

Karen Heppenstall, ChPP, MAPM, Head of Rail – Midlands Connect

Karen is a Chartered Project Professional, with more than 16 years of diverse rail experience spanning both public and private sectors. She started her career at Network Rail, working as a Project Sponsor in both the LNE and Sussex routes. After a short spell at WYCA, Karen joined Transport Planning and Engineering Consultancy WSP. During her 6 years at WSP, Karen led numerous rail strategy, planning and appraisal projects including the Western Gateway STB Rail Strategy and the SOBC for Wellington and Cullompton new stations and was WSP's lead in their partnership with Coventry City Council for their innovative Very Light Rail project. She created and developed a national Rail Strategy and Appraisal team. She joined Midlands Connect as Head of Rail in April 2021 and is already influencing the shape of the Strategy Refresh due to be published later in 2021 and working closely with senior colleagues at Network Rail and DfT to address current challenges with the Midlands Engine Rail programme. Karen is passionate about sustainable travel with rail at its core, and the benefits sustainable travel can offer to the environment, health and wellbeing, as well as driving the Levelling Up agenda.



Rupert Clubb, East Sussex County Council's Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Rupert is the chief officer lead for Transport for the South East. He chairs the Senior Officer Group leading the organisation's development and supports the Chairman and Board. He is also the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport at East Sussex County Council. A former president of the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport, Rupert is a Chartered Civil Engineer and Fellow of the Institution of Civil Engineers and the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation.



Tim Wood, Interim Chief Executive and Northern Powerhouse Rail Director

Tim Wood, Northern Powerhouse Rail Director at Transport for the North, has over 25 years' experience in railway design and delivery. He has previously held two rail director positions in the private sector and is known for early development of rail private public partnership schemes, as well as partner and stakeholder management.

His directorship of the programme aims is to drive transformational economic change within the pan-northern area of the rail system, with a primary focus on improving connectivity between the six major city regions in the North and Manchester Airport.

