

Transport for the North Annual Conference 2021: Northern leaders come together to discuss high-speed rail, the return to public transport, and decarbonisation

September 13, 2021



Transport for the North's 2021 Annual Conference is shaping up to be a day of debate, giving the region's political and business leaders the opportunity to reiterate the need for committed 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 investing in connectivity.

The third annual event, in partnership with The Northern Agenda, takes place on Monday 20 September at the Queens Hotel, Leeds, with sessions also being streamed live in full online.

During the morning panel sessions, discussions will focus on how a high-speed North can drive recovery across the region; whether people are going back to public transport and what more needs to be done to encourage them; as well as what the North thought of TfN's draft Decarbonisation Strategy.

For more details and to register for the livestream, visit: <https://transportforthenorth.com/annual-conference/>.

Andrew Jones, MP for Harrogate and Knaresborough, and Chair of the Rail in the North All-Party Parliamentary Group, is one of the panellists for the session on public transport. He said: "I am delighted to be joining Transport for the North's Annual Conference.

"Effective transport links are vitally important to all of us, not only in terms of getting from A to B, but in enabling access to jobs, education, health and leisure opportunities.

"Transport also has an important role to play in driving economic growth and in the decarbonisation agenda. The day promises to be action packed as we look to map out a better transport system in the years ahead following the pandemic, for people and businesses across the region."

Jamie Driscoll, Mayor of the North of Tyne, will be discussing decarbonisation, and said: "A third of CO₂ emissions are due to transport. It's essential that we tackle climate change head-on in the North.

"TfN's pioneering Decarbonisation Strategy sets the North's path to net zero. It's ambitious and it needs to be. Announcements about a green economy won't cut it – they have to be backed by funding and powers. Time has run out, let's work together to make the change happen."

Maggie Simpson OBE, Director General of Rail Freight Group, will be on the panel for the high speed rail discussion. She commented: "Increasing the amount of freight from road to rail is an important part of tackling climate change to ultimately deliver a more sustainable future.

"High speed rail projects will add resilience, connectivity and capacity to the network. This is an opportunity to put more freight on the railway using capacity freed up on core routes and also encourages new customers to rail.

"Join Transport for the North's Annual Conference to hear about ambitious plans on decarbonisation and the vital role freight transport will play in the region's prosperity."

Morning schedule for the Transport for the North Annual Conference

10.30 - 11:15 Morning Plenary

- West Yorkshire Mayor, Tracy Brabin
- TfN Chief Executive, Martin Tugwell
- More to be confirmed

11:30 - 12:30 Breakout sessions

How a high-speed North can drive a high-speed recovery

- Chaired by the Guardian's North of England Editor, Helen Pidd
- Northern Powerhouse Rail Director, Tim Wood
- West Yorkshire Mayor, Tracy Brabin
- HS2 Phase 2b Sponsorship Director, Lorna Pimlott
- Rail Freight Group Director General, Maggie Simpson OBE

Are people going back to public transport and what more needs to be done?

- Chaired by the Editor of The Northern Agenda, Rob Parsons
- Harrogate and Knaresborough MP, Andrew Jones
- TfN Strategic Rail Director, David Hoggarth
- Transport Focus Stakeholder Manager, Yvonne Fox-Burmby

What did the North think of our decarbonisation strategy?

- North of Tyne Mayor, Jamie Driscoll
- TfN Interim Strategy and Programme Director, Tim Foster
- Committee on Climate Change, Professor Piers Forster
- The Blair Project Director of Business, Dr Marilyn Comrie

Speakers and topics for the afternoon sessions will be announced shortly.

Photo credit: Transport for the North