

News story: Jo Johnson: unprecedented new powers for Transport for the North are 'crucial next step'

- Rail Minister attends first Transport for the North Partnership Board in Liverpool
- TfN now hold powers to drive forward long-term strategic transport projects and have proposals considered by government
- Rail Minister will also visit Liverpool Lime Street to see progress on delivering the Great North Rail Project worth well over £1 billion

Jo Johnson is encouraging the north to speak with one 'strong, unified voice' after meeting leaders from across the region in Liverpool today (5 April 2018) to discuss the unprecedented new powers of Transport for the North (TfN).

The Rail Minister called upon northern leaders to drive forward vital transport projects such as Northern Powerhouse Rail after he attended the first meeting [since TfN was legally established as England's first sub-national transport body](#) – backed by £260 million of government funding.

Rail Minister Jo Johnson said:

Between 2015 and 2020 the government will have spent over £13 billion – more than any other in history – to transform northern transport, boosting economic growth and unlocking the incredible potential of the great towns and cities of the north.

Establishing Transport for the North is a crucial next step in giving the north greater influence than ever over transport investment. It is imperative that the north now speaks with a strong, unified voice to identify where we can work together to transform journeys for people.

The fantastic progress on upgrades to Liverpool Lime Street, which will enable more trains every hour and direct services to Scotland, demonstrates our unwavering commitment to delivering the transport links the north needs.

With significant new powers to drive forward transformative projects like Northern Powerhouse Rail and smart ticketing, I am confident that TfN will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of northern transport.

[Transport for the North promotional video](#)

During his visit to Liverpool Lime Street, Jo Johnson met with Network Rail staff delivering major upgrades to platforms and signalling at the great Victorian station, as part of the Great North Rail Project.

With work to deliver an extra platform to be completed this summer, the upgrade will enable 3 new services per hour in and out of Lime Street.

Patrick Cawley, director of route sponsorship at Network Rail, said:

Our major transformation of Liverpool Lime Street is a key part of the Great North Rail Project, and it will be fantastic to show Rail Minister Jo Johnson what we've done so far and what work is currently being delivered while the station remains open.

Once complete in October this year, passengers will see completely remodelled platforms and 2 brand new platforms, increasing the total number to 10.

Longer, better managed platforms will accommodate longer trains, helping provide more space and seats for passengers. This is vital ahead of the significant increase in passengers expected in the coming years.