

Northern Powerhouse Rail could start in less than five years

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Work on Northern Powerhouse Rail could start in less than five years, according to the project's Director.

Transport for the North's [Tim Wood](#) told the [Westminster Social Policy Forum](#) he remains committed to finalising the case for NPR and securing unilateral support from Northern leaders.

The [blog post on Transport for the North's website](#) says he said the proposed start date for construction is "not a long time away" and believes it will form a key part of a Northern Infrastructure Pipeline.

"Despite the obvious challenges over recent months, the NPR programme continues to progress at pace," Mr Wood told the webinar.

"One thing I remain steadfast on is that we will have spades in the ground by the mid-2020s."

The rail boss said NPR is being designed to benefit the North "for the next century and beyond", and low passenger numbers on rail during the COVID-19 pandemic should not "deflect from this long-term vision".

He also emphasised the need for a green economic recovery in response to the crisis, and said the new rail network would work to support the aims of decarbonising the railways by 2050.

“Northern Powerhouse Rail will contribute significantly to reducing carbon emission levels by electrifying much of the north’s rail network and it will also take 64,000 car trips off the roads each day, achieved by building passenger trust in the network through reliable, quick and modern services,” said Mr Wood.

“NPR can play a key role to a green economic recovery and decarbonisation now and in the future.

“Commitment to NPR is an investment in a sustainable, greener future, while the associated work will lead to a significant upturn in the economy.”

The event focused on the next steps for NPR, with the panel discussing policy priorities, economic recovery post-COVID-19, and infrastructure development

And Mr Wood emphasised Northern leaders will have the chance to choose their rail future in November, when phasing and preferred routes are expected to be presented to [Transport for the North’s board](#).

“By better connecting the North’s towns and cities we can rebalance the economy and bring tangible benefits to Northerners that will make a real difference to their lives,” Mr Wood added.

“In a few months the North will have chosen the rail future it wants. One that is transformative in terms of journey times, capacity and connectivity but also economically, socially and environmentally, too.”

Click [here](#) to read the full blog post.

Photo credit: Transport for the North

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