

Plan to takeover railways

Published on **Tuesday 3 April 2012 13:01**

PLANS to take control of train services in the North East are to be put to the Government.

Ministers say they want to see rail rights devolved to local groups, but they would need the backing of councils from Northumberland to Teesside.

If it were to get the go-ahead it is likely that Metro bosses on the Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority would have to take on a bigger role.

MP Guy Opperman has said he will meet Transport Secretary Justine Greening over the possibility of creating a Northumbria Rail, which would replace the service currently provided by Northern Rail.

Mr Opperman said: "The problem with the present railway system is that we in the North East are the last in the queue when it comes to investment or attention.

"You can see that in the way we are always handed down the trains from elsewhere without new investment or in how we can't get extra services on match days."

David Wood, chairman of the Tyne and Wear Integrated Transport Authority, said: "Devolving local rail services away from Whitehall is a real opportunity for the whole North East to get a fairer deal on services and investment.

"We will need to work closely in partnership with all five of the Tyne and Wear local authorities, as well as the Tees Valley authorities and Northumberland and Durham county councils to build a common approach on this important issue."

<http://www.sunderlandecho.com/news/local/plan-to-takeover-railways-1-4413381>