

Welcome to the first of the new style partner e-bulletins. It's a busy time at Rail North with planning for the December 2017 timetable change well underway (look out for the consultation on this in the next few weeks) and our train operators busy delivering their franchise obligations including their new and refurbished trains and station investment plans.

On the investment planning side we are busy refining our 'ask' for the Initial Industry Advice (as part of the development of plans for the 2019-2024 period) and establishing arrangements for the joint clienting of the TransPennine Route Upgrade. Following Network Rail's announcement of their new Managing Director, Northern Portfolio we are working closely with them and Transport for the North to make sure this exciting new development really enhances the way the North does business with Network Rail.

I hope you like the new format and content, but please let us know what you think and if there is anything you'd like to see in future bulletins. Please send any comments or requests to pete.brunskill@transportforthenorth.com. We plan to issue another bulletin before Christmas as then revert to a monthly newsletter format.

A refreshing change

Arriva Northern took its first step in a multi-million pound fleet refurbishment programme by unveiling the first partly refurbished train last month. The train is a Class 158 unit (158752) now operating on the York to Blackpool route running between York, Leeds, Bradford, Blackburn, Preston and Blackpool.

The unit is the first of its kind to receive Northern's new external livery and branding.



The interior of the train has also been upgraded. Carriages have been repainted, new carpets have been laid and seat cushions have been replaced and recovered. New LED lighting has also been fitted to reduce energy use and help create a brighter on board environment.

People of reduced mobility will benefit with designated wheelchair spaces in the carriages, the addition of 'call for aid' facilities and an improved passenger information system. On-board toilets have also been refurbished and include improved baby changing facilities.

Alex Hynes, Northern Managing Director said: "We are committed to bringing real improvements for our customers and transforming rail travel in the North, but we appreciate this won't happen overnight. Our trains will be phased in and out of refurbishment in order to ensure minimum impact on our daily services, and we are excited to welcome this first milestone; our first train back in service for our customers.

There are still further improvements to be made to this particular unit and the rest of the fleet, including the installation of free customer Wi-Fi. The entire Northern fleet will be refurbished to a high standard and 98 new trains introduced to ensure the removal of all Pacer units by the end of 2019.

Shiny and new

Last month also marked the start of production of the first of 13 sets of new Mark 5A carriages for TransPennine Express.

The first rake of carriages will be delivered in 2018 from manufacturer CAF. Each five-car set will have 287 seats in standard and first class. The new carriages will be hauled by state-of-the-art Class 68 diesel locomotives and will operate initially on TPE's North Route from Liverpool across the Pennines to Scarborough and Newcastle (calling en-route at Manchester, Huddersfield, Leeds and York). From 2019, these trains will also run to and from Middlesbrough.



These brand new trains represent a step change in quality to an intercity standard with high quality seating, free Wi-Fi and plug sockets at every pair of seats and real-time travel information. An on-board media server will allow passengers to stream all the latest TV shows and films. An electronic seat reservation system means that passengers will be able to easily tell if a seat is free, partially reserved or occupied.

Between 2018 and 2020 TPE will introduce three new train fleets; comprising of 13 five-carriage Mark 5A coaches and 12 five-carriage Class 397 'Civity' electric trains, built by CAF and 19 five-carriage Class 802 bi-mode trains which will be built in County Durham by Hitachi Rail Europe. This £500m investment in 44 brand new trains will deliver an additional 13 million seats across the North and into Scotland over the next three and a half years.

TPE Managing Director, Leo Goodwin said, "I'm thrilled to announce that the first of our new trains has now entered production, marking an important milestone in transforming rail travel across the North. These new, modern trains will mean major improvements for customers that will really make a difference to the overall journey experience.

Are you sitting comfortably?



As part of the overall £1 billion + investment helping to transform rail travel across the North, a hitherto neglected area of passenger train design is being given some much overdue attention. During late-August and throughout September passengers passing through six stations spread across the North were able to vote...literally with their bums, on their preferred design of new seats that will be installed in Arriva Northern's refurbished trains.

TfN Stakeholder Manager – Rail, Pete Brunskill visited the roadshow at Sheffield railway station on the 20th of September and took the opportunity to try out the three different seat designs and talk to Northern colleagues and passengers about their thoughts.

Pete is pictured (left) with Northern colleague, Paul Barnfield (Stakeholder Manager – East Region) trying out one of the new seat designs.

Pete said: "All credit to Northern for running these high-profile roadshows and letting the end user have their say on the most comfortable seats. There was a real buzz of excitement in Sheffield on the day as passing members of the public tried out the three different seat designs, voted for their favourite and took away goodie bags containing water and fruit. For many passengers I spoke to, this was a tangible demonstration of the transformational investment now being made in rail services across the North."

Great North Rail project update

Work continues on the Ordsall Chord, to help provide a better railway for passengers in the North.

The existing railway between Eccles and Deansgate, Eccles and Manchester Victoria and Deansgate and Salford Crescent stations is being reconfigured; allowing the 300 metre chord to connect with the new layout before completion by December 2017.

Other work will consist of the installation of two new bridges and renovation of one existing bridge on Water Street, the widening of Castlefield viaduct and a new track layout at Ordsall Lane. There will also be signalling improvements and new overhead line equipment.



To ensure this essential work can be carried out safely, train services in and out of Manchester will be affected at times, namely:

- Weekends from Saturday 29th October until Sunday 11th December 2016
- Between early-Sunday 18th December 2016 until the last service on Monday 2nd January 2017.

Oxford Road and Deansgate railway stations will also be affected and will be closed on December 27th and 31st as well as January 1st and 2nd. All railway stations will be closed, with no train services operating on Christmas Day and Boxing Day as usual.

Manchester Piccadilly...fit for Olympic heroes

Team GB and Paralympic GB enjoyed outstanding success in Rio over the summer, surpassing their medal hauls from London 2012 and coming second in their respective medal tables.

To celebrate a National parade of athletes was held in Manchester on Monday the 17th of October, with more than 100,000 spectators crowded into the city centre and extensive BBC coverage. The athletes stayed overnight in Manchester, but had to be in Trafalgar Square the next afternoon for another event.

How were hundreds of athletes, coaches and support staff going to be efficiently moved from Manchester to the capital?



In an industry-wide effort; Network Rail, Virgin Trains, Caledonian Sleeper and GB Railfreight joined forces to ensure that the athletes' journey between the two cities ran seamlessly. Virgin Trains provided an eleven-car Pendolino from Piccadilly which arrived into Euston just before 1100hrs. Caledonian Sleeper provided a six-car charter rake, topped and tailed by GBRf locomotives that safely transported Paralympic GB athletes and staff from Piccadilly, arriving into Euston at 1039hrs. This train carried a special, commemorative headboard The Paralympian.

Network Rail and the BTP ensured that things ran smoothly at Piccadilly and the TPE Choir entertained onlookers.

Once at Euston, TfL laid on a fleet of ten double decker buses to take more than 350 athletes and support staff on to the event at Trafalgar Square.

Metrolink operator RATP unveiled a tram in a special all over gold Team GB livery as part of the celebrations.

Network Rail LNW Route Managing Director, Martin Frobisher said, "We are all so proud of the Olympic and Paralympic heroes. It has been brilliant to be involved in helping to facilitate the celebrations in Manchester and London."