

New MD will lead Northern under public ownership

March 2, 2020



Northern Trains Limited has announced that a new Managing Director will be at the helm of the company as it moves into public ownership.

Senior rail executive, Nick Donovan, joins Northern Trains as Managing Director. Mr Donovan is the independent Chair of the Network Performance Board and successfully led TransPennine Express from

2011-2015.

For the last two years, Nick has been advising the ScotRail Alliance on train service performance and before that worked on making the case for Northern Powerhouse Rail. He was interim Engineering Director at Arriva Rail North in 2016.

Robin Gisby, Chairman of Northern Trains and CEO of the public sector operator, DOHL, said: "Nick's widespread experience, leadership of TPE and his role as Chair of the industry's National Performance Board has given him a first-class insight into all the issues and challenges we face, not just as Northern but for all operators across the Northern region.

"Given the current circumstances and environment we are operating in, I am very confident that Nick is the right person to lead the business going forward.

"David Brown has faced some very difficult challenges during his time leading the Northern business. I have now asked David to move across to our holding company where we can explore other senior level opportunities and retain his skills and experience. We should all take this opportunity to acknowledge David's significant contribution to the Northern Franchise over the last two and a half years.

"Our priority over the coming weeks will be to stabilise performance whilst continuing to deliver existing projects including the introduction of new trains. Over the next 100 days, we will push forward with a widespread review of the business and its operations to ensure that we can and will deliver the improvements that Northern's passengers deserve."

On 1st March 2020, the government operator took over the running of services across the Northern network. On Sunday it was also announced that a new stakeholder panel will be put in place to provide ongoing strategic advice on the issues that impact on the operator. Political leaders, including Andy Burnham from Manchester and Judith Blake from Leeds, will be joined by regional leaders, passenger representatives and industry leaders on the panel.

Further plans and announcements from the new Managing Director of Northern will be made over the next 100 days as the leadership prepares its ambitious plans to improve the service for passengers of Northern and the North of England.

Photo credit: M Barratt/ Shutterstock