

Improved governance of future decision-making across rail in the north

- Blake-Jones Review into last year's timetable disruption across the north published
- 9 recommendations focused on improving passenger trust and increasing transparency
- since May 2018, performance on both franchises has improved, with significant strengthening of industry timetable process.

The joint review of the Rail North Partnership (RNP), commissioned by Councillor Judith Blake and Rail Minister Andrew Jones in response to the problems delivering the May 2018 timetable in the north, [has been published today](#) (19 July 2019).

The 9 recommendations of the Blake-Jones review include both long and short-term actions, including improvements to how the RNP functions so that it plays an active role in the design and delivery of rail services across the north.

There will also be greater oversight of RNP decision making, with increased visibility to help identify risks and challenges earlier and ensure better outcomes for passengers and the railway industry.

Rail Minister, Andrew Jones, said:

Working closely with Transport for the North, our absolute priority is to deliver reliable services. This review sets out how we can work to ensure passengers get the journeys they expect, and restore trust in our railway.

We continue to see performance improving, significant investment delivering new and refurbished trains across the north, and industry expert Richard George is continuing to drive forward a recovery plan to deliver better journeys.

Councillor Judith Blake, Leader of Leeds City Council and West Yorkshire Combined Authority Transport Lead, said:

While some stability has been restored since May 2018, rail passengers in the north continue to experience punctuality and reliability below acceptable levels. The rail industry lost sight of the need to put the interests of passengers first and our recommendations will significantly strengthen the voice of

passengers and local accountability in the way rail services in the north operate.

I hope proposals from the forthcoming Williams Review will address some of the broader issues raised by last year's disruption including the need to greater integrate track and train and to deepen devolution arrangements over rail services to the north.

Other recommendations include better governance of the partnership, improved internal communications and how accountability behind the scenes can be more transparent across the north.

Recommendations will also build on the industry changes already in place and the two subsequent timetable changes in December 2018 and May 2019, which have helped to improve reliability across the north.

Since last year, the rail industry has planned and implemented the summer 2019 timetable change, focussing on learning the lessons from last year and developing new and strengthened assurance processes.

People across the north have also started to see new trains across the network, alongside the extra 2,000 services a week already delivered. The introduction of Northern's new trains is another milestone moment, providing passengers with more comfortable, frequent and reliable journeys.

Transport for the North will consider an action plan at its July board meeting.

New economic plan to super-charge space and creative sectors in Buckinghamshire

- Local Industrial Strategy confirms Buckinghamshire's ambitions to help leading sectors like space and creative industries capture the world stage
- Business Minister Lord Henley met Buckinghamshire leaders today to discuss how the plans will boost productivity and earning potential

A new economic blueprint for Buckinghamshire, designed to grow the area's creative, space, advanced manufacturing and digital health capability on the world stage, has been unveiled today (Friday 19 July).

Developed in collaboration with local leaders, including Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership, local authorities, businesses, and Government, the Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy sets out how the area will

deliver the national Industrial Strategy's aim to raise productivity levels and to create high-quality, well paid jobs across the country.

UK Space Agency recently invested £4.12 million in Westcott Venture Park to develop the National Space Propulsion Test Facility, and today's new strategy sets out how the cluster will get to the next level, addressing skills shortages for technicians and propulsion test specialists.

Buckinghamshire's world-leading creative businesses like Pinewood Studios are also highlighted as a key asset and enabler of growth in the sector, with the next James Bond film currently being filmed in Iver Heath.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

Buckinghamshire already has world-leading assets and strengths, ranging from Pinewood studios and the next James Bond film, to an innovative space sector testing new and emerging technologies.

Today's Local Industrial Strategy – one of four published across the Oxford-Cambridge Arc – will build on this and its position as the fourth most productive area in England, while also opening up new job opportunities for people across the county and beyond.

Andrew M. Smith, Chair of Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership, said:

We have embraced the opportunity to work with Government to deliver one of the first trailblazing Local Industrial Strategies in the country, to help drive the Buckinghamshire economy to further increase innovation, support international trade and improve connectivity to help all businesses deliver their full economic potential.

Buckinghamshire has many world leading businesses and business clusters operating at the heart of the Oxford to Cambridge Growth Arc.

Many of these including, Robert Bosch, Silverstone, GE Healthcare, Johnson & Johnson, Boundless Productions and Pinewood Studios are operating at the heart of the automotive technologies, life-science and creative industry sectors and will be critical in delivering the success of our strategy.

The Oxfordshire, South East Midlands, and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Industrial Strategies have also been published today, demonstrating the

economic strength of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc area collectively.

To coincide with the launch of the Local Industrial Strategies, Business Minister Lord Henley met representatives from across the Oxford-Cambridge Arc today to discuss how the four strategies launched today will help to deliver the Government's national Industrial Strategy ambitions.

More than 100 organisations, including the leaders of the county's local authorities, have worked together to develop the Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy in collaboration with the Government.

It builds on its four big economic assets in the space, creative, advanced engineering and digital health sectors.

The plan includes:

- a long-term investment plan for Westcott Space Cluster to develop new research and development facilities and a base manufacturing excellence in space propulsion and in-orbit maintenance, and to address skills shortages for technicians and propulsion test specialists
- a new Screen Industries Global Growth Hub at Pinewood Studios to provide support to creative businesses
- using Silverstone Park and technology cluster to stimulate high tech cross-overs, supporting emerging technologies through improving links between firms, improving links between businesses and universities, and improving networking across the Oxford-Cambridge Arc
- digital health, med-tech and advanced artificial intelligence – building on assets including Stoke Mandeville Spinal Centre, Buckinghamshire Life Sciences Innovation Centre

Lord Henley, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, said:

Local Industrial Strategies are about celebrating the unique strengths of places across the country, so it was great to meet business leaders from across Buckinghamshire today to understand how they are going to put this new, Government-backed economic plan into action.

Our modern Industrial Strategy aims to raise productivity levels and to create high-quality, well paid jobs, and this Local Industrial Strategy outlines how we will do that for people in Buckinghamshire.

Alan Cox, Chief Commercial Officer, Satellite Application Catapult, said:

The Satellite Application Catapult have enjoyed being part of the Buckinghamshire Local Industrial Strategy development process, it has enabled us to be absolutely clear about the scale of opportunity and develop a

jointly agreed plan of action with Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership and other national and international partners to unlock the potential of the Westcott Venture Park and Enterprise Zone site.

Housing Minister Kit Malthouse said:

People deserve to live in thriving, prosperous communities where there are great job opportunities, high quality affordable homes and local leaders with strategies to boost economic growth in bold and innovative ways.

The four Local Industrial Strategies mark a momentous time for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and will maximise the undoubted potential of the region. That's demonstrated by the sheer range of plans covered by the strategies – whether it be developing future generations via a Skills Apprenticeship Hub, improving social mobility, or entertaining film lovers with productions from the world-famous Pinewood Studios.

It's time to roll up our sleeves and work with communities and local leaders to realise their ambitions and also build more, better, faster, providing one million new homes across the Oxford-Cambridge Arc by 2050.

Through Local Industrial Strategies, local partners will work together to harness the collective strength of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc's research base to drive greater collaboration on science and research, bring employers and providers together to understand and meet skills needs and develop improved support for business across the Arc as a whole.

The Government's modern Industrial Strategy is the flagship economic policy which backs businesses to create high-quality, well paid jobs throughout the United Kingdom, and invests in skills, innovation and infrastructure.

[Welsh firm Flamgard protects world's largest moving structure with UKEF support](#)

About the transaction: Flamgard

Region

Pontypool

About the transaction: Flamgard

Sector	Manufacturer: Fire dampers
Export destination	Ukraine
UKEF support	Bond support scheme

Welsh manufacturer Flamgard Calidair was contracted to provide fire and shut off dampers for the Chernobyl New Safe Confinement site. To do this, they required additional financial support for an advance payment bond they had to issue as part of their involvement in the project. Flamgard was able to secure this through their bank, Lloyds, while our guarantee meant there was no requirement for a deposit.

Steve Edwards, Managing Director, Flamgard, said:

This is a major international contract for Flamgard, which we were able to undertake with the support of UKEF, the Welsh Government and Lloyds Banking Group. The support we received from government and the private sector has helped us to win big in a global marketplace.

Putting the right finance and insurance in place can give you the exporting edge, helping you to win contracts, fulfil orders and get paid.

[Tell us about your business](#)

[How to define a public service mutual: public consultation launched](#)

- Civil Society Minister Mims Davies has launched a consultation on the definition of public service mutuals in order to provide clarity and increase understanding amongst the sector.
- The call for evidence aims to help public sector commissioners in particular who award contracts, and grow the role of mutual organisations.

Public service mutuals are currently defined as organisations that have left the public sector but continue to deliver public services, and have a significant degree of employee ownership, influence or control. However evidence suggests this current definition is misunderstood and unclear, and needs updating to reflect the changing public service delivery landscape. The public consultation will aim to:

- Strengthen the understanding of 'public service mutuals'. Doing this

will give public service commissioners and broader stakeholders increased confidence that mutuals represent the values government wants to see in public service delivery.

- Provide greater clarity for social sector organisations on what requirements are needed to be considered a public service mutual.
- Raise awareness and understanding of the benefits of the mutuals model, informing decisions about who delivers public services.

Mims Davies, Minister for Sport and Civil Society, said:

We know that mutuals have more engaged staff, increased productivity and deliver more innovative services and this is why we've been supporting the growth of mutuals over the last ten years.

We need to make sure we have a clear understandable and updated definition to increase confidence in the sector which can inspire further growth over the coming years.

The consultation will be open for 12 weeks following which the government will publish a revised definition that reflects current priorities for public services.

Further Information

More detail including the consultation document can be found [here](#)

[Invasive Species Order 2019: consultation opens](#)

A [consultation into how best to manage invasive non-native species](#) which threaten our native wildlife has been launched by the government.

Under EU law, management measures must be put in place for widespread invasive alien species. The eight-week consultation will ask for views on ways to manage populations of species of concern (listed below).

It comes as the government confirmed that the [Invasive Alien Species \(Enforcement and Permitting\) Order 2019](#) – which brings EU legislation into UK law – will come into force on 1 December 2019.

Biosecurity Minister Lord Gardiner said:

Invasive non-native species not only challenge the survival of some

of our rarest species but damage our natural ecosystems as well as costing the economy more than £1.7 billion per year.

The law requires management measures to be put in place and this consultation will ensure we consider the evidence on how best to manage these species of concern.

The UK will continue to uphold international obligations and also as a responsible partner nation working closely with other countries to protect our native wildlife and forestry landscapes for future generations to enjoy.

Invasive species

The 14 species identified as being widely spread in England and Wales and requiring management are:

Plants

- Nuttall's waterweed (*Elodea nuttallii*)
- Chilean rhubarb (*Gunnera tinctoria*)
- Giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*)
- Floating pennywort (*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*)
- Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*)
- Curly waterweed (*Lagarosiphon major*)
- American skunk cabbage (*Lysichiton americanus*)
- Parrot's feather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*)

Animals

- Egyptian goose (*Alopochen aegyptiacus*)
- Chinese mitten crab (*Eriocheir sinensis*)
- Muntjac deer (*Muntiacus reevesi*)
- Signal crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*)
- Grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*)
- all subspecies of (*Trachemys scripta*) otherwise known as "slider terrapins"