

# Annual Business Plan

2023-2024

GTR

Great Northern

GX

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# Executive summary

The past three years have had a profound impact on the UK economy and transport. However, guided by GTR's strong purpose '**We bring people together, and help communities thrive**', as well as a clear vision of what we need to deliver through our National Rail Contract (NRC), we have started to see green shoots of recovery emerge.

Our NRC commenced in April 2022, with clear expectations to deliver in four areas: providing a reliable and stable service; focusing on tight management of the contract; having strong collaboration to drive improvements for passengers and the industry; and maintaining a focus on cost and financial efficiencies.

We have been proud to support the industry's recovery through a number of sector-wide and standalone initiatives to help encourage passengers back to rail in 2022-23. While this has undoubtedly been a challenge in the context of nationwide industrial action and the commuter market in particular, it has been very promising to see an enthusiastic return to leisure travel across our network. While flexible working patterns have fundamentally changed how and when people use the railway, it's promising to see so many people wanting to get out and explore again.

In terms of the changing travel landscape that has emerged post pandemic, we continue to monitor, flex and innovate to meet future demands in terms of both our passenger mix and customer offering. Central to this is encouraging growth where demand exists, promoting the many benefits of train travel, particularly as the greenest form of public transport, and ultimately playing our part in reducing railway subsidies for the taxpayer.

In this Annual Business Plan (ABP) for 2023-24, our aim is to deliver an even more dependable train service that represents value for money for customers and taxpayers. We want to provide an even better start-to-end customer experience for all, achieved through a relentless focus on delivering the basics brilliantly - particularly around service performance and safety.







This means working in even closer collaboration with our industry partners, particularly the Department for Transport (DfT) and Network Rail (NR), and with all of our stakeholders.

Central to this is the role GTR can play as the UK's largest private rail operator, and the extensive technical and local knowledge we can share as the industry seeks to reform and modernise. This position is further supported by our parent companies - Go Ahead Group and Keolis - who provide significant expertise in public transport management.

In the plan outlined, there are several key areas covered which are essential to achieving our goals. From fostering an excellent company culture, to developing the best leaders and creating more diverse teams, to working in close partnership with our communities and key stakeholders.

We'll also be fully focused on providing value for money to customers, running an efficient operation and making our network more accessible to all, while maintaining high standards of train performance and a sustainable approach.

We look forward to playing a key role in welcoming more people back to train travel in the year ahead and ensuring a bright future for our railway and all the people who work so hard to deliver for our customers every day.



**Patrick Verwer**  
Chief Executive Officer, GTR



**Ralph Pidsley**  
Chief Financial Officer, GTR

# Leadership, management and resource

Focusing on delivering the best possible service for customers

We will continue to foster a culture of strong leadership and provide opportunities for colleagues to develop their skills and careers, and feed back to the business through forums and surveys.

## Open collaboration

By focusing on delivering the best possible service for customers, creating a safe and sustainable railway, and delivering value for money for customers and taxpayers, our teams will help deliver on our key commitments. In particular we will encourage a spirit of open collaboration and knowledge sharing, especially with partners such as DfT, British Transport Police and NR.



## Focus areas include:

- Continued **proactive open collaboration** with the DfT and other stakeholders
- Identify **future leaders** to attend our parent company's Executive Talent and Senior Talent programmes
- Obtain **Safeguarding on Rail** accreditation
- Maintain the role of **Open Data Champion**
- Maintain our **Open Data Sharing Agreement** with Network Rail





# People

## Retaining the best talent

GTR will continue to create a more diverse workforce, focusing on retaining the best talent and encouraging and supporting under-represented groups to join the rail industry.

### An engaged colleague community

We will build on the work achieved to date in terms of ensuring we have an engaged colleague community - a critical component of delivering excellent customer service.

### Focus areas include:

- Ensuring **30% of all new entrants** are female and 30% of all new entrants are from a BME background
- Continued deployment of our three-year **Diversity and Inclusion** strategy
- Achieve **Inclusive Transport Leaders** accreditation building on our Disability Confident Level 1
- Continued support for the Prince's Trust **Get into Rail** programme in 2023/24
- Deliver a Sector Based Work Academy (SWAP) **vocational programme**, working in collaboration with an educational establishment from GTR's route
- Working in collaboration with Network Rail and the British Transport Police, deliver **GTR's Safeguarding Strategy** for the benefit of our people and customers



# Collaboration

Delivering the long-term future of the railways

GTR will foster the continued development of a 'One Railway, Our Railway' approach in which we work with Network Rail to drive down costs while also supporting key cross-government agendas and cross-industry forums.

## Focus areas include:

- Support the operational introduction of the **new Brent Cross West** station
- Work with NR across a range of areas to identify **further industry efficiencies**
- Together with NR, continue the **GTR Service Investment Board** seen as industry leading in driving integrated whole system solutions
- Develop **strong relationships** with the GBR transition team to deliver the long-term future of the railways
- Proactively support, together with Network Rail, the implementation of an **industry-wide response** to recommendation 10 of the Margam RAIB accident report







# ○ Train service operations

Matching emerging demand while delivering efficiencies

GTR will continue to work collaboratively with the DfT, Network Rail and industry partners to develop timetables that support changes in demand and patterns of travel, while ensuring a cost-effective delivery. Central to this is continuing to run a safe, on-time railway to help attract more customers back to the railway.

## Focus areas include:

- Implement our May 23 and Dec 23 **timetable proposals** to better match current demand
- Develop together with NR and the DfT further data-driven timetable proposals to **match emerging demand and deliver efficiencies**
- Withdraw the legacy Class 313 fleet to provide **enhanced customer facilities** through more efficient deployment of other, more modern, units within our train fleet
- Support the operational introduction of the **new Brent Cross West** station
- Deliver together with NR performance improvement set out in our joint **One Plan**







# Customers and communities

Realising the social and economic benefits of our rail network

GTR is keen to modernise and simplify the passenger offer in a cost-efficient way, ensuring an excellent start-to-end journey experience.

## Working with local communities

Key points include delivering the highest standards of service, seeking to drive more digital adoption and working with local stakeholders and communities to realise the wider social and economic benefits of our rail network.

## Focus areas include:

- Continue to seek and **act on customer and stakeholder feedback** from an extensive range of formal and informal touchpoints and communication media
- Collaborating with industry partners to support delivery of the industry's **Smarter Information, Smarter Journey** programme
- Investing in station improvements, **Customer and Communities** and Community Rail Partnerships
- Achieving a **Silver Award under the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme** building on our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant







# Revenue

Delivering the long-term future of the railways

GTR will maximise and sustain the recovery and growth of GTR and industry revenues, while driving down costs and promoting value for money for passengers and taxpayers. Additionally, a key focus will be reducing the issue of travel without payment.

## Focus areas include:

- Delivering the campaigns set out in our comprehensive marketing plan
- Continue to **promote leisure travel** opportunities which are already at pre-COVID levels
- Work with industry partners to continue to encourage commuters to return through **improved fare options**
- Work with GBR transition team in its work to **develop national-level insights** into, and analysis of, revenue drivers and trends
- Undertaking a **twice-yearly ticketless travel survey** supported by our Revenue Protection strategy to reduce income lost through fare evasion





### Focus areas include:

- Achieve re-certification to **ISO 14001 Environmental Management** and **ISO 50001 Energy Management**
- Continue to work with Network Rail to **remove our remaining Diesel train fleet** by 2040
- Introduce an **Environmental Champion** volunteer scheme

# Environment and sustainability

A world leader in sustainable transport

GTR will support and encourage the creation of an even cleaner, greener railway to help spearhead the nation's ambition to become a world leader in sustainable transport, as well as a key proof point in encouraging rail travel as a green travel mode.

### Working with local communities

Our focus will continue on reducing energy consumption and striving for even more effective waste management.





# Accessibility

Serving the broadest range of customers

GTR understands the importance of recognising the different needs of individual passengers in order to make the railway **accessible for all** and encouraging the broadest range of customers back to rail.

## Building on our experience

We will continue to build on the improvements already made in this area to welcome everyone to our network.



## Focus areas include:

- Delivering the **Accessible Travel Policy** obligations
- Providing a **dedicated budget** for Minor Works
- Providing data to support the **National Accessibility Audit**
- Ensuring **disability awareness training** remains part of our corporate induction
- Appointing a senior leader as **Champion of Accessibility**



# East Coast Digital Programme

A transformational programme

GTR is fully committed to working collaboratively with the East Coast Digital Programme team, DfT, Network Rail and relevant third parties (e.g. ROSCOs) to deliver this transformational programme in a cost efficient manner and to maximise the benefits of the investment.

## Focus areas include:

- Complete **ETCS training** for the 216 drivers required for Tranche 1
- Supporting the **fitment of ETCS baseline 3.6.0** on CL717 units
- Supporting the **first in Class** fitment of the CL387 unit



# Summary

This Annual Business Plan lays out an exciting vision for the year ahead and represents a balanced approach to addressing the many inter-related challenges facing GTR, and indeed the wider rail industry, as we seek to attract more people back to rail.

## An end-to-end experience

Over the coming years we will continue to collaborate with the DfT, stakeholders and industry partners to create a railway that provides a safe, reliable train service and a better balance between the needs of demand, punctuality and cost efficiency. We will provide customers with an excellent fully inclusive end-to-end experience.

## The best choice for transport

This will be underpinned by brilliant customer service and innovative new products as we work continuously to promote rail as the best choice for travel and the greenest mode of transport for all.

