

Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP
Secretary of State for Transport
House of Commons
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10 October 2019

Dear Mr Shapps,

West Yorkshire Combined Authority is very supportive of the Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU). It is a vitally important short-medium term project for the North and for this region, buying us time and long overdue additional rail capacity on the north's main east – west rail artery, in advance of a new Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) line via Bradford city centre. For this reason, I would like to express my grave concern about the lack of a funding decision from the Department for Transport on TRU.

I would also like to take this opportunity to reiterate “our Asks” on this project which are summarised as follows:

- **TRU and NPR:** While we welcomed the Prime Minister's suggestion in principle of accelerating the development of a new line between Leeds and Manchester as part of NPR, we are not prepared to face an “either / or” choice between TRU and NPR. The two routes will in future have different roles to play in the north's east-west rail connectivity. A new NPR line will form the north's inter-city east-west trunk route, whilst TRU can be repurposed to better serve the inter-regional, local and freight markets. The region and the North need TRU improvements now without delay to help to deliver a more reliable railway, to provide the much needed capacity and provide freight shippers with an alternative to the chronic crowding of the M62 motorway.
- **Delivered in full:** As 7 out of the 12 LEP areas in the North, collectively accounting for over 80% of the north's economic output, are set to directly benefit from the TRU investment it is important that TRU is delivered in full. I understand that Transport for North (TfN) had already raised this to your predecessor through statutory advice but the recent response TfN received from your department still does not offer us any comfort that TRU will be delivered in full.
- **Accessible stations:** As a minimum requirement, all stations on the TRU route should be made accessible. It is in line with your department's ambition set out in the Inclusive Transport Strategy and TRU should be fully funded to deliver this.

- **Climate emergency:** In order to truly deliver a low carbon North of England transport network by 2050, it is important that the route is fully electrified. The Combined Authority has formally declared a climate emergency and so have all councils within West Yorkshire, with Leeds City Region setting a target of becoming net zero carbon region by 2038. Full electrification has repeatedly been proven to be the only cost-effective way of providing an efficient high-density, mixed-use railway over challenging topography, as typified by the TRU route. We therefore particularly welcomed the recent electrification cost challenge which explores the potential to provide full electrification within the assumed budget. I also believe that it should be within the TRU remit to design enhancements at stations and on the route that further decarbonise the railway.
- **Leeds station capacity:** The TRU project's scope as we understand it does not address capacity, performance and congestion issues at/around Leeds station. Leeds station has increasingly become a problem and bottleneck, not only causing issues on the current timetable but limiting any future enhancements in this region and the North – including the delivery of urgently needed longer trains and other existing franchise commitments on Northern, Trans-Pennine and LNER. We are asking your department to prioritise work on resolving the capacity issues at Leeds which plays a key role in narrowing the productivity gap, strengthening and rebalancing the national economy.
- **Enhanced involvement:** So far we have very limited sight of and input into key decisions in relation to TRU. We are seeking an enhanced role on TRU through TfN so that we and TfN can help to ensure the proposed TRU improvements can be planned and delivered in a way that appropriate to this region and the north.

I would also like your delivery agent (Network Rail) to work with us in the following issues so that we can work together to maximise benefits of TRU, minimise abortive works and minimise disruptions:

- **Disruption:** we need greater clarity on the proposed service patterns and the potential impact during construction.
- **Service patterns:** We need more clarity about what TRU Phase 1 work would deliver in terms of capability and capacity. We have set out our 'Ambition for TRU' in <https://westyorkshire.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s9022/Item%206%20-%20TRU%20update%20-%20Appendix%201.pdf>
- **Diversionsary routes:** We need to understand the potential impact on the existing train services on diversionsary routes. We also need clarity on potential opportunities to enhance these diversionsary routes in order to maximise the legacy benefits of the TRU project.

- **Interface projects:** We have an ambitious programme of rail investment and we are investing around £300m in the railway in this region in the coming few years. Some of our projects have a strong interface with TRU and we need to understand the scope of TRU at the earliest opportunity to deliver our investment programme within the timescales that are set by your department.

I would be grateful if you would consider the points raised above and I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,



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Chair of Transport for West Yorkshire Combined Authority

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