

Polling shows the North is upbeat about the economy over the next year

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Transport for the North and Ipsos Mori have been tracking the wellbeing of people in the North of England since the start of the year, with the latest results from September showing that the majority, 53%, rank their satisfaction with life as 7 or more out of 10 (where 10 is completely happy) – a significant increase on the 41% in January.

Over the same period, they have become much more optimistic about the future economic prospects of the North of England over the next 12 months, with 54% now very or fairly optimistic compared to 33% in January.

However, while life satisfaction and short-term economic optimism have both shown a steadily more positive trend across the three waves of polling conducted in 2021, Northerners have become *less* confident about the long-term outlook. Long-term economic optimism has fallen back slightly from 60% to 56% since April (after initially seeing a rise from 51% in January).

TfN launched its Northern Transport Charter at its annual conference in Leeds, which aims to set out a clear path for more devolution for Northern leaders to help build a New North.

Commenting on the figures, Transport for the North chief Executive Martin Tugwell, said: “This polling tells us that the prize of building a new north after the pandemic is there for the taking. People in the north are mostly upbeat after the last 18 months, but they are a little more cautious about their futures – the best way to reassure them would be to build transformational projects like Northern Powerhouse Rail and devolve more power to them as set out in the Northern Transport Charter.

“At our annual conference we will be setting out TfN’s vision for a new north of England that will help raise aspirations. And I would hope that as we hear back on key decisions about the investments we need, and people see progress over the coming months, the level of long-term optimism will start to reverse and head back in the right direction.”

Chris Rigby, Associate Director in Ipsos MORI’s Transport and Infrastructure team, said: “Our most recent survey for TfN finds Northerners in an increasingly buoyant mood about the prospects for the Northern economy over the coming 12 months. They are also feeling more positive about their own wellbeing compared with the start of the year, reflecting the changing context around the pandemic and the easing of restrictions. But there is a cautionary note in the survey findings – Northerners’ optimism around the region’s longer-term economic prospects has fallen away slightly since the spring.”

Photo credit: Transport for the North