

# Northern Evidence Academic Forum launched to help inform transport investment decisions

February 17, 2021

The poster features a vibrant background with a network of glowing lines in shades of blue, green, and purple, resembling a data or infrastructure map. The text is set against a solid purple background on the right side.

**Northern Evidence  
Academic Forum**

Wednesday 24 February  
12pm - 2pm

**FREE ONLINE EVENT**

 **TRANSPORT FOR THE  
NORTH**

A new collaborative approach to infrastructure planning and policymaking is being introduced by Transport for the North (TfN) to ensure investment decisions are based on the most relevant and latest research and data.

The [Northern Evidence Academic Forum](#) will hold its first meeting next week to connect the region's policy and decision-makers with the academics who are undertaking the cutting-edge research that could help shape and inform those choices.

It will provide a way to foster knowledge sharing to enhance understanding of a broad range of social and economic issues that are affected by or can have influence over transport and other infrastructure projects.

The forum will meet every quarter, with the first session to be held virtually.

Speakers at the launch event next week include:

- Tim Foster, Interim Strategy and Programmes Director at TfN
- Emanuela Orsolic, Senior Evidence and Analysis Officer at TfN
- Professor Philip McCann, Chair in Urban and Regional Economics at the University of Sheffield
- Jack Snape, Analysis Manager at TfN
- Dr Will Cook, Senior Lecturer in Economics at Manchester Metropolitan University
- Professor Greg Marsden, Professor of Transport Governance at the Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds

Tim Foster said: “There is a wealth of evidence being gathered by academics across our region that could guide our transport and infrastructure investment decisions; the trick is to bring everyone involved together in one place. Our Northern Evidence Academic Forum will do just that.

“By facilitating these regular sessions and supporting ongoing collaboration, we can ensure Transport for the North’s policy positions and actions are rooted in the strongest possible evidence, and also give other planners and policymakers that same confidence.

“The forum will help bring research to life to inform infrastructure planning, enabling investment decisions to be made with confidence, based on the latest data. It will give us greater assurance that the projects we and our partners are developing and advocating for are rooted in up-to-date evidence and will therefore best suit the connectivity needs of our region’s people and businesses.”

The forum will span themes including transport economics, decarbonisation, poverty, social exclusion, population health, and regional inequality in the North of England.

Discussions and research from the forum will also be incorporated into TfN’s [Northern Evidence Hub](#), a collection of easily accessible reports that can help shape the future of investment and growth in the North. This single library collates a wide range of evidence in one place, forming a coherent, efficient and strong evidence base for the North of England that supports joined-up planning and investment decisions.

**The Northern Evidence Academic Forum meets at 12pm on Wednesday 24 February on Microsoft Teams. [Click here](#) to register.**

*Photo credit: Transport for the North*