LTAs supplementary influence in rail matters and building on established arrangements with TfN. While supportive in principle it is also important to note that additional financial risk and taking revenue risk is not feasible for the Council.

While writing on behalf of Cumbria County Council, it is important to note that from April 1st 2023 Cumbria County Council will be abolished to be replaced by Westmorland and Furness and Cumberland Council's. Both of which have been consulted and are supportive in principle and it will be important for both authorities to be individually engaged moving forward.

Our support is based on our current understanding of the role and purpose of NWRBU, namely:

- The NWRBU will consist of up to 13 local authorities and MCAs across the North West of England
- The NWRBU's purpose is to support TfN and RNP in executing their formal duties, with a specific focus on providing specialist insight, advice and added value across the North West region
- The NWRBU is to act as influential / key partner across NW region, working within the framework of the TfN / DfT Partnership Agreement
- The NWRBU will provide cohesive, constructive, strategic and tactical/operational advice to both TfN and RNP on management of rail contracts (TPE and NTL) and infrastructure schemes in the NW region

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- The NWRBU will act as 'one voice' for the NW region in our wider engagement with rail industry e.g. NR and Operators
- The NWRBU will be inclusive, strongly representing and advocating for the needs of all parts of the region
- The NWRBU will have governance arrangements that are inclusive and allowing a strong voice for all parts of the region

Similarly, our support in principle is also based upon our current understanding of the anticipated commercial and management arrangements, including:

- The NWRBU will be enabled through a formal agreement between its members (which will be developed and entered into following approval of the proposal), including clear governance and management arrangements.
- The NWRBU will formally meet periodically (aligned with TfN / RNP's governance) with clear ToR to be developed
- The NWRBU will be resourced by member organisations, with centrally appointed NWRBU manager(s) to manage governance and interactions with TfN, RNP and industry partners e.g. TOCs, NR
- The NWRBU will be embedded into TfN and RNP processes to facilitate effective collaboration, e.g. dedicated resources, sharing of data, IT systems integration (where feasible), and alignment of governance / reporting
- There is no formal transfer of risk, responsibility or accountability as all NWRBU members are already members of the RNP Partnership Agreement. The NWRBU will feed into existing RNP governance arrangements. It is therefore assumed there is no change to existing RNP governance or decision making powers (including voting rights).
- All TfN and RNP responsibilities, accountabilities and duties remain as today

We look forward to working with you on this, the establishment of the NWRBU, and on delivering positive outcomes for the region during 2023 and beyond.

Kind Regards,



Angela Jones
Executive Director Economy and Infrastructure

Simon Elliott
Transport for Greater Manchester
2 Piccadilly Place
Manchester
M1 3BG

Telephone 01629 536721
Ask for Chris Hegarty
Email Chris.hegarty@derbyshire.gov.uk
Our ref NWRBU1
Your ref

Date 04 January 2023

Dear Simon,

RE: North West Regional Business Unit – Derbyshire County Council Letter of Support

Further to positive discussions held to date on the establishment of a North West Regional Business Unit (NWRBU) created under the existing Rail North Partnership (RNP) framework, we are pleased to confirm Derbyshire County Council's support in principle. We understand that Transport for Greater Manchester, on behalf of the local authorities and Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) across the North West of England, are submitting a formal proposal to the RNP Board requesting approval to establish the NWRBU and that this letter will be included in the proposal to demonstrate our support.

Our support is based on our current understanding of the role and purpose of NWRBU, namely:

- The NWRBU will consist of up to 12 local authorities and MCAs across the North West of England
- The NWRBU's purpose is to support TfN and RNP in executing their formal duties, with a specific focus on providing specialist insight, advice and added value across the North West region
- The NWRBU is to act as influential / key partner across NW region, working within the framework of the TfN / DfT Partnership Agreement
- The NWRBU will provide cohesive, constructive, strategic and tactical/operational advice to both TfN and RNP on management of rail contracts (TPE and NTL) and infrastructure schemes in the NW region
- The NWRBU will act as 'one voice' for the NW region in our wider engagement with rail industry e.g. NR and Operators

Similarly, our support is also based upon our current understanding of the anticipated commercial and management arrangements, including:

- The NWRBU will be enabled through a formal agreement between its members (which will be developed and entered into following approval of the proposal), including clear governance and management arrangements.
- The NWRBU will formally meet periodically (aligned with TfN / RNP's governance) with clear ToR to be developed

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- The NWRBU will be resourced by member organisations, with centrally appointed NWRBU manager(s) to manage governance and interactions with TfN, RNP and industry partners e.g. TOCs, NR.
- There will be no additional cost to Derbyshire County Council to join the NWRBU beyond the funding we already provide to TfN.
- The NWRBU will be embedded into TfN and RNP processes to facilitate effective collaboration, e.g. dedicated resources, sharing of data, IT systems integration (where feasible), and alignment of governance / reporting
- There is no formal transfer of risk, responsibility or accountability as all NWRBU members are already members of the RNP Partnership Agreement. The NWRBU will feed into existing RNP governance arrangements. It is therefore assumed there is no change to existing governance or decision making powers (including voting rights).
- . All TfN and RNP responsibilities, accountabilities and duties remain as today

Subject to the proposal being approved by at the RNP Board, we intend to become a member of the NWRBU and enter into an agreement between NWRBU members. We look forward to working with you on this, the establishment of the NWRBU, and on delivering positive outcomes for the region during 2023 and beyond.

Yours sincerely

Chris Hegarty

Strategic Rail Officer

Simon Elliott
Transport for Greater Manchester
2 Piccadilly Place
Manchester
M1 3BG
simon.elliott@tfgm.com

Phone: 01772 534675
Email: phil.durnell@lancashire.gov.uk
Our ref: PD/TFGM1
Date: 21 December 2022

RE: North West Regional Business Unit – Lancashire County Council Support

Dear Simon

Further to positive discussions held to date on the establishment of a North West Regional Business Unit (NWRBU) to be created under the existing Rail North Partnership (RNP) framework, we are pleased to confirm our support in principle.

We understand that Transport for Greater Manchester, on behalf of the North West of England Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) and Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs), are submitting a formal proposal to the RNP Board requesting approval to establish the NWRBU and that this letter will be included in the proposal to demonstrate our support.

The move towards the creation of Great British Railways (GBR) presents a significant opportunity for North West of England LTAs to come together as partners to influence the future planning of rail. We feel that the NWRBU's creation will provide additional local input to the existing RNP framework, forming the basis for stronger relationships between LTAs, RNP, TfN and in the future, GBR. We agree that the NWRBU's establishment would deliver additional regional benefits giving LTAs enhanced influence in rail matters and building on well-established arrangements with TfN.

The NWRBU's common aims are of particular importance to Lancashire. The need for a greater, combined influence cannot be underestimated and we see additional input and focus on the North West's transport issues as being key to the development of future rail infrastructure and services.

Given the current financial climate, assuming further financial risk is not feasible for the County Council. Furthermore, the current Central Government "red lines" regarding provision for additional power devolution, or finance at the present time, are noted.

Our support is based on our current understanding of the NWRBU's role and purpose, namely:

- The NWRBU will consist of up to thirteen North West of England LTAs and MCAs

Lancashire County Council
PO Box 100, County Hall, Preston, PR1 0LD

—————>>>————— lancashire.gov.uk

- The NWRBU's purpose is to support TfN and RNP in executing their formal duties, with a specific focus on providing specialist insight, advice and added value across the North West region
- The NWRBU is to act as influential / key partner across the North West region, working within the framework of the TfN / DfT Partnership Agreement
- The NWRBU will provide cohesive, constructive, strategic and tactical / operational advice to both TfN and RNP on management of rail contracts (TPE and NTL) and infrastructure schemes in the North West region
- The NWRBU will act as 'one voice' for the North West region in our wider engagement with the rail industry e.g. Network Rail and Operators
- The NWRBU will be inclusive, strongly representing and advocating for the needs of all parts of the North West region
- The NWRBU will have governance arrangements that are inclusive and allowing a strong voice for all parts of the North West region

Similarly, our support is also based upon our current understanding of the anticipated commercial and management arrangements, including:

- The NWRBU will be enabled through a formal agreement between its members (which will be developed and entered into following the proposal's approval), including clear governance and management arrangements
- The NWRBU will formally meet periodically (aligned with TfN / RNP's governance) with clear Terms of Reference to be developed
- The NWRBU will be resourced by member organisations, with centrally appointed NWRBU manager(s) to manage governance and interactions with TfN, RNP and industry partners e.g. TOCs and Network Rail
- The NWRBU will be embedded into TfN and RNP processes to facilitate effective collaboration, e.g. dedicated resources, sharing of data, IT systems integration (where feasible), and alignment of governance / reporting
- There is no formal transfer of risk, responsibility or accountability as all NWRBU members are already members of the RNP Partnership Agreement. The NWRBU will feed into existing RNP governance arrangements. It is therefore assumed there will be no change to existing governance or decision making powers (including voting rights)
- All TfN and RNP responsibilities, accountabilities and duties remain as today

We look forward to continuing to work with you on the proposals and to develop a collective agreement between all NWRBU members, so that we can deliver positive outcomes for the region during 2023 and beyond.

Yours sincerely



Phil Durnell
Director of Highways and Transport
Lancashire County Council

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Simon Elliott
Transport for Greater Manchester
2 Piccadilly Place
Manchester
M1 3BG

Cheshire West & Chester Council
The Portal, Wellington Road,
Ellesmere Port,
CH65 0BA
Phone number: 0300 123 8123

25th January 2023

RE: North West Regional Business Unit – Cheshire West and Chester Council Letter of Support

Dear Simon,

Further to positive discussions held to date on the establishment of a North West Regional Business Unit (NWRBU) created under the existing Rail North Partnership (RNP) framework, we are pleased to confirm our support in principle. We understand that Transport for Greater Manchester, on behalf of the local authorities and Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) across the North West of England, are submitting a formal proposal to the RNP Board requesting approval to establish the NWRBU and that this letter will be included in the proposal to demonstrate our support.

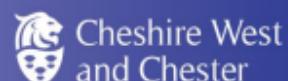
Our support is based on our current understanding of the role and purpose of NWRBU, namely:

- The NWRBU will consist of up to 12 local authorities and MCAs across the North West of England
- The NWRBU's purpose is to support TfN and RNP in executing their formal duties, with a specific focus on providing specialist insight, advice and added value across the North West region
- The NWRBU is to act as influential / key partner across NW region, working within the framework of the TfN / DfT Partnership Agreement
- The NWRBU will provide cohesive, constructive, strategic and tactical/operational advice to both TfN and RNP on management of rail contracts (TPE and NTL) and infrastructure schemes in the NW region
- The NWRBU will act as 'one voice' for the NW region in our wider engagement with rail industry e.g. NR and Operators

Similarly, our support is also based upon our current understanding of the anticipated commercial and management arrangements, including:

- The NWRBU will be enabled through a formal agreement between its members (which will be developed and entered into following approval of the proposal), including clear governance and management arrangements.
- The NWRBU will formally meet periodically (aligned with TfN / RNP's governance) with clear Terms of Reference to be developed
- The NWRBU will be resourced by member organisations, with centrally appointed NWRBU manager(s) to manage governance and interactions with TfN, RNP and industry partners e.g. TOCs, NR
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- There is no formal transfer of risk, responsibility or accountability as all NWRBU members are already members of the RNP Partnership Agreement. The NWRBU will feed into existing RNP governance arrangements. It is therefore assumed there is no change to existing governance or decision making powers (including voting rights).
- All TfN and RNP responsibilities, accountabilities and duties remain as today

Subject to the proposal being approved by the RNP Board, we intend to become a member of the NWRBU and enter into an agreement between NWRBU members. We look forward to working with you on this, the establishment of the NWRBU, and on delivering positive outcomes for the region during 2023 and beyond.



Commercial in confidence

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Kind Regards,



Rose McArthur
Director of Transport & Highways
Cheshire West and Chester Council



