

North's leaders to discuss rail reform

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Leaders from across the North of England are scheduled to meet virtually on Tuesday (January 12) to discuss rail reform and what it might look like in the years ahead.

With the Government's Williams Review on rail reform expected to be published by this Spring, members of [Transport for the North's](#) (TfN) [Rail North Committee](#) will discuss proposals for how the Sub-national Transport Body can take an active role in shaping the way the rail sector develops and is run over the coming decades.

The authority's executive has set out a paper which both makes clear what it has already fed into the review and which shows the sort of role the body could play in supporting local authorities to deliver their ambitions at their own pace.

David Hoggarth, Strategic Rail Director for Transport for the North, said: "In our submission to the Williams Review we have already made clear what we would like to see. This includes a rail sector where investment decisions focus on local needs and put passengers first. We also want to see more local accountability and a simplified network with consistency in fares and ticketing."

David said TfN had made clear that it believed there should be greater alignment across the rail sector

and, working through the appropriate local bodies, the creation of mechanisms that deliver outputs which reflect the concerns and needs of local people.

He said members had already agreed four priorities for rail reform which the North will be seeking whatever the rail review may produce. These include: accountability to the public; de-centralisation; transparency; and better integration of rail services with wider transport networks.

On Tuesday, members will hear that Transport for the North has the potential to help fulfil their ambitions for rail in a number of ways – including:

- playing a core role in managing great local input
- continuing to shape services and timetables
- providing regional oversight and helping co-ordinate cross boundary services
- and representing local and regional interests with the national co-ordinating body that is expected to emerge from the review outputs

If Tuesday's paper is accepted, then TfN will work with member authorities on a phased approach based around five-year milestones covering recovery from the pandemic, major programmes such as Northern Powerhouse Rail, the Transpennine Route Upgrade, and HS2.

Photo credit: Transport for the North