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# Logistics UK North of England manifesto

Unleashing the power of logistics to drive growth across  
the North



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## Foreword



Welcome to Logistics UK's 2024 manifesto for the North of England. With mayoral elections approaching, this is a document to support policymakers to unleash the power of logistics to drive growth across the North.

Whichever candidates become the mayors of Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, the North East, Tees Valley, North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire, they will need to seize the opportunities and confront the challenges facing this country for the long-term, from climate change and the development of AI to getting growth going. Our sector has a crucial role to play in addressing all these agendas.

Logistics is one of the North of England's largest economic sectors, playing a key role in driving growth. It creates good jobs using highly technical skills and underpins all other economic sectors. Where it is supported to thrive, it is investing in new, state of the art vehicles, facilities and logistics hubs. However, its potential is too often held back by capacity constraints on the transport network, planning barriers, skills shortages and border friction. Resolving this would deliver up to £7.9 billion in UK productivity-led growth per year, by 2030.

All goods and products delivered to the North of England's households, businesses and public services, and imported and exported, are moved by logistics

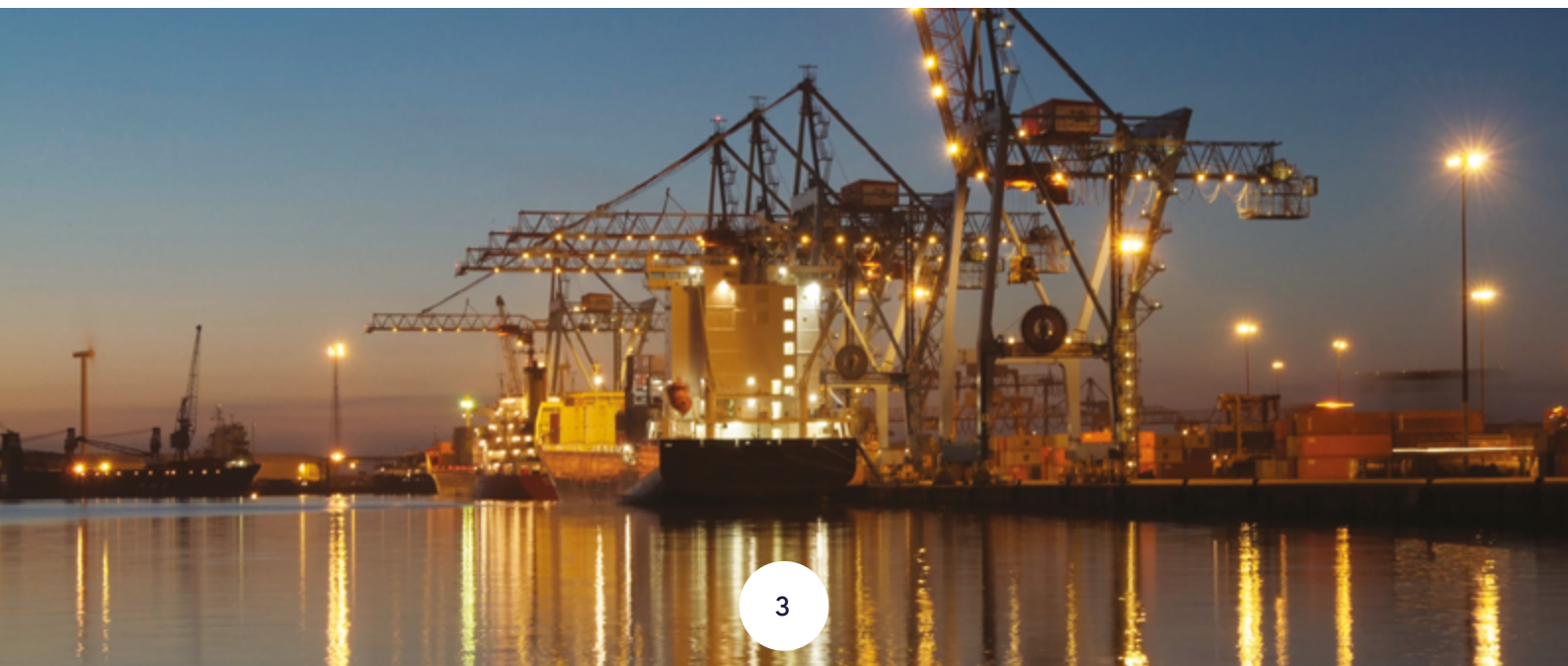
operators – meaning we all pay for logistics services. It is incumbent upon our sector to continually strive for efficiency, avoiding adding pressure to the cost of living while maximising safety and reducing emissions. We are calling on policymakers to work with us to do the same, by optimising charges, regulations and transport investment to make logistics a priority and thereby support the economy for everyone.

Our sector is crucial to addressing the strategic opportunities and challenges facing the North of England. It is connecting new markets, investing in automation to optimise supply chains, acting as a testbed for innovation, and is embracing the decarbonisation agenda. Delivering these transformations while supporting economic productivity and growth will require a close, trusted partnership between our sector and the combined authorities – and we want to see that partnership strengthened in the months and years to come.

In short, if the North of England is to get growth going, its mayors and combined authorities must put logistics first. This manifesto sets out how.



**David Wells OBE**  
Chief Executive  
*Logistics UK*



## To unleash the power of logistics to drive growth, the North of England needs:

- **A public-private partnership** to unlock investment and enable logistics to maximise the benefit it can deliver to the economy. This should be backed by the mayors each appointing a senior lead for logistics, responsible for ensuring the sector has its rightful, prominent place in each region's growth, environmental and skills strategies.
- **Innovative and integrated infrastructure**, with the North playing an integral part in a national logistics network. This must be based on long-term infrastructure plans, planning reforms and the development and adoption of technologies to deliver logistics in new ways – all focused on achieving the most productive, strategic and green movement of goods.
- **A fair transition to a green economy** underpinned by investment in commercial vehicle electric charging and low carbon fuel production. Urban logistics must also be backed as an essential part of our communities, not inhibited by patchworks of rules and charges that risk inefficient transport movements and increased overall emissions.
- **Skills partnerships to support a thriving sector**, with careers in logistics backed by reforms to skills funding, effective local skills strategies and a sustained commitment to attracting people, ensuring businesses have a strong pipeline of talent to draw from and nurture.

### To achieve this, the logistics sector is seeking partnerships with combined authorities focused on:

- Creating, and encouraging their local authorities to develop, supportive policy environments for logistics, including in decisions on transport and energy infrastructure, planning and urban rules and charges.
- Fostering collaboration and intelligence sharing between logistics businesses and the advanced manufacturing, technology and energy sectors – to drive green growth.
- Providing material support to boost their logistics sectors in the areas of skills and innovation.



## A public-private partnership to boost productivity and growth across the North of England

There is widespread consensus that the UK needs to radically improve its economic growth, and that the North of England has a key role to play in delivering that. The North needs a public-private partnership to unlock investment and enable logistics to maximise the benefit it can deliver to its economy and communities. To achieve this, the mayors should each appoint a senior lead for logistics, responsible for ensuring the sector has its rightful, prominent place in each region’s growth, environmental and skills strategies.

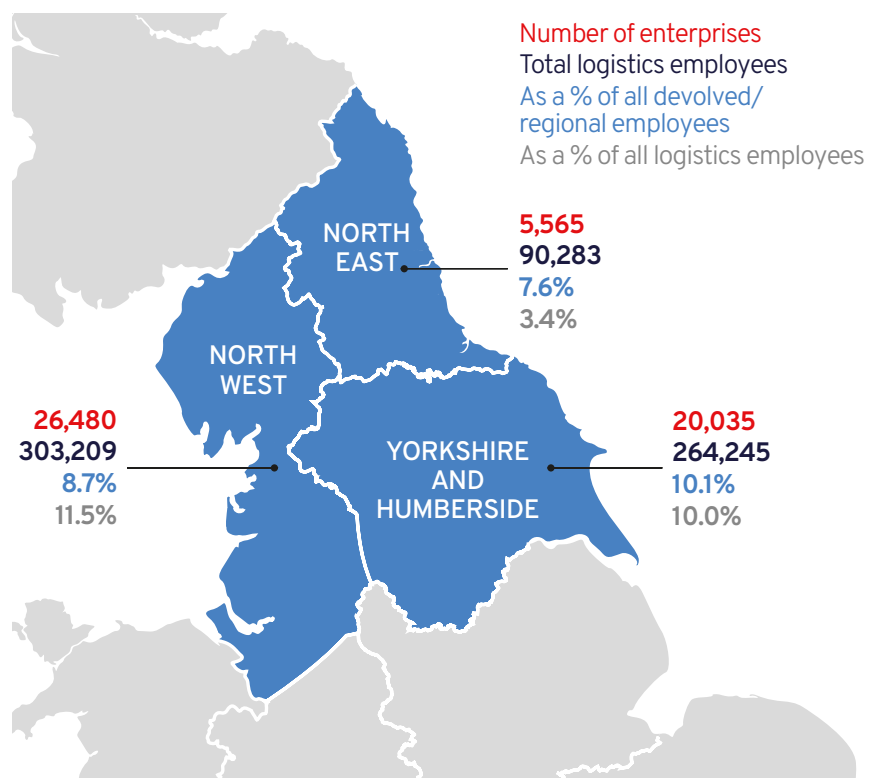
- Logistics underpins the economy of the North, delivering for its households, businesses and public services, every day.** It is central to enabling the affordable homes, green industrial sites and exports that the North needs to thrive.
- Logistics creates opportunities across the North of England** and links it to the wider UK and global trade network. There are more than 650,000 people employed in logistics roles and over 50,000 logistics business in the North of England, making, selling and moving goods. In fact, a quarter of the UK’s logistics roles are in the North.
- Logistics is highly innovative.** It transformed the North of England, from its canals, ports, railways and, from the second half of the twentieth century onwards, enabled revolutions in global trade and e-commerce. It is now innovating to deliver decarbonisation and even greater efficiency.
- Logistics delivers for the future.** By putting logistics first – with the right partnerships, regulations and investment – policymakers can help deliver productivity gains that would supercharge UK GDP by £3.9 billion to £7.9 billion per year by 2030.

### Logistics creates opportunities across the North and underpins the economy

More than 650,000 people are employed in logistics roles and there are over 50,000 logistics businesses in the North of England, making, selling and moving goods.

25% of the UK’s logistics roles are in the North of England.

Sources:  
 Repgraph analysis for Logistics UK.  
 Labour Force Survey.  
 Office of National Statistics Q3 2022 and Q1 2023.  
 Logistics: delivering a solution to the UK’s productivity puzzle, Oxford Economics, 2023





## Innovative and integrated infrastructure

The UK needs investment in a national logistics network, planning reforms and innovation funding to enable goods to be moved in the most productive, strategic and green way – and the North of England has a key role to play in this. The UK's logistics sector is becoming ever smarter and more integrated, within businesses and between logistics sites and transport modes – and the infrastructure it relies on needs to become more integrated and multimodal too.

### A national logistics network

The government's 2022 Future of Freight Plan commits it to working with the freight sector to develop a National Freight Network (NFN). Together with reforms to planning, this must include investment in the North's key road, rail, water and air connections and its logistics hubs. This will enable goods to be moved in the most productive, strategic and green way, reducing congestion and carbon emissions, boosting trade through better connections with ports and airports, and adding resilience to the overall logistics system and economy.

### The North is being held back by transport congestion and a lack of maintenance

The North of England's transport infrastructure is increasingly constrained, adding further cost to the logistics sector and hampering the economy. Poor transport conditions, overrunning works and congestion are all combining to make journey planning highly unpredictable, increasing business costs such as through missed deliveries, unnecessary overtime, increased fuel consumption, inefficient fleet utilisation and damaged vehicles. Congestion cost the UK economy £9.5 billion in 2022 alone<sup>1</sup>.

### The logistics sector's infrastructure priorities for the North of England

- Across the Pennines:
  - Emphasis is needed on dramatically improving trans-Pennine connectivity and reliability across all routes and modes, as well as ensuring effective interchange with urban areas, north-south routes and between road and rail.
  - The planned dualling of the A66 must be delivered swiftly and with consideration of the facilities needed by the logistics drivers who will use it day and night, as well as improving the reliability of the M62 and its interaction with the M60.

- Delivering the Transpennine Route Upgrade would better connect logistics hubs with customers and deliver improved east-west rail connectivity between northern ports, benefitting the whole country.
- Between the North and the South East of England:
  - Reversing the decision to scrap the northern leg of HS2, or replacing it with an alternative project on the same or similar alignment, would create vital capacity for rail freight on the existing network. Logistics UK is urging the government not to sell off the land bought for HS2 to ensure it is safeguarded in the event that any future government decides to revive the project.
  - Delivery of Eaglescliffe-Northallerton gauge enhancements.
- Between the North of England and Scotland:
  - Significant road improvements are needed to improve journey time reliability between major urban centres and cross-border, as well as greater resilience for non-motorway sections. This includes fulfilling long-promised commitments to fully dual the A1 between Newcastle and Edinburgh.

### Driving logistics efficiency through innovation

Innovation plays a key role in enabling logistics to work as an efficient system. Logistics is leading the way on the use of robotics and AI, businesses are implementing new systems to support modal shift, adopting green technologies to reduce carbon emissions and are training people in new data-based skills. In fact, logistics is at the centre of introducing such cutting-edge technologies into the workplace. The logistics sector, SME innovators, investors and combined authorities must continue to work together to create opportunities to develop new solutions.

<sup>1</sup> Source: INRIX 2022 Global Traffic Scorecard



To deliver the innovative and integrated infrastructure that the North needs to thrive, we are calling for:

- The North of England to be part of a national logistics network, backed by reforms to planning and alignment between national, regional and local plans, 30-year infrastructure strategies and five-year delivery plans.
- Investment and planning decisions focused on enabling efficient logistics and tackling the North of England's top congestion hotspots on road and rail, and at ports and airports.
- Investment in better maintenance of existing strategic and local infrastructure to improve reliability and safety.
- Mayors to champion the innovation that is delivering an increasingly productive, green and strategic logistics system, and to bring SMEs and the logistics sector together to develop new solutions for the North of England, leveraging the region's academic strengths in areas such as connected and autonomous vehicles.

## Fair transition to a green economy

The decarbonisation of the logistics sector must be underpinned by investment in electric charging and low carbon fuel production. Urban logistics must also be backed as an essential part of our communities, not inhibited by patchworks of rules and charges that risk inefficient transport movements and increased overall emissions. The logistics sector is committed to playing its part to help achieve net zero but needs a greater say on plans that impact its ability to decarbonise.

### Achieving net zero while protecting supply chains

Logistics businesses are focused on decarbonising, investing in zero tailpipe emission road vehicles; introducing low carbon fuels, including Sustainable Aviation Fuel; and developing plans and calling for investment in rail electrification and clean maritime, including shore power at ports, to enable vessels to switch off their engines and plug into the grid whilst berthed.

The sector is doing this while operating on small margins so must invest carefully to cut emissions while avoiding inflationary impacts for households, businesses and public services. It is also responsible for maintaining UK supply chains, meaning the technologies it adopts must get goods from A to B.

With net zero deadlines approaching, there is a growing risk that the energy infrastructure needed will not be delivered at the pace the sector requires, while zero tailpipe emission HGVs remain unproven for long-distance operations. There is also no agreed plan for the role low carbon fuels will play in the transition, despite being able to reduce emissions by up to 80%<sup>2</sup>, provide a bridging technology for heavy vehicles, and that many internal combustion engine vehicles will remain in use into the 2050s. Addressing these policy gaps would be of

significant benefit to the North of England, given it aspires to be the national leader in clean energy production.

### Managing the costs of decarbonisation through public-private partnership

Unlocking private sector investment in decarbonisation requires policymakers to work in partnership with industry and be committed to developing clear plans and policies.

Such an approach will enable the sector to invest wisely and in a way that keeps costs down for households, businesses and public services.

### Transport planning and charging

Improving the North's transport corridors, across transport modes, is key to enabling goods to be moved in the most productive, strategic and green way.

Local patchworks of rules and charging mechanisms must also be avoided. Fleets operate nationally so, when different areas have different approaches, the cumulative impact in terms of cost and red tape can be significant. The result is increased costs for everyone and logistics businesses less able to invest in the future, including their decarbonisation. This is especially the case when local rules and charges do not align with any overall fuels or energy strategy, or where there are no viable alternatives to the vehicles being targeted.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Zemo Partnership, *Market opportunities to decarbonise heavy duty vehicles using high blend renewable fuels*, 2021







To deliver a fair transition  
to a green economy,  
we are calling for:

- Investment in electric charging and low carbon fuel production.
- The potential for the North of England to be a national leader in clean energy, decarbonisation and hydrogen production to be fully exploited.
- Urban logistics supported as an essential part of our communities, backed by reforms to planning while avoiding a patchwork of local charges and regulations.

## Skills partnerships to support a thriving sector

Careers in logistics must be backed by reforms to skills funding and a sustained commitment to attracting people, ensuring businesses have a strong pipeline of talent to draw from and nurture. With roles in logistics unlocking opportunities from driving to robotics, delivering strong potential for social mobility, and being essential for maintaining supply chains, it is vital that combined authorities and educators work in partnership with our sector.

### Boosting access and appeal

The logistics sector is changing. It is at the centre of the introduction of cutting-edge technologies which are set to reshape the workplace, while also managing the pressures that come with an ageing population. However, too few people understand the breadth of the sector and the job opportunities it brings.

To challenge perceptions and attract new entrants to logistics, the sector is leading the Generation Logistics campaign – a collaboration between Logistics UK, CILT (UK), over 50 businesses and the government. The campaign is working. Research commissioned in September 2022, immediately before the campaign

began, showed that only 10% of 18-to-24-year-olds and career switchers would consider logistics careers, underlining the often-hidden nature of the industry. By October 2023, the Generation Logistics campaign had already increased awareness of the sector by 11% and sentiment towards a career in logistics by 170% amongst the above group.

However, the sector cannot do this alone. Attracting people to our sector, maximising the opportunities that change brings and mitigating the risks must be a team effort. As part of this, we want combined authorities, education providers and skills funders to partner with us to ensure young people and those looking for a new career have a true picture of our sector.

To support the welfare of logistics workers, and attract new and more diverse talent, the North of England also needs improvements to facilities for logistics drivers. Transport Focus data published in August 2023 shows that most vehicle managers regard the UK's rest stops of being of poor quality, lacking availability, and security, and the latest Lorry Parking Survey shows the utilisation of lorry parking facilities in the England at night is above critical level, at 87%.

### Reforming skills funding to support the North's long-term needs

Continued skills shortages in key logistics roles, including vehicles technicians, are a symptom of a skills system that is not delivering for the future. The sector and skills providers must come together, underpinned by the necessary funding to support the delivery of the right courses, to train up a new generation of logistics professionals and upskill the existing workforce.

Local and regional partners have a crucial role to play in supporting this collaboration, both through their own funding powers and through developing strategies such as Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs). These strategies must recognise logistics as an important sector in its own right as well as a critical enabler of wider regional economic aims.







To deliver skills partnerships to support a thriving logistics sector, we are calling for:

- Appropriate funding for training providers to ensure key logistics courses are available.
- A collaborative effort to promote the industry to young people and job seekers.
- Faster planning approvals for facilities to improve the welfare of logistics workers, and such facilities made integral to road investment schemes.
- The proactive identification and development of transferable and cross-cutting skills needed by the current and future logistics sector.



## To unleash the power of logistics to drive growth, the North of England needs:

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Logistics UK is one of the country's largest business groups, representing the entire logistics industry and supporting, shaping and standing up for safe and efficient logistics.

Our membership of over 20,000 includes global, national and regional businesses and SMEs spanning the road, rail, maritime and air industries as well as the buyers of freight services, such as retailers and manufacturers.

As an organisation, we deliver services, representation and thought leadership, helping members and policymakers to seize new opportunities for the sector and the economy as a whole, right across the country.

To discuss how to unleash the power of logistics to drive growth across the whole economy, contact: [publicaffairs@logistics.org.uk](mailto:publicaffairs@logistics.org.uk)

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