

'There is an opportunity to build a New North after the pandemic' say region's leaders

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Transport for the North (TfN) Chief Executive Martin Tugwell has called for more devolution and new approach to funding for the region: one that recognises that local leaders are best placed to shape the future of connectivity in a way that creates opportunities for people and businesses.

Opening the TfN's Annual Conference in Leeds, he will highlight the importance of allowing the North's political and business leaders to decide and deliver on transport needs.

The blueprint for doing this is set out in TfN's [Northern Transport Charter](#) (NTC), a road map towards further devolution and funding control that would make levelling up real. These proposals are grouped around four key ambitions:

- Championing an inclusive and sustainable North
- A long-term Northern funding settlement (Northern Budget)
- Leading strategic transport delivery
- Putting rail passengers first

The Charter sets out how the people living and working in the North of England, as represented by the business and political leaders on the TfN Board, speaking with 'one voice', are best-placed to know what is in the long-term interests of the region.

Martin Tugwell, Transport for the North Chief Executive, said: "There is a prize of building a New North up for grabs, but it requires both investment to create transformational change, and the devolution of powers to those best placed to use them.

"By bringing our region's leaders together Transport for the North acts as the voice of our region on transport challenges and opportunities. It has allowed us to set out a single, ambitious vision that will transform connectivity, empower our people and businesses, help tackle climate change, support economic growth; enhance accessibility; and address societal disadvantages.

"Our Northern Transport Charter sets out how the investment made in TfN can be used to provide leadership and to determine what is best for our region .

"With further devolution and control over investment and policy decisions, we can work to close the North-South divide, unleash the North's economic potential, and make real the levelling up agenda in a green accessible and sustainable way: with it we can build a truly new north of England to the benefit of generations to come."

TfN's Annual Conference, which takes place today (Monday 20 September), brings together politicians and business leaders from the North, alongside industry experts, to discuss key issues on transport, decarbonisation, levelling up and economic recovery.

With the Government's upcoming Comprehensive Spending Review and the imminent publication of the long-awaited Integrated Rail Plan, speakers will reiterate the need for committed long-term funding to major infrastructure projects such as Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR), as well as highlight the wide-reaching and long-term benefits to be gained from improving connectivity, including the societal benefits and support for economic growth.

The crucial issue of climate change is also on the agenda, alongside the importance of encouraging people back to public transport post-Covid, the value of freight, and the need for strategic reform of the rail industry.

The third annual event, in partnership with The Northern Agenda, will be streamed live and in full online. To watch, visit: <https://transportforthenorth.com/annual-conference/>.

Photo credit: Transport for the North