



## Right Track North charter

The Government is consulting on the future of railways in the north of England. This charter makes the case for people, communities and the economy in the North to have a high quality rail network, and sets out what this means in practice.

Currently many rail services in the North are well below the standards in other parts of the country leaving passengers dissatisfied and the potential for growth unmet. We welcome the investment that the Government has already committed, to the Northern Hub and electrification. This has made a start in improving the network but much more is needed if the North-South divide is to be narrowed. We want the Department for Transport to use the re-franchising of Northern Rail and Trans-Pennine Express to make further major strategic investments in the quality and capacity of the north's rail network. Only through such investment can costs and subsidy be reduced. Such investment will have wider economic benefits and is essential if the region is to take full advantage of investments such as HS2 and the prospect of faster East-West connectivity in future.

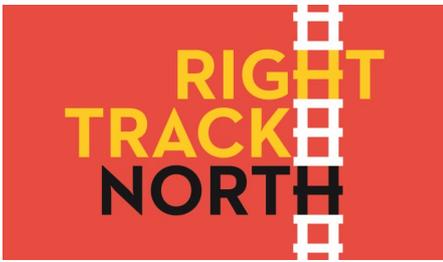
In practice this means:

### Better quality

- New trains to replace decrepit 30-year old diesel trains are essential, and upgrades to others must be part of the franchise. The existing trains drag down the region in its performance and image. **New franchises should include a clear timetable for replacing older rolling stock and upgrading the rest to meet basic standards of comfort, reliability, information, accessibility and cleanliness**
- Better stations: many stations lack even basic facilities, are unattractive for users and are not contributing to their local community and economy as they could. **The new franchises should include a major programme to invest in stations so that all have basic facilities like covered waiting areas, real time information and help points. There also needs to be a major programme of accessibility improvements. More major stations should be upgraded and redeveloped where appropriate as gateways or hubs for the communities they serve.**
- Customer service: **the new franchises should include improved services for users. There should be sufficient staff on trains and stations to collect revenue, help people and give passengers security.**
- Value for money: **The franchises should include a "Passengers' Charter" with a right to be sold the cheapest ticket for any journey on the railway network in the North. Part-time workers should be offered flexible season tickets, initially through monthly carnets and later through smartcards (see below).**

### Higher capacity

- Tackle overcrowding: the railways in northern England have seen huge growth in usage over the past few years and overcrowding is a major problem on many parts of the network, on some lines worse than in the South East. KPMG has estimated that this could have lost northern cities 20,000 new jobs and £500m in their economies. **The new franchises should include investment in more trains as well as replacing and upgrading existing ones, with standards for maximum passenger numbers on trains and maximum time passengers should expect to stand, as on the London and South East commuter network.**



- Faster and reliable journeys: journey times between northern cities are far slower than those in the south. Improving journey times and reliability will attract more people to use the trains and cut costs by making better use of trains. **Alongside the new franchises, the Government should commit to invest in rail infrastructure in the north to bring down journey times between northern cities and improve reliability. A rolling programme of electrification must be part of this investment.**
- Increased capacity: the Northern Hub and other investments are very welcome additions to capacity in the north of England, but with the current and expected levels of growth we believe that **the Government, rail industry and local authorities should develop a long term programme for further additions to capacity, including improving evening and weekend capacity, and options for future East-West capacity increase and a “Northern Hub 2” around West Yorkshire. This should take account of the needs of rail freight, which is also important for the region’s economy.**

#### Better connections

- Smart ticketing: the north needs the same smart ticketing that London has developed so successfully. **The new franchises should be part of a programme to roll out multi-modal smartcards, starting in the major cities where much investment has already been committed.**
- Better connections: **the new franchises should include better connections across cities and the region as a whole, and should be developed so that all parts of the region have good links to HS2.**
- Door to door journeys: **the new franchises should include better links to and integration between other modes of transport – buses, trams, and cycles as well as cars. Improvements to information and links between stations and the towns they serve should be part of the franchise commitments.**
- Missing links: some communities and key employment sites in northern England are not served by the rail network, and there are also “missing links” which would improve connectivity. Many of these are the subject of plans and studies by local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships in the region. **The new franchises should include a programme of investment in new stations and lines where justified, as a means of improving connectivity across the region and access to the rail network for communities and businesses.**

Many of these objectives can only be delivered through collaboration between the railways, the Government and local authorities. The experience on Merseyside, where Merseytravel manages the local rail network there, has been encouraging. We believe that the Government should aim over time to transfer control over railways in the north to the Rail North grouping of local authorities, subject to appropriate agreements on governance, finance and risk.

A growing and improving rail network is vital for the future of the North, and for rebalancing the economy of the country as a whole. This Charter is about giving the North rail services that will meet future as well as current needs, connecting people with jobs and services, giving people choice in how they travel, reducing road congestion and encouraging inward investment. This is not just about the next franchises. We ask that the Government commit to working with authorities, businesses and communities in the North on a long term programme of investment to give the North the railways it needs and deserves.



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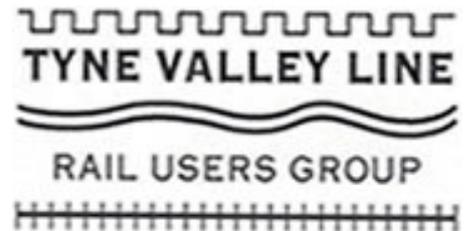
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