

# News story: Competition will breathe new life into an old Pacer train

- Rail Minister calls for ideas on how a Pacer train could be renovated to serve communities
- an old Pacer could be transformed into a community space, cafe or new village hall
- Pacers will be phased out this year and replaced by new and refurbished trains across the north

An old Pacer could be transformed into a community space, a café or even a new village hall after Rail Minister Andrew Jones announced that a call for ideas will be launched on how the Pacer could be renovated to continue to serve communities.

After more than 3 decades of service, Pacers are being phased out alongside the introduction of a fleet of entirely new and refurbished trains across the northern network, delivering more modern and frequent services with extra seats for passengers in the north.

This summer, rail industry partners will launch a competition offering community groups the opportunity to put forward their plans to convert a Pacer into a new public space.

The Pacer will be donated by rolling stock company Porterbrook.

Rail Minister Andrew Jones said:

The Pacers have been the workhorses of the north's rail network, connecting communities for more than 30 years, but it is clear that they have outstayed their welcome.

That is why they are being phased out completely to make way for new or fully-refurbished trains, improving journeys and creating space for 40,000 more passengers

Through this competition we can ensure that the Pacer can be transformed to serve a community near where it carried passengers in an entirely different way. What we need now are creative and exciting proposals from the public, alongside ideas from businesses keen to support this competition, as we say goodbye to Pacers on our railway.

Northern Powerhouse Minister Jake Berry MP said:

Making the north one of the best connected regions in the UK is at the heart of our ambition for a thriving [Northern Powerhouse](#).

Replacing Pacers with a brand new fleet of trains is not just great news for passengers, it now provides this exciting opportunity for our grassroots community groups across the north to bring people together through this competition.

I travelled to school on a Pacer train and I look forward to getting on board again to see how these old carriages will continue to provide a valuable service for many years to come.

Senior sponsor at Network Rail, Andrew Morgan, said:

As part of the Great North Rail Project, we have lengthened platforms, remodelled track and altered Victorian structures across the north. These upgrades have paved the way for new and refurbished longer trains, allowing the pacer train to be phased out.

Managing Director of Arriva Rail North, David Brown, said:

Northern is introducing 101 new trains worth £500 million, the first of these new trains will be carrying customers this summer, and at the same time we will start to retire the Pacer trains. Using a Pacer as a valued community space is a very fitting way to commemorate the service they have provided since they entered service a generation ago.

More than 100 new trains will be rolled out by Northern and TransPennine Express from this year, offering more comfortable seats and improved accessibility.

It comes as part as part of a significant investment by both government, Network Rail and train operators as part of the Great North Rail Project to transform the national rail network, delivering more than 4,500 new carriages to UK passengers.

Making the north one of the best-connected regions in the UK is at the heart of the government's ambition for a thriving Northern Powerhouse.

Department for Transport is investing £13 billion through to 2020 to transform transport across the region and is focussed on supercharging transport connections for years through our support for HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail.

Between 2019 and 2024, the government will also invest around £3 billion further in upgrading the Transpennine route between Manchester, Leeds and York to deliver faster, more frequent and more reliable journeys with more seats.

On Sunday 19 May (2019) the rail industry launched a new timetable that has seen around 1,000 extra services a week added across the country.