

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.