

# Briefing Note: Invitations to Tender for the Northern and TransPennine Express franchises

- The Invitations to Tender for the Northern and TransPennine franchises have been published today, Friday 27 February 2015.
- Both franchises are due to start on 1 April 2016 and will be managed jointly by a Rail North / DfT partnership team based in the North of England. This is planned to be based in Leeds.
- The Northern franchise will run for nine years with the option of a one year extension.
- The TransPennine franchise will run for seven years with the option of a two year extension.

## Key points

- There will be better trains. This will include **at least 120 new-build carriages for use on non-electrified routes** and the modernisation of all remaining Northern trains.
- The **Pacer units** currently in use on the Northern network will be **completely phased out by 2020**.
- **Trains will be longer with more seats**, particularly on the most crowded routes into the North's largest cities.
- **More train services will run in the week and on Saturdays.**
- There will be **more services to more places on Sundays**.
- A new '**Northern regional**' service for the Northern franchise – reflecting the needs of passengers travelling longer distances.
- **Free wi-fi** will be introduced on **all trains by 2020** at the latest.
- Northern **stations will be improved**, with at least £30 million of investment across the franchise.
- There will be **improved customer service** and challenging **targets for customer satisfaction**.
- There will be increased support and funding for **Community Rail**.
- The new train operators will need to **cooperate with local smart ticketing schemes**, simplify fares, and improve the **door-to-door** journey experience for passengers.
- Long term **investment** in the franchises is also encouraged.
- There will be a gradual introduction of Driver Controlled Operation (DCO) on parts of the Northern franchise, with the driver being responsible for all safety aspects of the train, including operating the train doors. This will free up the second member of staff on board to focus on **customer service** – including by helping those with mobility impairments or other disabilities – selling and checking tickets and providing a sense of security.

## What it means for the North of England

- Significant economic benefits for the region, supporting business, tourism and job growth and contributing to the prosperity of the north of England through better connections and faster journeys.
- Reduced crowding – more seats at the busiest times and fewer people having to stand.
- Improved customer service and increased passenger satisfaction.
- Customer and community engagement – better communications with passengers and local communities
- Enhanced connections with other forms of transport – making it easier for passengers to use a mixture of trains and other transport options for their journeys.

## Rail North's Role

- The Invitations to Tender, published today, reflect work undertaken jointly between Rail North and the Department for Transport.
- Rail North, representing the Local Transport Authorities in the north of England, has helped transform the Northern franchise, unrecognisable from the 'no-growth' one let in 2004.
- Rail North's **Long-Term Rail Strategy** called for a truly transformational package. The most important outputs Rail North wanted to see in the Invitations to Tender were:
  - A step-change in the quality of rolling stock including replacement of the totally inadequate 'Pacer' trains;
  - More carriages to meet future demand as well as to reduce current overcrowding, helping to support economic growth;
  - Oyster-style smart ticketing rolled out;
  - Better quality stations including improved facilities for buying tickets;
  - A consistent approach to service provision, creating certainty for passengers;
  - Service improvements including later evening journeys, and more services on Sundays.
- The content of the Invitations to Tender go a long way in delivering our aspirations. They are however the minimum requirements from bidders; Rail North will push bidders during the tendering process to build upon this.

## Summary

- Rail North has worked in partnership with DfT to ensure the best possible foundations are set for the North of England's future rail network.
- The publication of the Invitations to Tender for the next Northern and TransPennine franchises reflect that work and the continuing involvement of Rail North in the re-franchising process.
- This will help cement a future for rail in the North of England that will support the growing economy and truly contribute to a transformation in rail service provision.