

OFFICIAL



CP7 Delivery Plan

2024-2029

Communications

March 2024

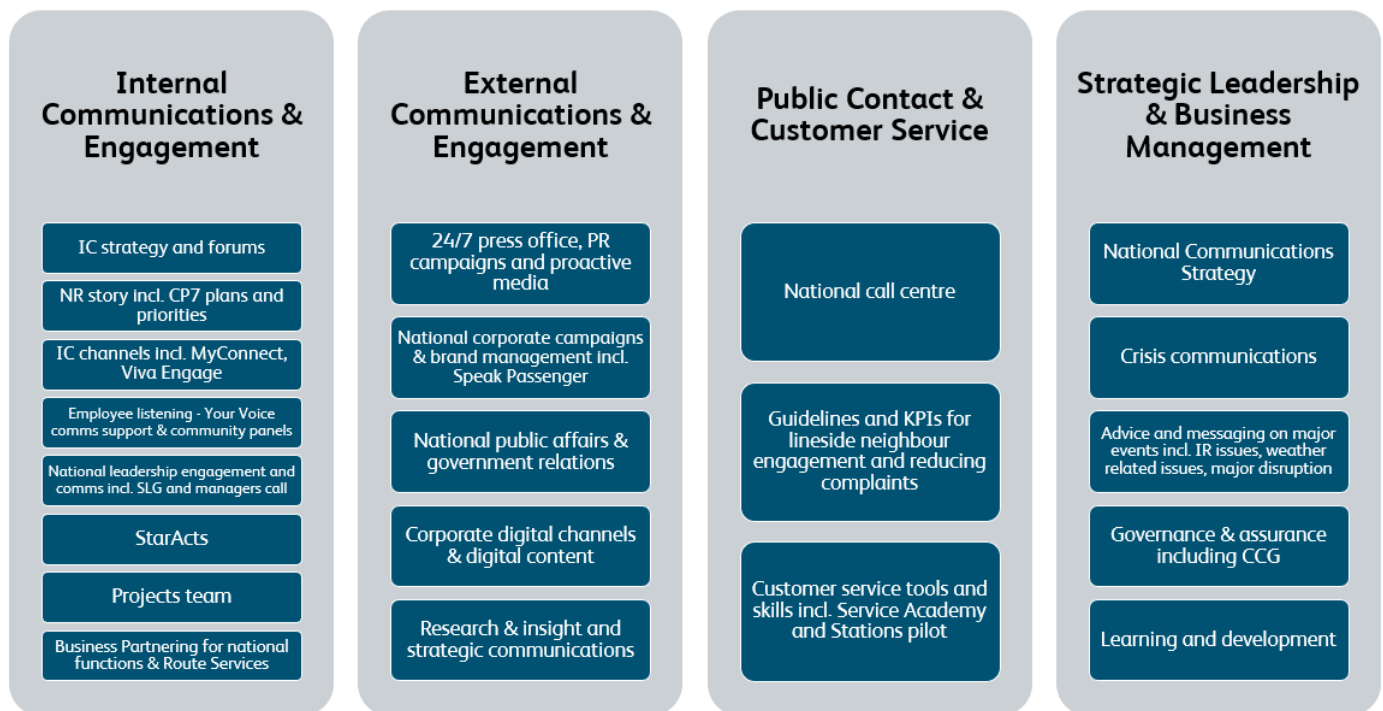
Contents

Who we are.....	3
Our strategy and outcomes.....	4
How we have developed our plans.....	12
Risks and opportunities.....	14
Governance and assurance.....	14
Delivery for the year ahead.....	15

Who we are

Structure

The **National Communications team** is defined as a Network Function and reports into the CEO. Led by the Group Director, Communications, the function is split into the following areas: Internal Communications & Engagement, External Communications & Engagement, Public Contact & Customer Service and Strategic Leadership & Business Management.



The **role** of the national communications team is to build trust and confidence in Network Rail and its leadership. We do this through:

Leadership

- Developing and delivering the national corporate communications strategy, building trust and confidence in the company and its leadership
 - Providing expertise and support that is sought out by the functions, routes and regions to help solve the biggest, most urgent and challenging problems.
- Examples of this include:**
- National Group Comms Strategy.
 - National communications and engagement (incl. brand).
 - Government relations.
 - Crisis comms and managing corporate reputation issues.
 - Sharing best practice from within and without the industry.
 - In person strategy and development away days.

Service

- Providing services that, due to scale, complexity, cross boundary or national nature make sense to do the work once, at a national level
- Examples of this include:**
- National Helpline
 - Internet
 - Intranet
 - National press office
 - SLG/Leadership events
 - Research & insight
 - Tools and templates
 - Learning and development
 - Business partnering for national functions

Assurance

- Harnessing the power of the national, region and route teams to create great national corporate guidelines, policies, processes and strategies
 - Providing assurance – monitoring communications to ensure compliance with guidelines and policies.
- Examples of this include:**
- Processes and policies
 - Meeting framework
 - KPIs
 - Performance reviews
 - Compliance with GCS standards

Our strategy and outcomes

The opportunity

Despite a challenging public spending environment, rail is broadly seen as a good investment. Recent insight shows that our leadership is respected. But to maintain trust and credibility we must show meaningful progress in improving performance, delivering projects and making efficiencies.

The challenge

Growing engagement and trust amongst employees is key to driving the pace at which we can modernise and deliver an improved service for passengers and freight.

Demonstrating improved punctuality and reliability is important to retain and attract passengers but also to win permission for conversations with decision-makers about reform and continued investment.

Weak economic growth and a constrained public spending environment make that conversation more challenging so we must tell the story of the wider benefits of rail in a compelling way.

With a General Election within a year these conversations take place against a backdrop of potential political change. This reaffirms the importance of engaging a wide range of stakeholders.

How do we judge where communications will have an impact?

The goal of almost all communications is behaviour change.

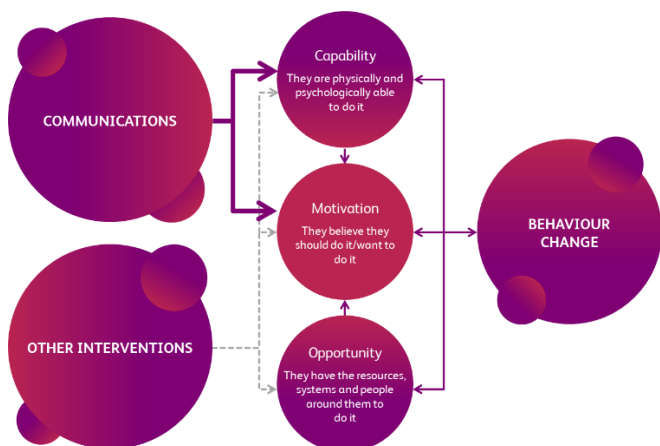
To change behaviour an individual needs capability, motivation and opportunity. If there are barriers in any categories then behaviour change won't happen.

As a general rule: communications is a useful tool for tackling capability and motivation barriers.

Where there are opportunity barriers, comms is generally not an effective intervention.

If there are multiple barriers, communications can work alongside other interventions.

This model helps us to prioritise work where communications can make a real difference.



Our strategy

The current priority areas where we feel communications can make a real difference are:

- Build engagement and trust with employees
- Build stakeholder trust and confidence – in reform and investment
- Put passengers first – punctuality, safety, care and service
- Looking after our lineside neighbours
- Grow our professional capability

Build engagement and trust with employees Audience: all employees	Build stakeholder trust and confidence – in reform and investment Audience: funders, decision-makers, key influencers incl. journalists	Put passengers first – punctuality, safety, care Audience: current and potential passengers	Looking after our lineside neighbours Audience: lineside neighbours	Grow our professional capability Audience: communications team
Grow belief that rail has a positive future. Increase understanding of our business goals, plans.	Preparation for the General Election and a potential new Government through effective engagement.	Help improve punctuality by supporting the reduction of unsafe behaviour that causes delay.	Improve the service we provide for lineside neighbours by helping them understand and prepare for work on the railway in their area.	Mature our governance and assurance frameworks in alignment with Government standards and GCS.
Grow trust in our leaders. Increase authentic communication and engagement, supported by improved insight.	Demonstrate our commitment to being a valued partner, efficiently delivering via: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue recovery • Cost control and efficiency • Project delivery and innovation 	Help passengers understand and react to planned/anticipated service disruption.		Grow capability around communications planning, SMART objective setting and robust evaluation, aligned with GCS best practice.
Focus on fewer, better activities, channels and messages.	Show how we are improving the service for passengers and freight – now and in the future.	Increase passengers' perception that we care about them.		Growing our crisis comms readiness and capability, aligned with GCS best practice.
Show our people we care about their safety and wellbeing.	Demonstrate the wider benefits of improvements to the railway – e.g. economic benefits, sustainability benefits.	Service Audience: our employees		Review our current use of AI in communications and decide principles around future use.
		Grow the capability and motivation of our employees to embed customer led thinking in current/future ways of working.		

The key deliverables in the five priority areas are mapped against the relevant **strategic themes** in this Delivery Plan. We have grouped them by audience in our own strategy.



Reduce safety risks to our workforce

Communications objective: Show our people we care about their safety and wellbeing

Key deliverable

- Develop a safety communications content strategy

Reduce passenger and public safety risk

Communications objective: Help improve punctuality by supporting the reduction of unsafe behaviour that causes delay

Key deliverable

- Deliver refreshed public safety campaign(s) following review of external safety communications

Communications objective: Increase passengers' perception that we care about them

Key deliverable

- Toolkits for use in stations/routes/regions to promote safety at stations



Prevent delays and minimise the impact of disruption

Communications objective: Help passengers understand and react to planned/anticipated service disruption

Key deliverable

- Review current planned disruption comms (Check Before You Travel) and implement refreshed cross-functional communications to help minimise the impact of planned disruption.
- Review and refresh delays explained content.

Communications priority: Build stakeholder trust & confidence – reform and investment disruption

Communications objective: Show how we're improving the service for passengers and freight – now and in the future

Key deliverables

- Regular stakeholder engagement that builds support and awareness of delivery today and future upgrade plans and how rail reform will support future improvements
- CP6/CP7 – a workstream that shows service improvements for passengers and freight – in the past, present and future
- Development of an engagement and communication plan that builds understanding of the facts of reliability and demonstrates commitment to improving performance and delivering a more reliable railway



Customers & communities

Strategic narrative

Communications will continue to lead on workstreams for the Customers & Communities strategic theme. Our **research and insight team** commissions, manages, and produces the public perception tracker that generates the net promoter score. We advise on the targets for the wavelength survey and net promoter score.

The **National Helpline** will continue to be managed by the National Communications Team. We advise on the recommended complaints handling index targets. We support the regions and routes on ways to avoid customer complaints (*being a better neighbour*), providing national solutions where appropriate.

Step-change in passenger information, particularly during disruption

Communications objective: Help passengers understand and react to planned/anticipated service disruption

Key deliverables

- Review current planned disruption comms (Check Before You Travel) and implement refreshed cross-functional communications to help minimise the impact of planned disruption
- Review and refresh delays explained content

Communications objective: Increase passengers' perception that we care about them

Key deliverable

- Review extreme weather campaign and implement cross-functional project to support passengers during extreme weather

Embed customer led thinking in current and future ways of working

Communications objective: Increase passengers' perception that we care about them

Key deliverable

- Care for passengers campaign

CP7 Delivery Plan - Communications

Communications objective: Demonstrate the wider benefits of improvements to the railway – e.g. economic and sustainability benefits

Key deliverable

- Regular stakeholder engagement and business engagement programme that demonstrates the wider benefits of the railway
- Thought leadership, based on research, to explore the value of securing thriving cities and the role that rail plays

Communications objective: Grow the capability and motivation of our employees to embed customer led thinking in current/future ways of working

Key deliverable

- Plan and deliver service academy training
- Deliver Southern stations pilot to improve customer service
- Develop and deliver online version of Speak Passenger and proposal for AI version

Improve relationships with our lineside neighbours

Communications objective: Improve the service we provide for lineside neighbours by helping them understand and prepare for work on the railway in their area.

Key deliverable

- Plan and deliver customer and community scorecard.
- Digital pre-notification – build trust, confidence and reputation through complaints reduction.



Communications priority: Build stakeholder trust & confidence – reform and investment

Communications objective: Demonstrate our commitment to being a valued partner, efficiently delivering via: Revenue recovery, Cost control and efficiency, project delivery and innovation

Key deliverables

- Develop a series of evidence-led briefings on key themes, with case studies and digital collateral to reset perceptions of today's railway.
- A PR/content plan that demonstrates investment and efficiency in the three key pillars of revenue recovery, cost control and efficiency, project delivery and innovation.

We will also continue to ensure our plans are efficient and are committed to achieving £5m efficiency savings over CP7.



Communications priority: Build stakeholder trust & confidence – reform and investment

Communications objective: Demonstrate the wider benefits of improvements to the railway – e.g. economic and sustainability benefits

Key deliverables

- An external NR narrative, PR and content plan that persuades about the economic and sustainability benefits of rail.



Enable a great employee experience through an engaging, safe and inclusive culture

Communications objective: Grow belief that rail has a positive future. Increase understanding of our business goals, plans.

Key deliverables

- Introduce a fresh narrative – the Network Rail story.
- Develop a national/local campaign which supports great communications by leaders and managers.
- Share insights and activities on how we can be simpler and better (our strategic enablers).
- Mark the end of CP6 and launch CP7 to employees in a positive and engaging way.

Communications objective: Show our people we care about their safety and wellbeing

Key deliverables

- Star Acts – a recognition scheme to motivate, recognise and inspire colleagues.
- Employee listening and insight programme to include:
 - Your Voice communications.
 - National internal community panel to seek real-time ideas and opinions from colleagues.
- Develop a safety communications content strategy.
- Enhanced people comms (ED&I, pay & benefits, policy changes, professional development).

Better work

Communications objective: Focus on fewer, better activities, channels and messages

Key deliverables

- Develop and deliver a national internal channels strategy.
- Simplify the channels mix and increase the accessibility of our internal comms channels.
- Deliver increasingly targeted content directly to colleagues.
- Create and manage a national internal content plan that helps align content around the Network Rail story, reduces content 'clutter', and allows us to plan content more effectively.

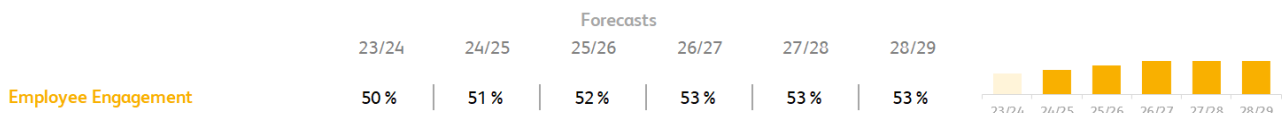
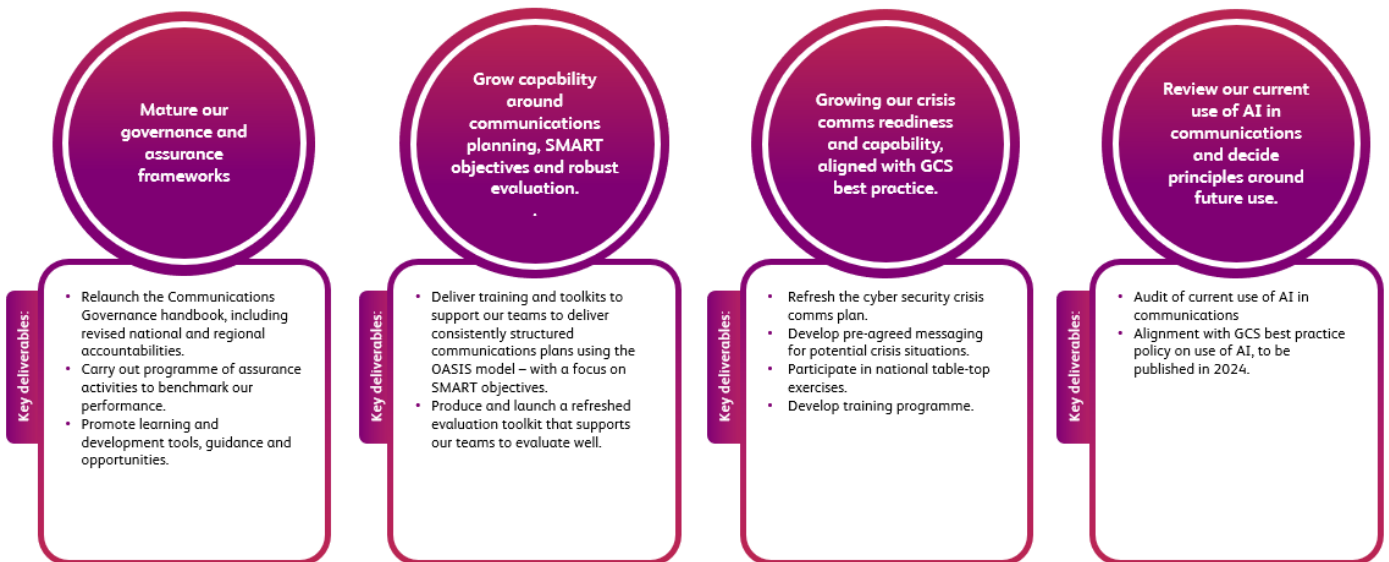
Great leadership

Communications objective: Grow trust in our leaders. Increase authentic communication & engagement, supported by improved insight

Key deliverables

- Senior Leadership Group (SLG) communications programme.
- Line manager communication programme to help line managers improve their communications skills and practice – based on research/DU pilot (Wales & Western).
- Periodic all-line managers call
- Provide support for leaders to use internal channels (Viva Engage, Teams Live).

Our **people plan** for the National Communications team is addressed in our strategic priority area of growing professional capability:



How we have developed our plans

Introduction

The key focus in developing our CP7 plan was to make sure that our structure and approach meets the needs of our stakeholders. The content we produce considers the context we're operating in on an annual basis.

Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholders & priorities

National Communications' key stakeholders include (internally) the Executive Leadership Team, the Board, the Regions, the Routes, the Network Rail communications community and all Network Rail employees. Externally our key **audiences** are passengers, Train Operating Companies/Freight Operating Companies, Government, MPs, Media, Funders, Neighbours, Supply Chain and Taxpayers.

Annual strategy

Our **communications strategy** is reviewed on an annual basis to align with the strategic priorities of the company and to reflect the context we're operating in. The planning cycle concludes with ELT/Board review in February/March preceding the performance year. Regions are also consulted and informed through the Communications Coordination Group.

Route and region communications team listening

We undertook engagement sessions in **October 2022** with the region and route communication teams. The engagement sessions asked a series of questions about the service the national communications team provides and are planning to continue to provide in CP7.

We revisited this question set through another set of regional listening in **November/December 2023**.

Feedback from these sessions have informed the leadership, services and assurance we provide as a national function and are built into our annual strategy.

CP7 operations and support

Support

Our strategic objectives build on our strong delivery of efficiencies in CP6. We have set ourselves ambitious yet realistic CP7 efficiency targets to deliver efficiencies of 10 % on operational expenditure and 15 % on capital expenditure. In CP7 we will continue to work with industry partners to deliver efficiencies across the whole of rail as well as minimise disruption for passengers. This includes closer collaboration with operators across a range of activities to make the best financial decisions for the industry in its entirety.

Communications headcount will remain within the modernising management guiderail through CP7.

We are ensuring our plans are efficient by:

- Reviewing strategy on an annual basis, prioritising areas of focus based on internal and external business context
- Benchmarking headcount and maintaining a right-sized operating model
- Managing contracts, licenses and subscriptions
- Utilising in-house design capability rather than assigning to agencies
- Staying close to technology developments in our sector through the Government Communications Service and other sources that may help deliver a more efficient approach, e.g., AI

CP7 financial summary

The following tables show forecast expenditure for Communications in CP7.

£m in cash prices	CP6 exit	CP7 baseline					
	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	CP7 total
Support and operations	19	17	18	18	19	19	90
Maintenance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Industry costs and rates (excl. BT Police) *	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Renewals	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Risk Funding	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Allocated Expenditure	-19	-17	-18	-18	-19	-19	-91
Electricity for traction (EC4T)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure (excl. EC4T)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

* Industry costs and rates include Cumulo Rates, ORR subscription, Rail Delivery Group subsidy, etc.

As part of finalising this delivery plan, as agreed with ORR, there has been a reclassification of some expenditure between operations, maintenance and support which means that these categories cannot directly be compared to our Draft Determination response or our CP7 Strategic Business Plan.

Risks and opportunities

The main objective of the national communications team is to build trust and confidence in the company and its leadership. Any event which impacts on the company's reputation will also have an impact on our communications strategy. We will need to be flexible and agile to respond to changing circumstances. Examples of reputational risks are listed below.

No.	Risk	What we plan to do	Owner	Timescale
1	Train performance Infrastructure and/or external factors (e.g. weather) affect our ability to run the network	Communications campaigns to explain causes of poor performance and improvements to come	Head of Brand & Campaigns	2024-2029
2	Network Safety – safety incident on the rail network impacting on corporate reputation and credibility to effectively fulfil our role	Safety incident on railway requiring comprehensive communication support. Fully integrated crisis communication response including potential media spends.	Group Director	2024-2029
3	Industrial relations – industrial action or worsening relationship impacting on corporate reputation and train performance	Comprehensive communication support including fully integrated comms responses. Crisis comms structure and coordination with regions.	Group Director	2024-2029

Governance and assurance

Our ambition is for joined up, professional communications across national, regional and route with effective risk mitigation, aligned to the delivery of our business strategy.

We measure the effectiveness of our strategy through our **Communications Assurance Framework**.

This evolves year on year to reflect the key priorities and associated outcomes of our annual strategy.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are set for the national and regional/route teams at the beginning of each financial year with reviews carried out on performance at our Communications Coordination Group meeting twice yearly (May and November).

These assurance reviews form part of the **Directorate Business Review (DBR)** held with the CEO and CFO twice yearly (June and December) where performance against the agreed strategic plan is reviewed.

Delivery for the year ahead (2024-25)



Our areas of focus for 24/25

Rebuild engagement and trust among our own people so that we are set up to deliver the service passengers and freight deserve.

Build stakeholder trust and confidence in rail across the political spectrum – winning continued progress on rail reform and continued support for investment.

Support recovery by improving the service for passengers – with a focus on punctuality, safety and care.

Look after our lineside neighbours - with a focus on improved notification and communication.

Grow our team's professional capability and collaboration so we're on track to being the best we can be – ready for an integrated railway.