

North West & Central



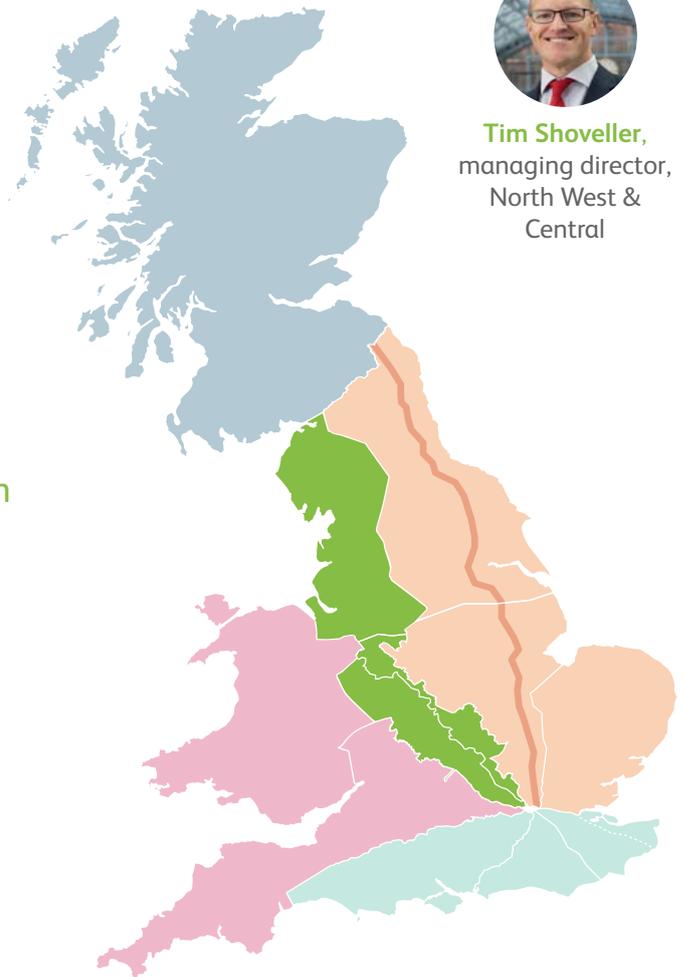
Tim Shoveller,
managing director,
North West &
Central

The North West & Central (NW&C) region is the backbone of Britain, the economic spine linking our main cities of London, Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool. We connect workers with jobs, people with loved ones and goods to market.

In year one of Control Period 6 (CP6) many people, particularly in the North and the Midlands, the railway industry did not work well. The result was that passengers did not get the reliable service they expect and deserve. This is not acceptable. It cannot continue. We are changing our business structurally and culturally to bring lasting improvements.

NW&C's three routes – North West, Central and West Coast Mainline South – were launched in September 2019, devolving key decision-making closer to the markets we serve in line with Network Rail's Putting Passengers First (PPF) transformation.

I recognise organisational structure alone will not deliver consistently reliable services for passengers and freight-users. The key to this is great personal behaviours by all 8,700 NW&C colleagues together with a whole-network, service-led mindset.



This is outlined by our backbone of Britain behaviours (see 'Our people') and our 'service equation,' which has been shaped around Transport Focus research data confirming what matters most to passengers:



Safety + Performance + Brilliant basics = Service

We must take a whole-system view, looking at what we do through the eyes of passengers. A service-led NW&C region, with its three routes and strong capital delivery and support functions, will be equipped for the challenges ahead, including:

- **Immediate performance improvements for passengers in the North and the West Midlands.** Our Project Alpha programme (see 'Performance'), activated in November 2019, is addressing this. We are also working with industry partners to fix longstanding timetable frailties. Without a workable timetable, we cannot give passengers the reliable services they deserve.
- **Growing demand.** In CP6, demand for rail is forecast to grow dramatically – by 12 per cent for passengers and 18 per cent for freight. This is a particular challenge because in some parts of the region, such as the West Coast Main Line, Europe's busiest mixed-use railway, the network is already completely full.

- **Building a bigger railway to carry more passengers and produce in the future, while continuing to run a reliable railway.** It's akin to building a new Wembley stadium while continuing to stage events. HS2 has now received the Government's green light to proceed. This will add much-needed capacity on West Coast, freeing up space on chronically congested rail arteries into the Midlands and the North. The Great North Rail Project, including upgrades to the Trans-Pennine route and, longer term, Northern Powerhouse Rail, and Midlands Rail Hub strategy also seek to boost capacity and connectivity, including to the new HS2 railway once complete.
- **Climate change.** Britain's weather is becoming more extreme. An example was Storm Ciara, in February 2020, when a month and a half rain fell in one day along with 90mph winds. We are developing plans to weather-proof our signals, overhead wires and other infrastructure to cope better with changing weather patterns.

Our funding has been set at £5.7bn (2018/19 prices) for our core maintenance, renewals and operations programme. This is a huge vote of confidence and a big responsibility. Together, as an industry, we will deliver for customers and taxpayers.

Safety

Our safety vision is 'Everyone home safe every day.' By 2024, we aim to have achieved world-class safety levels, as illustrated in the graph below, reducing the number of colleagues seriously injured at work by two thirds against 2019 levels.

In 2019/20 our safety performance was strong, with period 10 the best for the past two years on both workforce and passenger safety measures. We must continue on this trajectory to hit our 2024 goal.

Our daily tactic 'Take 5 For Safety' remains essential. Meanwhile our long-term strategy is to drive health, safety and environmental performance in line with our company values (teamwork, safety, empowerment, care), to which our backbone of Britain behaviours align. We will do this while running a reliable railway for passengers - and increasing its size and capacity to meet future demand.

Reducing workforce accidents (lost-time injuries):



Performance

Year one (2019/20) performance summary

During year one of CP6 Merseyrail and London Overground saw strong performance. In fact, as at period 12 (February 2020), Merseyrail was performing at its best-ever level. But Avanti, Chiltern, West Midlands Trains, Transpennine Express and Northern trains fell short of what passengers expect and deserve.

Poor train punctuality is the key driver of passenger dissatisfaction. In Transport Focus's autumn 2019 National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS), it led to drops in customer satisfaction scores for most of our lead train operators, notably

Region at a glance



246m

annual passenger journeys



6,700

train services per day



24%

of Britain's railway



8,700

employees



571

stations (four of which we manage – Euston, Liverpool Lime St, Manchester Piccadilly & Birmingham New Street)

Northern (bottom on 72 per cent), TPE (79 per cent) and West Midlands Trains (second from bottom on 73 per cent).

The NRPS scores for Northern reflect ORR criticism and the subsequent move to bring the operator under government control on 1 March 2020. We are working with the operator of last resort to bring lasting improvements to service.

On a positive note, scores for Chiltern (90 per cent) and Merseyrail (91 per cent), whose punctuality performance were both strong, were well above the national average of 82 per cent. This proves we can deliver for passengers provided we have a workable timetable.

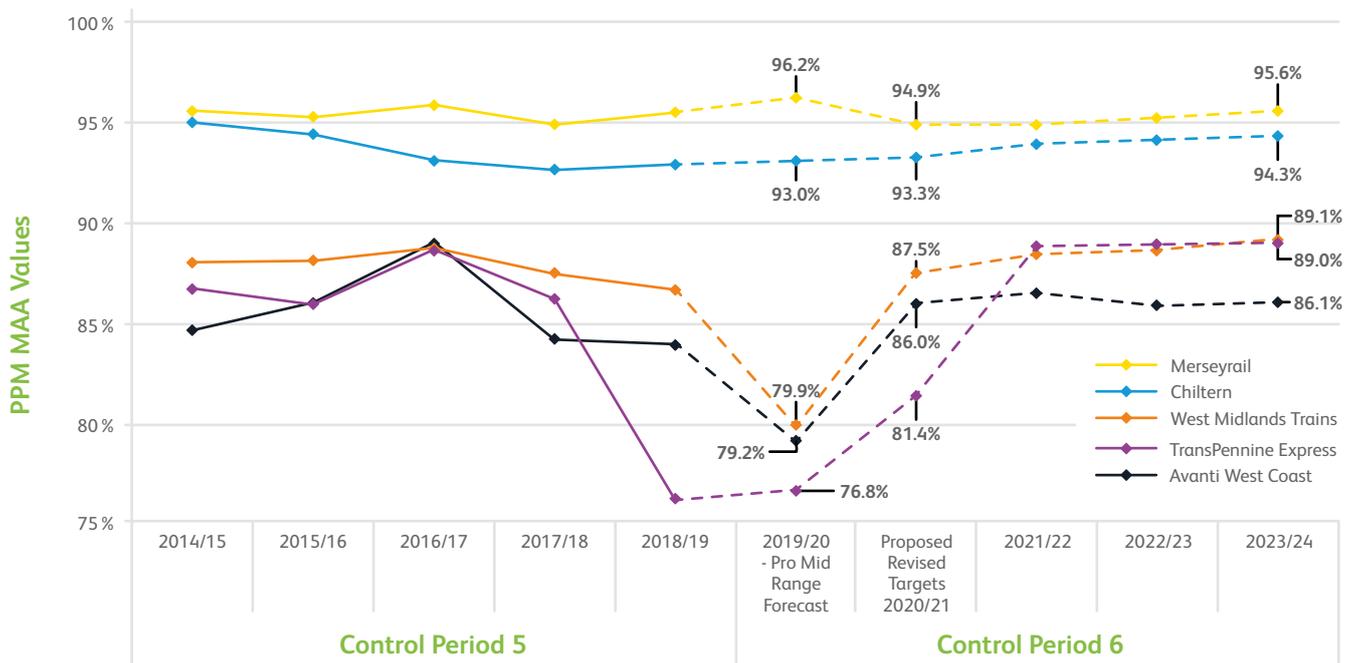
The root cause of our current performance challenges:

- An unworkable timetable - notably in the West Midlands and the North, making recovery from even minor incidents very difficult.
- Train operator traincrew availability - notably for Northern, TPE and WMT.
- Infrastructure reliability. This is within our control and we are working hard to make improvements, particularly through Project Alpha.
- Capacity constraints on existing station space (Euston; Manchester Piccadilly) and infrastructure (Castlefield Corridor in Manchester), which can only be fully addressed by long-term capital investment made possible by Government funding.

Performance strategy for CP6 year two and onwards

The table below sets out performance trajectories we believe can be achieved through effective collaborative working with our train operating partners. We consider timetable improvements to be critical to us achieving these aims. Other focus areas include prevention of primary incidents and continuous improvement of our incident management and service recovery plans. This will help to reduce the overall spread of delay and return the network to normal working as quickly as possible following disruption.

All North West & Central lead train operating companies



Project Alpha performance-improvement programme

In November 2019, we kicked off the Project Alpha performance improvement plan to bring:

- Quick wins in infrastructure reliability.
- Service-led cultural change ahead of NW&C's fully-resourced organisational structure going live in June 2020.
- Longer-term plans to remedy the timetable, train regulation and other strategic and structural issues.

There are some early signs of progress, as we have seen improvements in performance by several of our lead train operators, but there is much still to do.

Project Alpha is paving the way for NW&C's end-state PPF organisation, set to be fully implemented in the summer of 2020. Alpha is a catalyst for cultural change, summarised neatly by our service equation.

Our people

NW&C becoming a service-led business

We are now set up as a region of three routes with strong and strengthening capital delivery and support functions. This new structure devolves our key local decision-making closer to the communities we serve. It also empowers and enables every NW&C colleague to adopt a service-led mindset and make service-led decisions that truly put passengers first.

But structure alone won't deliver the service outcomes passengers expect and deserve. The biggest lever is how each of us behaves - see our backbone of Britain behaviours to the right.

Customer-focused

Getting people and produce from A to B on time, every time, and being good neighbours.

Team players

By working as one team with our partners, there's no limit to what we can achieve.

Responsible

It's up to all of us to do the right thing.

Speak up

If you see something unsafe, wasteful or not right, challenge it.

Take 5 for safety

We take five seconds to think through what we do to make sure it's safe.

Long-term benefits

CP6 projects bringing much-needed capacity and connectivity



West Coast Mainline South route (south of Crewe to Euston)

- HS2's purpose is to create more capacity on a full West Coast Main Line. Through our On-Network Works team, we're working with HS2 Ltd to integrate the new railway to the existing network.
- East West Rail Phase 2 – new railway between Oxford and Bedford and Milton Keynes and Aylesbury, secured Transport and Works Act Order consent in February 2020 and is now working towards final investment decision.



Central route (West Midlands and Chiltern)

- Birmingham resignalling is a major CP6 scheme of similar complexity to London Bridge. During delivery we seek to minimise impact on passengers at Birmingham New Street station.
- Midland Rail Hub is Midland Connect's plan to boost regional rail connectivity including to the new HS2 railway. We are key to turning this vision into a reality.



North West route (Crewe to Gretna)

- Crewe hub - £1bn of remodelling and resignalling to be delivered jointly by us and industry partners as part of long-term plans to integrate the existing rail network with HS2.
- Upgrades to the Leeds-Manchester Transpennine route are set to take place in CP6. Although this is being led by the Eastern region, a significant part of this scheme is on our North West route.

Additionally, we are working with our stakeholders on capacity and growth plans including:

- Chilterns connectivity to Old Oak Common
- Northern Powerhouse Rail
- Birmingham Airport connectivity
- Cumbrian Coast line enhancements

Working with our partners

In the same way that train performance can only improve if track and train work together, so the same is true for the major schemes outlined above. We can only deliver efficiently and effectively by working in an open and collegiate manner with industry partners. That is the guiding principle of our CP6 stakeholder plan.

Key priorities identified by our stakeholders for CP6 are:

- Deliver capacity improvements to time and budget
- Support delivery of HS2
- Achieve agreed performance metrics and minimise delays
- Reduce journey times
- Deliver better stations and improve network capacity
- Support the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham in 2022

Short-term wins

Delivering brilliant basics

Initiatives across the region to make our basic service deliverables brilliant include:



West Coast Mainline South route

- Project Stephenson - £2.5m of immediate customer experience improvements at Euston, including seating, signage, loos, info flow, platform passenger flows and much more.



Central route

- Improvements to wayfinding, signage and customer contact points at Birmingham New Street



North West route

- Hiring of 12 additional station staff at Manchester Piccadilly to improve passenger flows on and off platforms 13 and 14. Treating these two platforms as a station in its own right.

Region-wide

- PPF information service - via our six NW&C twitter feeds, improved real-time info on journey-impacting track issues, augmenting efforts by train companies and National Rail Enquires.

Engineering & asset management

In CP6 we will deliver £2.7bn of renewals across NW&C, as well as overseeing major enhancements. Our long-term strategy, stretching out to CP12 aims to deliver a High performing, sustainable, safe and efficient railway for passengers and freight-users.

One key aspect of our plan is weather-proofing our railway so it is better able to cope with increasingly extreme weather. A great example of this is Caldew Junction, near Carlisle. In 2015 Storm Desmond flooded this location wrecking the signalling equipment. Repairs took 14 days during which time the West Coast main line to Scotland remained closed. We subsequently raised the signalling kit on 3m-high stilts (pictured). In 2020 when Storm Ciara flooded Caldew again, the kit remained intact and the line reopened in 24 hours. This is a much better outcome for passengers, and we are delivering weather-proofing work like this across the network.



Challenges for CP6

- We expect to see 12 per cent growth in passenger numbers, and 18 per cent growth in freight
- Working with HS2 Ltd to help deliver the new railway.
- Accommodating growth in demand at London Euston with 16 rather than 18 platforms (to allow HS2 to build its Euston terminus).
- Transformation of Crewe hub.
- Supporting the safe and successful delivery of the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.
- The introduction of new trains affecting the reliability of the timetable as they bed in.
- More trains will mean greater wear and tear on our infrastructure.
- Earlier morning services and later evening services will reduce the overnight window for engineering access.
- Greater customer expectations in CP6 to improve on current performance.
- Delivering East West Rail Phase 2.
- Securing more external funding for railway and station upgrades.
- Delivering a £2.7bn renewals portfolio.
- Achieving the regulator's efficiency challenge.