

A DRAFT TRANSPORT FOR THE NORTH OPEN DATA POLICY

Introduction and background

Transport for the North (TfN) brings together Northern elected and business leaders to work with central government and national transport bodies, to speak with one voice on the transport infrastructure needed to boost the North's economy.

As such, TfN does not directly operate any transport services or own any physical infrastructure. Its role is to add strategic value by ensuring that funding and strategy decisions about transport in the North are informed by local knowledge, requirements, and evidence. In this respect, **TfN is a data driven organisation, with the data it collates and produces its biggest asset.**

How TfN manage this data is therefore critical, both in maximising its utility for TfN and the North's residents and businesses, and demonstrating its values. One of these core values is that to collaborate by building relationships based on openness, transparency, trust and integrity.

TfN can achieve this by releasing this data as per the principles of **open data**; namely -

- Proactively;
- Unrestricted and in a useful format;
- To a high quality and level of detail;
- In a timely manner;
- In plain English, fully described, with appropriate metadata.

- unless there are legitimate reasons why not; for example, disproportionate cost, personal or commercial sensitivity, or harm to TfN's ability as a taxpayer funded organisation to maximise public value for money.

Commitment

In recognition of this, TfN intends to **commit to being open by default** and to at least a 3* standard as referenced in the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency; that is:

- In a structured format, ie. a spreadsheet, so that the data is made easy to use for the greatest number of people;
- In a non-proprietary format, ie. CSV rather than XLS, so that the data is accessible to the greatest number of people;
- Under an Open Government Licence wherever possible, so that the data is available to the greatest number of people.

As a relatively new organisation, TfN will work with partners such as the Open Data Institute to realise this commitment by 2020 and will regularly review its approach and progress made, to ensure that TfN is following best practice, improve performance, respond to data users, and develop data maturity.

Benefits

By making this commitment, TfN recognises the value this can bring to the organisation and the North; such as:

- Improve data quality, and so stronger evidence and better informed decisions
- Improve collaboration with partners, contactors, and the public, and so stronger relationships and better integration
- Improve services, where developers can use data to develop useful applications
- Encourage TfN to be a more efficient, responsive, and accountable organisation
- Adhere to best practice and provide industry leadership

Ultimately this will help TfN **deliver innovation in how modern transport connections drive economic growth and support an excellent quality of life**, as per its vision.

Acknowledgements

Similar documents produced by constituent combined and local authorities (Transport for Greater Manchester and Leeds City Council), national transport agencies (Highways England), and supralocal transport authorities (Transport for London) contributed to this policy.

As the first Subnational Transport Body, none of these organisations are totally comparable to Transport for the North but together represent a broad range of forms and functions relevant to its role and this policy.