

Connecting Communities: Rail Strategy in a Devolving Landscape A North East Perspective

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Overview

- Almost 19 million journeys started or ended at North East railway stations in 24/25- up 20% on pre-pandemic levels even without the Northumberland Line.
- Tyne and Wear Metro saw over 32 million journeys.
- We have 2 active Community Rail Partnerships, with another coming soon.





Local Transport Plan & Rail Strategy

Our LTP was published in March 2025 following approval by Cabinet and a 12-week public consultation, generating over 16k responses

Aim to create a green, integrated transport network that works for all.

Sets region's transport priorities up to 2040, covers movement of both people and freight.

Accompanied by a Delivery Plan - the list of what we will build, introduce or change up to 2040 and what mechanisms we will use to deliver.

Our rail strategy will be a comprehensive strategy for the North East Combined Authority that:

- Supports delivery of the Local Transport Plan (LTP)
- Sets clear expectations for the rail industry/GBR through partnership working with the Combined Authority

North East communities represented by our Tyne Valley Community Rail partnership sit on the steering group.



In the last year...

- Opening the Northumberland Line, transforming connectivity in SE Northumberland. Over 800,000 passenger journeys recorded since opening in December 2024. Invested to secure delivery of Northumberland Park interchange.
- 2tph service on Durham Coast Line has been a long-term goal and is starting next week!
- Established North East Rail Partnership Board to prepare for partnership with GBR.
- Rollout of new Metro fleet underway to deliver - 23 new trains expected to be in service by end of 2025.
- Secured £1.85bn of Transport for City Regions funding, including investment to bring the Metro to Washington.



Our priorities

- Increasing local service frequencies to make rail a more viable choice.
- Fully integrating rail with other modes: coordinated timetables, integrated ticketing and physical integration at interchanges.
- Supporting housing growth and regeneration by unlocking development opportunities around new and existing stations and lines, starting with Leamside.
- Delivering much-needed capacity increases on the East Coast Main Line
- A safe rail network where women and young girls feel confident using rail at any time.
- Making North East stations fully accessible.

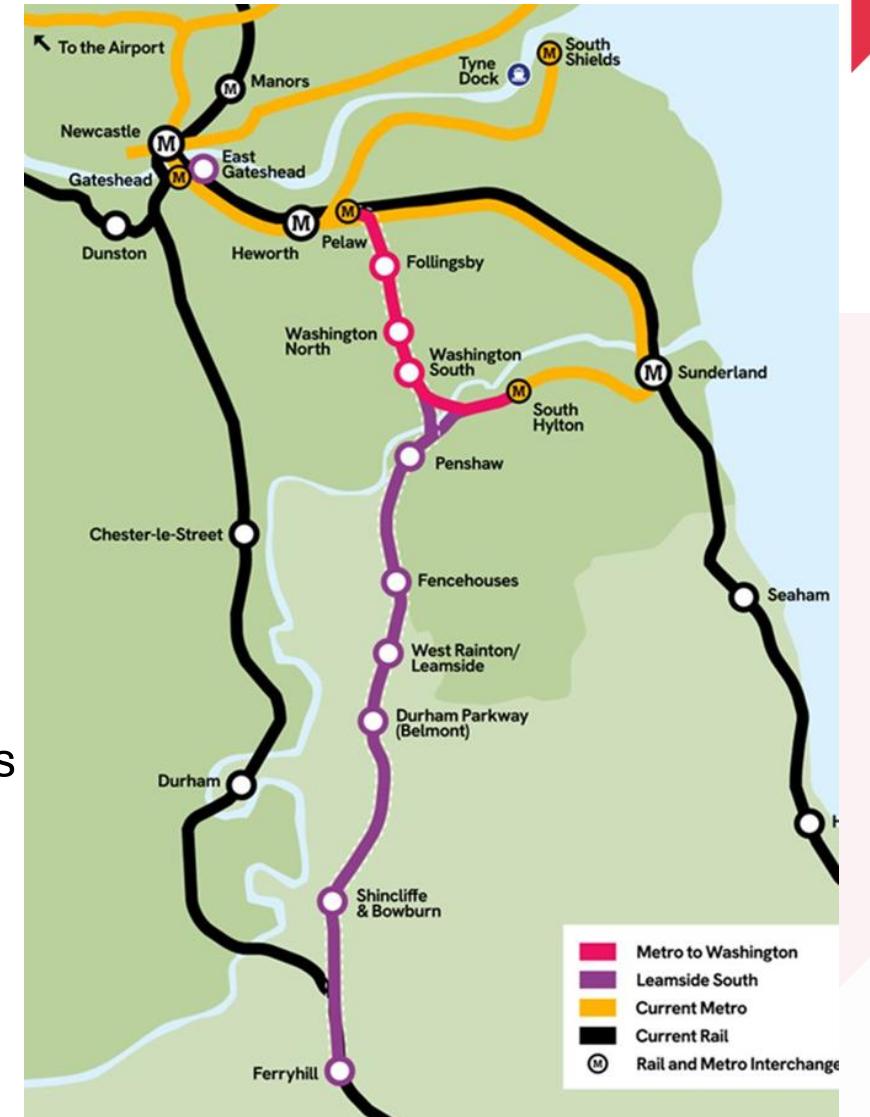
Leamside Line

Metro to Washington

- One of the UK's largest towns with no mass transit solution.
- Currently at Outline Business Case stage.
- Due for completion end of 26/27 financial year.

Leamside South

- Major opportunity for regeneration, connecting communities and releasing much-needed ECML capacity for more long-distance services to come to the region.
- Technical feasibility work and simultaneous Investment Corridor strategies are underway







Rail Reform and Rail Partnerships

- North East welcomes the opportunity of rail reform to influence the rail network to better align with local strategies.
- We have established shared governance through the North East Rail Partnership Board. This is chaired by the Mayor and defines our partnership asks to industry in the upcoming North East rail strategy.

The North East Rail Partnership Board aims to:

- Influence Great British Rail design and future partnership arrangements.
- Work on short-term North East priorities.
- Key goals are integration of rail ticketing with Pop brand, enhancing station accessibility and safety and joint investment planning.



Other Partnerships

North East Rail Management Unit (NERMU)

- Management of NERMU regional business unit delivering meaningful local influence over the delivery of rail services in the North East, Tees Valley, North Yorkshire and Cumbria.

Wider industry engagement

- Active involvement in national and regional discussions, including ECML timetabling, through bodies such as the Rail North Committee.

Community Rail Partnerships

- Partnering with CRPs ensures their initiatives complement the region's Rail Strategy and Local Transport Plan, driving sustainable travel and empowering community-led enhancements.



North East
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