

Better. Connected

Backing Public Transport for a 'Better. Connected' Future for all

An effective and successful public transport network is vital for the economic, social, and environmental wellbeing of everyone in Northern Ireland; we are committed to the transformation of transport and enabling a modal shift to public transport and active travel. This will bring substantial benefits environmentally, economically, and socially.

Translink's vision for the decade ahead is focused on theme of Better. Connected, which is the title of our new corporate strategy – more information can be found here:

[Better Connected \(translink.co.uk\)](https://www.translink.co.uk)

Having successfully delivered our previous five-year strategy, 'Get on Board', significant progress has already been achieved, and we wish to further develop our plans and vision to make Translink your first choice for travel, today for tomorrow.

Translink needs your support to continue the transformation of public transport in Northern Ireland to realise its full potential and the wider benefits it brings for everyone in our society.

Investment in Public Transport

Translink has significant investment plans in place to increase passenger capacity, decarbonise our fleet and deliver infrastructure upgrades, enhanced connections, station investment and ticketing and technology upgrades.

Just prior to the pandemic, (2018/2019) Translink delivered over 84.5m passenger journeys, a record total and the highest such figure in two decades. Passenger numbers declined during the pandemic, but are now recovering strongly, and we anticipate the attraction of large numbers of new passengers in the years ahead.

Bus and rail travel plays a vital role in our society, yet per-head funding in Northern Ireland is already considerably lower than elsewhere in the UK, at approximately 30% of the average UK expenditure. In addition, recent research from the Independent Fiscal Commission NI (December 2021) confirms that transport is the only public service area in Northern Ireland where we already spend significantly less per capita than elsewhere in the UK.

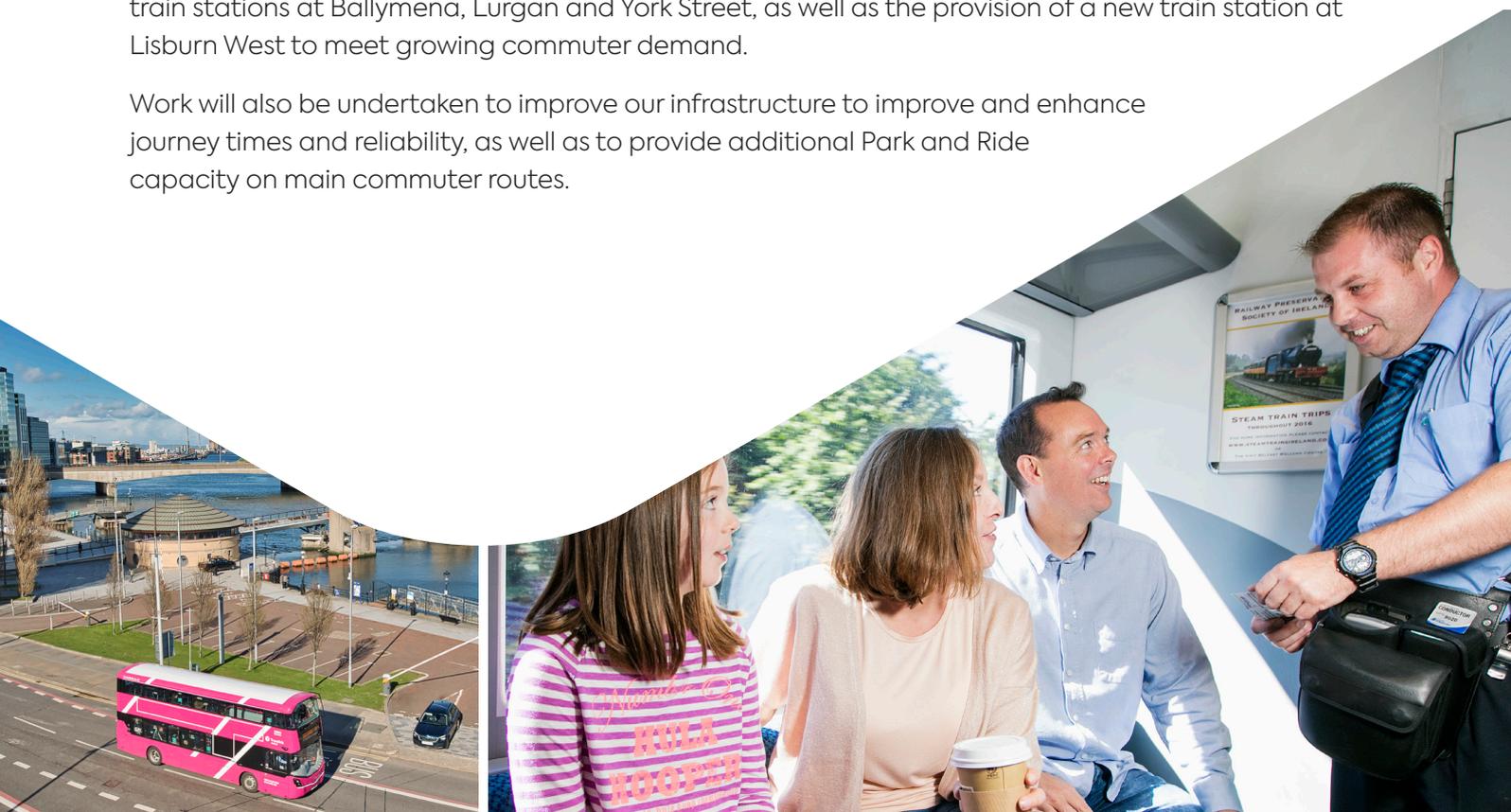
Nonetheless, Translink continues to deliver one of the largest public transport network coverages in the UK.

Customer Focus

We are aiming to achieve >90% customer satisfaction across all our services, and this will involve a focus on all aspects of our service, including better punctuality and reliability, better use of technology and better accessibility.

The delivery of better facilities is also of critical importance. Our flagship project will be Belfast Grand Central Station, which will deliver greatly enhanced capacity across the network, replacing existing facilities at Europa and Great Victoria Street. The Belfast city neighbourhood will be known as Weavers Cross and will be a major catalyst for regeneration in the city centre. We also have plans for enhanced train stations at Ballymena, Lurgan and York Street, as well as the provision of a new train station at Lisburn West to meet growing commuter demand.

Work will also be undertaken to improve our infrastructure to improve and enhance journey times and reliability, as well as to provide additional Park and Ride capacity on main commuter routes.



Climate Action

The climate crisis is the most pressing challenge of our time. Translink is making great strides in introducing Zero Emission buses as part of our journey to Climate Positive by 2050. With around 100 new buses being introduced, representing around one third of the Metro fleet, Translink will operate the UK's fourth-largest Zero Emission bus fleet later in 2022 when all are in service. Derry~Londonderry will become the first city in the UK and Ireland to achieve a fully Net Zero urban fleet in 2023 when new Foyle Metro vehicles arrive.

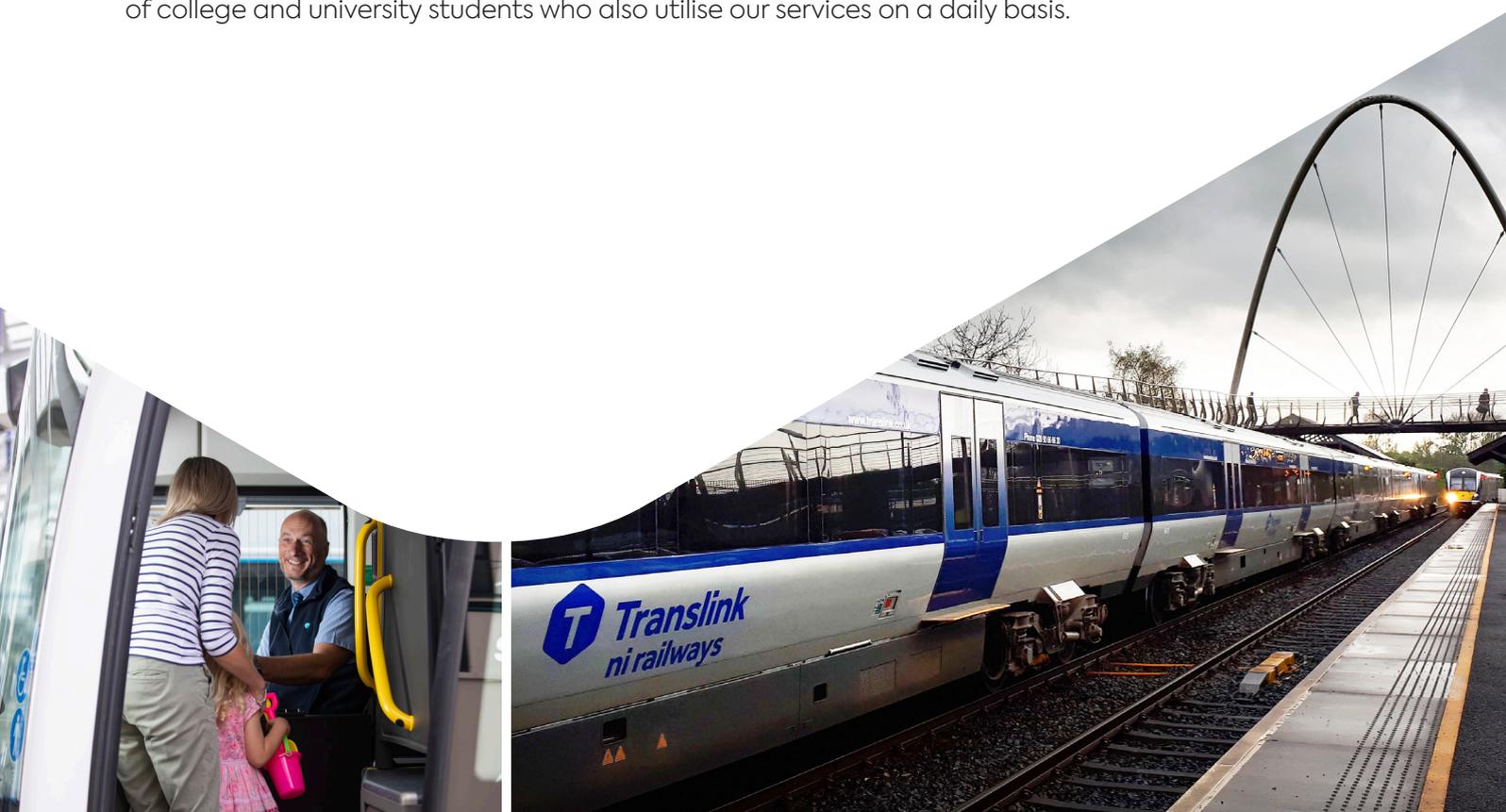
We are also developing a fully sustainable rail fleet, which will transition to Net Zero technologies by 2040, on the same proposed timescale as the bus network. This will involve a shift to bi-modal and Zero Emission trains, as well as at least partial electrification of the rail network, alongside the delivery of the Enterprise Development Strategy, in partnership with Irish Rail, to deliver a modern fleet, the improvement of journey times and a more frequent service.

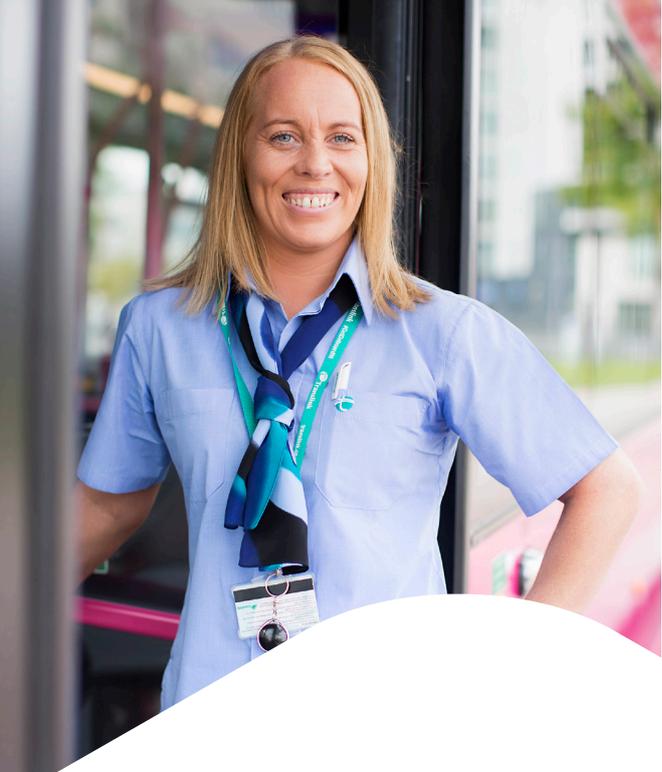
Connecting Communities

Bus and rail travel is instrumental in connecting businesses to customers and also acts as a lifeline, connecting communities to education, employment, retail, and social and leisure opportunities, as well as supporting the visitor and tourist market. In Northern Ireland, where over 20% of households do not have access to a car (rising to almost 36% in Derry~Londonderry and over 40% in Belfast), dependence on effective public transport is a fact of life.

Translink operates a cross-subsidy model, where profitable services subsidise socially necessary, but commercially unviable, routes, often serving students, elderly and disabled or less well-off travellers. Without appropriate funding to enable this, large parts of the rural bus and rail network would simply not exist.

Translink also operate school services, transporting approximately 55,000 pupils to and from school every day. Going beyond compulsory education, this figure does not include the significant number of college and university students who also utilise our services on a daily basis.





Supporting Health and Wellbeing

Adopting public transport, especially as we come closer to Net Zero emission and as modal share of public transport increases, will mean less congestion and cleaner air to breathe. This significant factor is key when you consider health costs associated with air pollution in Northern Ireland are already on the rise, with a projected 84,000 new cases of disease between now and 2035, with expected costs of up to £635million.

Conclusions

Public transport is a major player in developing the Northern Ireland of the future, and no Programme for Government will function without the recognition of the position of bus and rail travel. As we seek to address the climate crisis and restore our economy in challenging times, public transport is taking steps to decarbonise, re-connect communities and revitalise town and city centres. The challenge is a formidable one, but Translink is well placed to meet it. Public transport is fundamental to the success of our region and as we work to bring people together, as well as closer to the opportunities that matter to them, it has a role in building a Northern Ireland that is environmentally sound, economically competitive, socially inclusive.