

West Yorkshire Combined Authority

Response to Whole Industry Strategic Plan Call for Evidence

West Yorkshire Combined Authority's Key Messages

General Industry/Governance

- Railway is there to serve a wider purpose in society and not an end in its own right
- The railway must be accountable to those who use, fund and benefit from it
- Rail must be seen in the context of wider transport needs
- Trade-offs between outcome and cost must be informed
- There must be openness and honesty within the rail sector along with simplification of the industry to drive improved accountability for decision making and affordability
- Plans should not be made based on the current Covid-19 transport position – cannot assume current trends will continue

Customer

- Customers must be at the heart of the industry – simple affordable fares, good reliable service matching travel needs, full accessibility and a high-quality offer to encourage modal shift
- The rail-industry must have some freedom to use their expertise to improve the passenger offer, grow the rail market and provide more financially sustainable services

Climate

- The strategy needs to prioritise the climate emergency and provide for inclusive growth for everyone across our region
- Rail freight must be encouraged and new freight customers supported, balance between customer and freight services needs to be appropriate

Investment/Major Schemes

- There needs to be local powers/influence to ensure the that local needs are provided for
- Rail investment needs to be judged over the longer term to allow investment to provide longer term cost savings
- There must be acceptance that some investment/costs cannot be judged on a pure financial business case but on wider benefits and the government agenda of levelling up and decarbonisation.
- TRU should be delivered with full electrification and accessible stations. Details are required on disruption and timetabling planning to maximise the benefits of the programme and minimise the disbenefits to the local communities and businesses.

- Further studies will be required to look at options that deliver benefits close to the HS2 East and NPR network, CA should be involved in the governance process
- Leeds station needs the capacity required (both track and pedestrian capacity) as a major rail hub and bottleneck of the rail network, and the connectivity of Bradford needs to be transformed to realise the city's economic potential

Strategic Objectives for the Whole Rail Industry

The UK Government has developed five strategic objectives for the Strategic Plan over the next 30 years: **meeting customers' needs, delivering financial sustainability, contributing to long-term economic growth, levelling up & connectivity, and delivering environmental sustainability.** We intend to put these objectives at the heart of the Strategic Plan, and we are using them to guide all of the questions in this call for evidence.

GREAT BRITISH RAILWAYS TRANSITION TEAM

Strategic Objectives	Ambition for rail
I Meeting customers' needs	Meeting the needs of future passengers and freight customers by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing value for money and improving the performance, reliability and convenience of rail, Meeting multi-modal expectations and reducing end-to-end journey time, Maintaining a safe railway as part of a safe transport system and widening accessibility.
II Delivering financial sustainability	Ensuring rail is financially sustainable, efficient and value for money by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing costs to government, Ensuring a sustainable balance of fare/fee and government funding, and Increasing the efficiency of operations, asset management and capital investment – delivering on time and on budget.
III Contributing to long-term economic growth	Catalysing long term economic growth by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing total journey time and cost for transport users, Connecting labour markets and realising agglomeration benefits, and Connecting places to markets, directly investing in skills, innovation and digital infrastructure, crowding-in foreign investment and facilitating the housebuilding & place-making agenda.
IV Levelling up & connectivity	Reducing regional inequalities and improving connectivity between communities by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Contributing to long-term economic growth in areas in support of levelling up, Contributing to social benefits from improved connectivity, and Improving rail passenger and freight connectivity across the union.
V Delivering environmental sustainability	Supporting government's environmental sustainability objectives by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging modal shift by increasing the attractiveness of rail, Delivering rail net-zero (traction and infrastructure), protecting biodiversity and addressing air pollution, and Protecting transport links by investing in climate adaptation.

We recognise that many of you are working to similar long-term objectives. We are very interested in how you define and quantify your objectives, and how they match or differ from our own. When considering your response to question 1, please use your experiences to inform your answers and share any examples, taking into account that in all future scenarios we expect affordability to be a significant constraint.

Question 1

- How would you apply these objectives to rail in your region or to your area of expertise within the transport sector? Do you have evidence you can share with us of how you have applied similar objectives in relation to rail, and do you consider the objectives to have missed any key areas?**

The West Yorkshire Combined Authority (hereafter WYCA) working in partnership with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), operates to ensure that our region is recognised globally as a strong, successful economy where everyone can build great businesses, careers and lives. We bring together local councils and businesses to achieve this vision, so that everyone in our region can benefit from economic prosperity and a modern, accessible transport network. We have four main objectives:

- **Tackling the climate emergency**- Ensuring a green recovery and accelerating our plans for a net zero carbon economy by 2038 at the latest.
- **Boosting productivity** -Helping businesses to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic **and** helping people find and retain good jobs.
- **Enabling inclusive growth** -Enabling as many people as possible to contribute to, and **benefit** from, economic growth, especially those disproportionately affected by the pandemic.
- **Delivering 21st Century transport** -Ensuring our transport network recovers to provide the services that people need, while laying the foundations for future improvements.

We consider these objectives very similar to those proposed by Great British Railways. Our objectives are at the heart of a clear vision for transport in West Yorkshire. In 2017, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority adopted the West Yorkshire Transport Strategy 2040 setting out our policy framework for improving transport:

[transport-strategy-2040.pdf \(westyorks-ca.gov.uk\)](#)

For rail, we have set out a vision that significantly increases capacity, connectivity and reliability and integrates with bus, mass transit, cycling and walking to connect people to work, education and leisure locally, regionally, nationally – and even internationally.

[Our vision for the future of transport in West Yorkshire - West Yorkshire Combined Authority \(westyorks-ca.gov.uk\)](#)

In our Transport Strategy and Rail Vision, we are looking to grow the number of trips made by rail by 75%, come 2027.

We have been working with partners in Government, in the rail industry and across the north for a long time on developing a successful railway. We would define success as a railway that supports our wider objectives, with the corresponding rail outputs as follows:

- Reliable and punctual
- Modern and of a high quality
- Integrated with other transport modes - easily accessible from across the region.
- Fast and frequent
- Of sufficient capacity for passengers and freight

- Accessible to all
- Value for money for fare-payers and taxpayers
- Welcoming station gateways - supportive of our place-making and regeneration plans.

b. How is it possible to make progress against a number of the objectives simultaneously? Do any of the objectives have larger barriers associated with them than others, or do any objectives pose possible barriers to others? Where would you make the trade-offs?

It is important to recognise that as well as serving its customers, the railway is there to serve a wider purpose in society and is not an end in its own right. Its organisational frameworks and structure should fundamentally be developed based on the function the railway is to serve.

At a strategic level there is a point to be made that pursuit of rail taking a much larger share of the total travel market delivers against **all the objectives in one go**. This is the type of thinking that the WISP needs to be addressing, i.e., seeing rail in the context of wider transport needs. WYCA welcomes the advent of GBR as an opportunity to further join up and strengthen the linkages between the planning and delivery of an integrated transport network, including (and with an emphasis on), active travel.

Not only is rail part of the wider mix of transport infrastructure and services which together, provide vital mobility for people and goods to move around and to/from our country but it will itself offer a range of infrastructure and services, all of which will address each strategic objective with differing levels of proportion.

If the output of any transport strategy is a set of initiatives, service, or infrastructure improvements that will address identified objectives or issues, then it must be widely accepted that each element identified may well impact less favourably on, for example a particular geography, commuting pattern or environmental concern. It is therefore not always possible to make progress against a number of objectives simultaneously.

It is the role of the Transport Appraisal process to ensure that decision-makers are always presented with a full account of the impacts on identified objectives and that all the impacts are monetised, quantified, and qualified wherever feasible with sufficient mitigation proposed where necessary. This appraisal process should align very closely with the decision-making process and an understanding from those involved at a local political level as to what the priorities and more importantly outputs of an organisation are.

The strategy process should not therefore pre-suppose trade-offs when trying to make progress against a number of objectives simultaneously but should document all the evidence in order for an informed decision to be made.

A final point on “trade-offs” is that the that the railway will always need to make them (even if they are informed) between outcomes and/or between outcomes and cost. However, they need to be the *right* trade-offs, based on:

- The railway achieving operating and capital costs at levels that bear comparison with international and historic peers (otherwise costs trade-offs are spurious and sub-optimal choices will be made)
- Full understanding of the differing needs of different parts of the country (and so of the railway), including but not limited to a recognition of the different baseline situation from which the railway in the North is starting in comparison with that in London and the South-East, as a result of the historic disparities in investment levels – this implies meaningful devolution of rail governance and decision-making made by those with the fullest understand of local and regional priorities;
- A better balancing of short- against long-term costs, with a stronger emphasis on “investment to save” which drives the long-term effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the railway – classic examples are the benefits of rail electrification and of signalling/train control upgrades;
- Appraisal and forecasting methodologies that are fit for purpose – so that the real benefits of rival interventions are better understood.

c. What long-term trends in wider society, the economy, and the environment will affect these five objectives over the next 5, 10, and 30 years? Please give evidence to support your response.

[The Draft West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan 2021](#) has been developed as the region and the UK as a whole emerges from the pandemic. The plan focuses, building resilience, and recognising both the challenges and opportunities for the future

The plan has two main areas of focus which are synergic with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority’s view of the long-term trends in wider society, economic and environment:

1. to deliver inclusive growth for everyone across our region and
2. ensuring that there are plans to tackle the climate and environment emergency.

The box below highlights some of the key trends that the two area of focus will need to address:

<p>POLITICAL AND SOCIAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devolution and decentralisation • Changing demographics – ageing population and migration • Pressures for immediacy and individual tailoring • Increasing polarisation and inequalities • Risk of global political instability 	<p>ECONOMIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Globalisation • Changing international economy powers and demand – BRIC+ • Changing skills demands – increasingly for higher level and for transferable skills • Changing work patterns, e.g. self-employment • Continuing austerity and economic uncertainty
<p>ENVIRONMENTAL AND INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change impacts (e.g. flood risk and drought extremes) and adaptation • Climate change mitigation • Changing energy supply and demand patterns • Increasing transport demand 	<p>TECHNOLOGICAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automation/robotics and impact on jobs • Health advances (e.g. genomics), bio-economy • Internet of things, new technologies with big impacts (e.g. 3D printing, driverless cars) • Continued digitalisation and processing power

The next section will show how some of these key trends are being addressed.

The [West Yorkshire State of the Region Report 2021](#) is the first annual review of the performance of West Yorkshire against key socio-economic and environmental indicators. It provides a stocktake using indicators developed as part of the Combined Authority’s Strategic Economic Framework. As West Yorkshire exercises its devolved powers with the direct election of its new Mayor, it is an opportune and appropriate time to assess the progress the region is making.

In terms of the future and key long-term trends, the following themes are drawn out and quoted from the report:

- There is uncertainty about the long-term structural impacts of COVID-19 on the type and location of economic activity in future. For example, it is unclear whether the shift to remote working seen during the pandemic will persist in the medium to long term, while the implications of such a change for future productivity are poorly understood (see p. 75)
- Delivering fast and reliable broadband is vital to the economic performance of West Yorkshire and supports the Combined Authority’s strategic objective of delivering inclusive growth by removing barriers to education, training and employment opportunities. Digital connectivity has the potential to improve the accessibility of training and employment opportunities by improving access to digital resources and remote learning for students and enabling people who spend a large amount of time at home to adopt more flexible working practices or start up a business at home. Improved digital connectivity also increases the range

of occupations which can be carried out at home. As well as professional roles, this could include lower skilled occupations such as call centre operators, which may be suited to people who have spent a long time outside the labour market. (see pp 68-74)

- Much ink has also been spilled about how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on travel behaviour and to which extent the trends that have emerged during this time will continue in the future (see p.158)

Each district and the Mayoral Authority have strategic priorities/shared outcomes and a corporate plan to address them. The following table details each organisations' priorities:

<u>City of Bradford MDC</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Better Skills, more good jobs and a growing economy 2. Decent homes 3. Good Start, great schools 4. Better Health, better lives 5. Safe, strong and active communities 6. A sustainable District 7. An enabling council
<u>Calderdale Council</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strong and resilient towns 2. Reducing inequalities 3. Climate emergency
<u>Kirklees Council</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shaped by people 2. Best start 3. Well 4. Independent 5. Aspire and achieve 6. Sustainable Economy 7. Safe and cohesive 8. Clean and green
<u>Leeds Council</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Health and wellbeing 2. Sustainable infrastructure 3. Child-friendly city 4. Age-friendly Leeds 5. Culture 6. Housing 7. Safe, Strong Communities 8. Inclusive Growth
<u>Wakefield Council</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Places to be proud of 2. An economy that works for everyone 3. Better health and lives 4. Thriving children and families 5. A greener Wakefield District
<u>West Yorkshire Combined Authority</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tackling the climate emergency. 2. Boosting productivity 3. Enabling inclusive growth 4. Delivering 21st Century transport

Looking across all the priorities and shared outcomes, it can be inferred what each district believes are key trends to be addressed as the future unfolds. The links on each authority name give more detail.

d. What are the key uncertainties you consider that the Strategic Plan must be resilient to in order to be effective over the next 5, 10 and 30 years?

There are several external factors that impact the supply and demand of rail that the strategic plan must be cognisant of, if not resilient to, over the next 5, 10 and 30 years. These include the environment and climate change, population and demography, technological change, economic growth, and behaviour change following the Covid-19 pandemic

5 years

Covid-19

We agree with the National Infrastructure Commission's summary of the impact of Covid-19, contained in their report: "Behaviour change and infrastructure beyond Covid-19", insofar as the fact that "It is too early to assume that long term behaviour change will lead to wholly different patterns of infrastructure use. In the face of this uncertainty, long term infrastructure policy must consider the range of potential permanent changes in behaviour"

To address this any strategic plan must base its outcomes on a range of realistic scenarios that could unfold, and what could, or should be implemented to address these scenarios. Again, quoting from the NIC (National Infrastructure Commission) report: "This will help focus attention on the low regrets interventions that make sense across different scenarios, and on policies that can help decide the scenario by encouraging shifts in behaviour long term"

Climate Change/Environment

In 2019 the Government amended the Climate Change Act to commit the UK to achieving net zero by 2050, compared to the previous target of an 80% reduction in emissions by 2050. The Government has introduced some policy initiatives to meet net zero, but the Climate Change Committee has said the UK is currently not on track to meet its carbon budget targets in 2025 and 2030.

The West Yorkshire Combined Authority and the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (the LEP) are working towards the challenging ambition of being a net zero carbon economy by 2038, and to have made significant progress by 2030. In June 2019, the Combined Authority and the LEP formally declared a climate emergency.

In July 2020, the WYCA produced an Emission Reduction Pathways Report [emission-reduction-pathways-report.pdf \(westyorks-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/emission-reduction-pathways-report.pdf) that sets out how we can address the climate emergency, meet our target, and reduce emissions across

five sectors of our economy: buildings, industry, land use and agriculture, power, and transport. For transport the work determined the following targets need to be met:

- Reducing private car travel by 21% through shifting demand to public, shared and active travel e.g., walking and cycling
- Increasing travel by walking by 78%
- Increasing travel by bike by 2,000%
- Increasing travel by bus by 39%
- Increasing travel by rail by 53%

Given the scale of these targets, it is unthinkable that any rail strategy would not have climate change as a key uncertainty to be resilient to starting from today.

In addition to the contribution rail can make to addressing climate change, there is also the effect climate change has on the ability of the rail network to function effectively and efficiently. In 2014/15, the UK Government initiated a transport resilience review which for each mode of transport.

For rail, the Office of Rail Regulation's monitoring of Network Rail's asset management capability has shown progress in asset knowledge, risk-based maintenance, and weather resilience and for the customer there has been a tangible difference in the approach to compensation, including during periods of extreme weather-related disruption.

Whatever governance is proposed for GBR (Great British Railways), any strategic plan would need to ensure this resilience to extreme weather conditions is carried forward.

10 years

Economic Growth

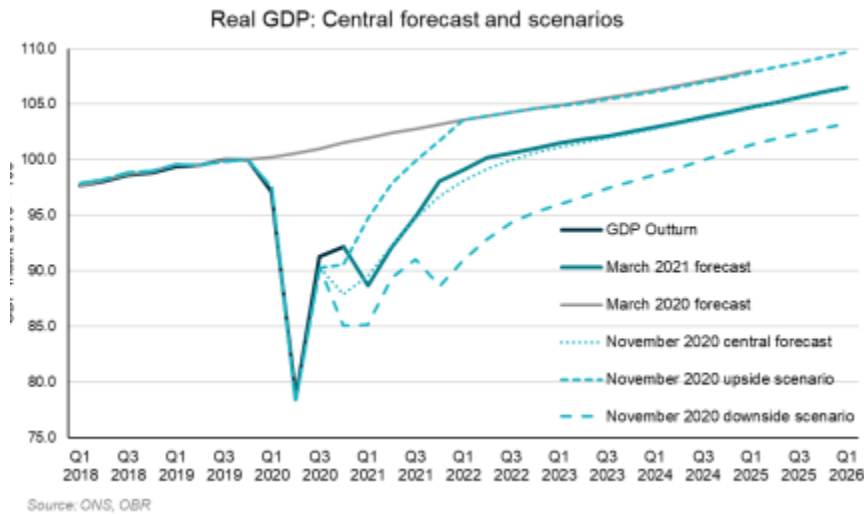
Forecasting economic growth in the context of the pandemic is difficult and may well be the most "*uncertain uncertainty*" of any long-term transport strategy.

At the outset of the pandemic, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority commissioned scenarios to predict the potential direction of the region's economy as a result of COVID-19. It was expected that the contraction in the West Yorkshire economy across the 3 scenarios would be significant, with total GVA (GROSS VALUE ADDED) in 2020 contracting by between 10% (£5.3bn) in scenario 1 and 22% (£12.1bn) in scenario 3, with potentially between 30,000 and 58,000 jobs lost in 2020, and with the length of time for recovery varying from a year to six years to pre-pandemic levels.

Nationally, our economy was hit particularly hard with our GDP (Gross Domestic Product) falling by 9.9% in 2020. This was the largest decline of any G7 country.

For 2021, the UK economy is expected to grow with the NIESR expecting growth of 6.8% and the OBR (Office for Budget Responsibility) (Office for Budget Responsibility) 4% respectively. NIESR forecasts that by late 2021, or early 2022 the economy will return to a level of overall activity recorded at end of 2019. While the

OBR forecast suggests that it will take until Q2 2022. The graph below outlines the scenarios for GDP growth until 2026:



As with appraisal, uncertainty around economic growth should be dealt with by understanding, addressing, and providing infrastructure and service options to address a range of economic forecasts, from which travel demand can be extrapolated.

30 years

Nationally, population growth is a key driver of transport demand. Office for National Statistics figures suggest the UK population will surpass 69.6 million by mid-2029 and reach 72 million by mid-2041². By 2066 there is projected to be a further 8.6 million UK residents aged 65 years and over. The total number in this group could be 20.4 million, up to 26% of the total population.

With an aging population comes a decrease in active travel and a subsequent increase in car use. Any long-term rail strategy will need to address ways of making the rail network accessible and better integrated with other modes, particularly in rural areas where the population is ageing more rapidly.

General Point

Whilst the Government Office for Science publication: "[A time of unprecedented change in the transport system](#)" is not government policy we would urge any strategic plan to be mindful of the planning undertaken within this document and perhaps use the following scenarios when considering key uncertainties in the context of alternative longer-term strategies:

- **Trends Unmodified** illustrates a world where only incremental, mostly reactive, change occurs; this scenario highlights the risks of inaction.
- By contrast, **Technology Unleashed** considers a future where technology is developed and delivered in a highly permissive environment.
- **Individual Freedoms** outlines a future in which this environment is tightly constrained due to increasing public concerns over companies' handling of their private data.

- Lastly, **Greener Communities** suggests a future where change is geared towards beneficial social and environmental outcomes

e. Over the next 5, 10 and 30 years, which steps should the sector take to improve integration of rail with the wider transport system (including walking and cycling) in pursuit of these objectives?

Integration: At present the passenger railway operates not so much as a system as in the form of a collection of services that run between various points: it does not consider the real-world journeys that passengers need to make, even from their origin station to their destination station, let alone from door to door. Partly for this reason, rail's modal shares are extremely patchy, with high values being achieved for radial flows into city centres where there has been investment in service quality (an example in West Yorkshire is the Airedale and Wharfedale routes, which achieve modal shares of 75-85% for Leeds commuting flows) but negligible shares of more complex journeys. Research has repeatedly shown high values for "interchange penalty" compared with systems built around easy and reliable interchange - this reflects the lack of a strategic view towards the design of timetables with regard to travellers' real-world journeys.

It is not only individual routes and operators that appear to exist in isolation from one another – there is a consistent failure to bring together rollingstock, infrastructure, and long-term timetable planning into a coherent strategy. The Northern Hub and May 2018 timetable are a prime example, and it is relevant to understand in particular the wide variety of vested and conflicting interests within the industry that together militate against best practice being adopted.

The problem is however larger still than this: **the railway in Britain can be seen as operating in "splendid isolation" from other means of transport**, with (outside London) integration with buses in particular being exceedingly difficult to plan. This should become easier and more joined up through Enhanced partnership working and ultimately future franchising. This is inimical to creating a public transport network that is attractive for a wider variety of journey types and purposes – an outcome that is essential if the Combined Authority's social, economic, and environmental objectives are to be met. It follows from this that joining up public transport policy as a whole – and rail policy in particular – with regional and local plans for economic, spatial, and social change is very challenging.

The railway must be accountable to those that use, fund and benefit from it; as discussed above and in our previous evidence, a crucial part of this must be *meaningful* devolution of rail in the North to bodies with *genuine power* to make decisions, guide planning and enforce agreements. True devolution must encompass genuine power (to specify, to manage, to enforce), as well as accountability of the devolved body and governance structures that ensure local politicians' priorities are put into practice.

Collaboration: We need to emphasise explicitly that **there is a need for a transformation towards openness and honesty with funders, specifiers, and local/regional government – as well as within the industry itself.**

Like many Combined Authorities, WYCA is a significant investor in the railway, with a current pipeline of investment worth £250m. To realise the full potential of this investment a strategic plan must address these elements described above to ensure that the railway is truly “open for business” and that better integration with modes of transport can be facilitated.

Meeting Customers’ Needs

Rail industry customers broadly fall into two types: passengers and freight. The rail network provides important benefits to the customers who rely on it. The Plan for Rail says that passengers must receive high-quality, consistent services day in, day out. This means accessible, reliable journeys that are well connected with other transport services and include new customer offers at stations and on trains. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, the rail freight industry has shown its resilience and agility, working to transport food and medical supplies around the country. This example, and others given in the Plan for Rail, highlight how important rail freight is to our economy now and in the future, and how we will develop growth targets for freight that will be included in the Strategic Plan. The Plan for Rail says of freight: ‘national co-ordination, greater opportunities for growth and strong safeguards will put rail freight on the front foot.’

When considering your responses, please take account of the likelihood of changes in levels or patterns of passenger and freight demand over the next 5, 10 and 30 years, what that would mean for the rail system, and what will the interventions be over that period that will provide the maximum value for money.

Question 2

- a. Passenger: how will rail passenger expectations, including accessibility requirements, evolve over the coming 5, 10 and 30 years, what will be the driving causes of these changing expectations, and how can they be most effectively met by the rail sector?**

Rail passenger expectations will evolve in the short, medium, and long term. There is likely to be an increased demand for faster, more frequent, and more punctual services and improved connectivity to major cities to counter the increasing road congestion as a result of growth in urban housing stock.

Customer’s will continue to expect and demand comfort – both in respect to avoiding overcrowding (enhanced as a legacy of the COVID pandemic and improved awareness of close contact risks), and in terms of general cleanliness. In a recent survey carried out by Passenger Focus a key driver of customer satisfaction was ‘information on how busy the train is’. The most important driver for customer satisfaction remains consistent and is punctuality and reliability. Integration will continue to be a major factor affecting rail travel where the expectation is for seamless journeys to and from the destination point. Enhanced information by means of technology will be key in helping to deliver the seamless journey. The low carbon agenda will likely gain pace considerably and environmental factors will continue to play an increasingly important role in decisions and choices.

Most importantly, cost and value will continue to be an important influencing factor in decision making. In some cases, the use of cars will have become a perceived 'safer' way to travel as a result of COVID so rail will need to be affordable and offer ticketing solutions which meet the changing markets and influence demand. For example, ticket sales suggest that commuters are travelling one or two days a week so ticketing products will need to target here.

In terms of accessibility, with around 11 million people living in the UK with some form of disability, access to rail data facilitating real time change notification and accessible journey planning along with a consistent experience will become increasingly important. Stations will need to be usable for 'everyone' without discrimination.

Information relating to accessibility at stations is almost as critical as improved accessibility itself. A good example of this which could be carried out for all stations is a new initiative to provide 3D mapping of rail stations, similar to google maps it enables customers to access the station from home and walk round different areas of the station. Trials are also in place to provide voice directions in toilets to help people who are blind or have a vision impairment to find their way round.

b. Passenger: in your experience, how can we most effectively monitor and assess customer satisfaction? What is a stretching yet realistic ambition for this objective and what measures can we most effectively use to consider success over the coming 5, 10 and 30 years? What evidence can you share to support your view?

The Blake Jones review¹, published 19 July 2019, underlined the importance of ensuring that customers are at the heart of decision making in the rail industry.

An overall objective could be a single overarching industry wide 'customer view' to enable strategic improvement. This would be useful if presented to provide local, regional and national information of customer experience but needs to identify emerging trends and therefore be carried out frequently to enable a more proactive relationship with the customer.

Blake Jones review suggests' A regular sector-wide snapshot of performance and passenger experience enhancing existing reporting arrangements to ensure impact is fully understood. This approach will bring together local intelligence, operational performance information, passenger feedback, and infrastructure updates, to consider future impacts on passengers, rather than merely reporting historic operations, with suitable early warning systems for foreseen problems.'

The following is evidence of current processes which could feed into this but these areas themselves need to be consistent across the industry and there needs to be mechanisms in place to ensure they can be monitored easily, for example, by way of a dashboard. Resources to do this and staff acting upon the information is needed to deal with this proactively.

¹ Blake Jones review: Rail North partnership review, available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blake-jones-review-rail-north-partnership-review>

- Complaints/compliments/social media – This needs to capture both formal complaints submitted by the customer and verbal complaints given in conversation by telephone/call centres or by conversation via staff. Everyone who comes into contact with customers should have a method of capturing the feedback and sending on for analysis. Upward and downward trends could be monitored and also the distribution of the complaints by type of customer, location and nature of the complaint. For example, stations, performance, managing disruption, replacement buses.
- National Passenger transport survey (currently paused due to Covid-19)– provides a useful satisfaction benchmark industry wide on a quarterly basis. Although it can provide a robust method of monitoring it can be reactive to needs due to slow publishing timescales. Data can be more limited at granular levels, for example, if you required feedback on one station it may have only had one survey. Improved use of technology could help here. Potential for bar codes on trains which link through to online surveys, similarly at stations. Historically customers have set up their own feedback, such as, 'Northern Fail' which was a negative forum, hopefully these formal channels which are easily accessible will help to negate this behaviour by providing another channel to customers to feed into.
- Service Quality Regime - A proactive and robust Service Quality Regime focusing on passenger experience by identifying faults/cleanliness/ information on trains and stations would help to drive continued improvement. Penalties and incentives attached to this by way of benchmarks have historically ensured more focus is given within the business to making improvements. Contract managers responsible for cleaning/maintenance and Station Managers have repeatedly highlighted how it helps them to carry out their roles better and enforce change.
- Customer service champions in the organisation need to act on all the information and be able to enforce change through a formal process. For example, assisting where 'faults' get blocked. One example of this is where Customer Information Screens had been installed on a station platform but there was no power for over a year, as the cable needed to be taken under the track and was something Network Rail needed to enable. The customer feedback from surveys which highlighted 'lack of information at the station' was used as evidence to Network Rail who programmed in works to provide power to the screens.
- Lessons learnt – one of the main areas of concern frequently raised by customers is how disruption is managed by the rail industry/rail operators. As part of planned disruption there needs to be lessons learnt carried out and shared but also the setting of key passenger facing targets which includes measures outside the rail provision, for example, bus provision, highway impact.
- Net Promoter Score (NPS) - is a widely used market research metric that typically takes the form of a single survey question asking respondents to rate

the likelihood that they would recommend a company, product, or a service to a friend or colleague and is a useful way to monitor customer loyalty.

A working group made of customer service professionals (from within the Rail Industry and allied sectors as well as customers) would be a good platform to help inform suitable targets and KPIs. Success could be monitored in a number of ways: - improvements to the overall target for satisfaction, benchmarks for passenger facing measures improvements over time, reduction in complaints, engineering works meeting key specific passenger targets.

c. Freight: what evidence can you provide regarding the advantage(s) of transporting goods by rail and what evidence can you share for how that could develop in the next 5, 10 and 30 years? What do you consider to be the most effective role for rail freight in the existing supply chains served and those that it doesn't? How could this change over that period? In answering, please explain and take account of likely developments in technology and in the wider economy.

In a mid-week survey carried out in November 2021 the 30 trains operated to and from the WYCA area accounted for an estimated 25,000 tonnes of freight, the equivalent of over 1,400 articulated HGV loads and associated trips, the latter likely to have been at least 30% higher to account for empty running and/or return journeys. The equivalent annual tonnage by rail in 2020 would be estimated at 8 million tonnes, compared to the MDST figure for 2014 of 23.8 million tonnes. In total, the 77 loaded trains which operated on the day of the survey accounted for 61,000 tonnes of freight or 2,790 articulated HGV loads. Beyond this, a further 61 scheduled freight train paths were cancelled on the day of the survey, along with 78 "Q" freight train paths which only operate on an "as-reQuired" basis. The overall potential of rail freight services to move freight to, from or through the WYCA area is therefore considerably higher.

The MDS GB Freight model indicates that using tonne km as a metric, the growth between 2016 and 2050 would be 60.4% overall, broken down as follows:

- Road 61.8%;
- Rail 52.9%;
- Waterway 11.6%.

There is scope for the rail industry and wider freight industry to explore innovative new models that build on the particular strengths of rail and meet the demand from customers for a reliable, flexible and rapid delivery service. These may include parcels carried directly between and into city centres using the spare capacity on off-peak passenger services, or old rolling stock converted to carry freight into cities.

The Williams-Shapps Plan for rail also noted that stations can also play a bigger role in their local communities by providing opportunities for new, innovative services for passengers and residents alike. This could include on-demand shopping collection and small-scale freight.

Network Rail has recently carried out a review of its Major Stations portfolio (which includes Leeds) to determine suitability for handling small-scale freight. The review of Leeds station has highlighted its former use by, and facilities for, Royal Mail traffic, as well as the extensive network of disused undercroft space which could be capable of reinstatement for urban distribution. Other stations and railheads across the WYCA area (eg York) might also be capable of handling such traffic during intra-peak or overnight periods. This in time could create opportunities for zero-emission urban delivery services, using electrically powered freight trains interfacing with electric delivery vehicles, the trains effectively acting as mobile warehouses or consolidation centres.

As part of the Combined Authority's work on a freight study stakeholders provided feedback on constraints and opportunities for rail freight:

- Demand: growth in intermodal and construction traffic by rail has been strong relative to other rail freight market sectors. For intermodal traffic, the demand for warehousing is similarly strong nationally and within the Yorkshire & Humberside region, the National Policy Statement (NPS) continuing to encourage more of this demand to be satisfied via Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) developments. For maritime traffic, consolidation of traffic to/from the Baltic into larger ships and ports (some such as London Gateway and Teesport with "port centric" quayside distribution parks) should help generate more inland trainload freight opportunities. For construction traffic, material suppliers are increasingly seeking to deliver materials at scale into more city centres beyond London, whilst in the opposite direction, waste contractors such as BIFFA and SUEZ are looking to rail to export waste from city centres out to landfills or (increasingly) to power stations.
- Network capability: the truncation of HS2 phase 2b to Leeds would have delivered additional passenger capacity with which to relieve existing routes for freight traffic. An announcement on funding may be forthcoming which would see the northern Trans-Pennine route via Hebden Bridge and Huddersfield cleared to W12 gauge by the end of the decade, reflecting wider aspirations in the IRP about improving capacity on the corridor. If funding is forthcoming, further lobbying would be desirable to ensure the core W12 route is then extended out on surrounding routes to feed into local SRFI and other intermodal terminals. In addition, some of the sites currently being used or considered as work sites for the wider Trans-Pennine Route Upgrade (eg Gascoigne Wood, Healey Mills) could be retained and developed for freight, providing a positive legacy and maximising value for money from the investment.
- Resolving passenger / freight conflicts: the nascent Great British Railways and associated restructuring of the rail industry affords a once-in-a-generation opportunity to challenge the "passenger first, freight second" mindset. Network Rail has several workstreams in hand to review how to balance the value / need of both sectors on a more equitable and objective basis, and similar consideration needs to be given at regional and local levels to avoid creating further conflicts going forward –

particularly where the scale and pattern of passenger rail usage may not warrant previous or planned service frequencies.

Rail freight interchanges:

- Intermodal terminals: the presence of 2 operational SRFI within Yorkshire & Humberside (Wakefield Europort and iPort) along with other satellite sites (Leeds Stourton, Doncaster Railport, Masborough and Tinsley) compares with the East and West Midlands which have 2 operational SRFI each and a further 2-3 SRFI each in various stages of planning and development.
- Construction railheads: there is a need to safeguard sites against redevelopment or surrounding prejudicial development which may then fetter operations on site: RFG cited recent work undertaken by the Centre for London on the “deindustrialisation” of the capital, noting that around 500 hectares have been lost to housing between 2013 and 2018. Overall usability of the site will be as important as rail access, RFG citing the need for ready-mix plants to be no more than 45 minutes’ drive by HGV from city centres to ensure the integrity of the material.
- Extra-regional facilities: RFG stressed the need to acknowledge the role that railheads outside the area can and do play in serving neighbouring areas, local authorities sometimes being overly focussed on localism rather than the wider sub-regional / regional context.

Potential for positive interventions:

- Better engagement and understanding is needed between end users and the transport & land-use planning process, given the withdrawal of Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 and the more nationally focused NPS has created a policy void for rail freight and railhead sites.
- Such engagement (even if this may on occasions need to be on a commercially confidential basis) would help improve safeguarding of existing sites and potentially enable further sites to be brought forward by local authorities and/or third-party promoters, based on better understanding about key success factors for railhead use.
- Through better engagement, backed by an evidence base of case studies, rail freight could be further demystified to create a more positive and informed approach within the Local Plan process. This ideally needs to take a 10-year forward view to “predict and provide” for rail freight, whether in supporting proposals for enhancing network capability, as for identifying and safeguarding a sufficiently diverse portfolio of railhead sites to respond to and/or foster new rail flows.

Transport for the North's Freight and Logistics' Strategy² offers a valuable assessment of the issues that need to be considered across the North to ensure the potential of the freight sector to contribute to the North's economic, social and environmental objectives. For rail this means ensuring planning for freight in growth traffic, a more co-ordinated approach to rail-connected warehousing and continuing effort to electrify the railway. The strategy underlines the importance of ensuring key growth markets, such as intermodal traffic are properly planned for a part of network investment plans, especially on the east-west axis across the Pennines.

d. What is a stretching yet realistic ambition for this objective and what measures can we most effectively use to consider success over the coming 5, 10 and 30 years? What are the interventions over that period which will be the maximum value for money, and what evidence can you share to support your claim?

It is important to establish targets for increasing rail's share of overall freight volumes, and it is welcome to see this suggestion. Such targets must be expressed in market share terms rather than in absolute terms to ensure that the benefits of rail freight as a mode are realised irrespective of wider trends in freight volumes and markets. Once the evidence is available, such targets should be sector specific and ideally broken down geographically. This should include specific market segments where rail is currently weak, but where there is latent market potential such as express parcels that structural reform can help to realise. Targets should have reference to their potential contribution to improving local air quality, contribution to carbon reduction objectives; reduction in miles travelled by road and / or air would be a good proxy for the national and local policy objectives that underpin the preference for rail freight. This would also naturally favour proposals that promote integration with waterways as a freight mode.

This approach will help align the railway and its decision-making to account for potential growth in freight volumes and to either protect or develop the facilities and circumstances for this to happen. This extends to the way the railway industry interacts with the land use planning and other local decision-making processes. There is a growing local appetite to facilitate the circumstances for more sustainable freight transport, and the rail industry needs to positively influence these local processes to make the most of these opportunities. Sometime the local implications of these decisions, particularly at transfer sites, will require bold decision making.

Clear targets will help to create the conditions to secure this, including the supporting the wider case with good underpinning evidence. This is a real opportunity for Great British Railways to add value to the work of Rail Freight Group and the rail freight operators and customers it represents.

² Draft Transport for the North Freight and Logistics Strategy available to download here: <https://transportforthenorth.com/reports/draft-freight-and-logistics-strategy-consultation-version-december-2021/>

Passenger needs are more readily and naturally understood compared to freight. Driven by ambitious targets, the WISP has a significant role in ensuring freight is considered in the margins of general decision making around long-term planning for the network, its facilities and, for example, stations and new rolling stock. This will secure efficient capital investment and maximise the marginal revenue generating opportunities that freight can offer to the railway.

Delivering financial sustainability

Rail is both a public service, supported by the taxpayer, and a business, run by private operators, with paying passenger and freight customers. The railways have received unprecedented levels of public support throughout the pandemic, protecting the essential services that people, including commuting key workers, rely on. As the recovery and rail reform gains pace, as with all areas of public expenditure, there is an onus on the rail sector to ensure value for money for users and taxpayers in how funds are used, and it must harness the incentives of the private sector to deliver the service in the most cost-effective way.

The railway, accordingly, must seek to deliver infrastructure and services more efficiently, in order to maximise beneficial outcomes while balancing costs against revenue and taxpayer funding. This is more than just a short-term issue: we are clear that reducing the cost of the railway, increasing efficiency including through innovating with private partners, and achieving a better deal for users and taxpayers is a critical priority over the next 30 years.

When considering your answer to the question below, please consider how we can support greater efficiency (such as joined up operations), innovation, alternative sources of funding and/or cost base reduction. Similarly, what steps you would propose to improve the efficiency and reduce the cost of infrastructure projects, operation and maintenance, and what evidence you have to support your response.

Question 3

Where are the most significant opportunities and barriers to delivering financial sustainability in the rail sector over 5, 10, and 30 years and how do we achieve/overcome them? How can we most effectively monitor and assess this? What is a stretching yet realistic ambition for this objective and what measures can we most effectively use to consider success over the coming 5, 10 and 30 years? What are the interventions over that period which will be the maximum value for money?

The value of the rail network in terms of its wider economic benefits, as well as its contribution to other policy objectives (carbon reduction, social and environmental benefits) are covered elsewhere. All these factors justify public support for the railway, but with that comes an expectation for efficient and effective use of that support. Simply put, this means delivering value for money.

The Combined Authority noted in its responses to the Williams Review the inefficiencies inherent in the overall structure of the railway. These are driven by a range of factors, including duplication of activity across operators, hundreds

of costly artificial contractual interfaces within the industry, often with mis-aligned incentives. The structure has not secured effective long-term decision making (i.e. capital investment to reduce operating costs) or has led to piecemeal investments that fail to realise wider efficiencies.

The growing level of revenue support the railway has required over the last 15 to 20 years at a time when passenger numbers have been increasing is testament to the inherent inefficiency of the outgoing industry structure. It is a structure that has worked against effective and efficient decision-making despite the best efforts of many of those operating within it. The new pressures imposed by the pandemic simply underline this.

Complexity has led to a lack of accountability for poor decision making, giving rise to numerous problems, including for securing value for money. The Williams-Shapps White Paper acknowledges these failings, and it is a core theme to simplify the industry's structure to secure clearer lines of accountability and a more rational basis for making important decisions.

The Combined Authority with our local council partners is an important investor in the railway in West Yorkshire. We have invested over £43 million of local funds to secure projects with a value of almost £70 million in the last 10 years and have programme commitments of over £182 million of locally controlled funds to secure projects with a value more than £220 million in coming years. This is delivering investment in new stations, and station improvements to make them more attractive and accessible for passengers. Alongside this we invest around £900,000 annually on rail concessionary fares, funded via local council taxes. This widens access to the railway but is also an important commercial intervention helping to drive the off-peak rail market.

The Combined Authority receives no direct exposure to the revenue benefits of these investments; they are made to secure the contribution that rail makes to our policy objectives. The value for money of these investments is therefore of paramount interest. Our investment in rail comes at an opportunity cost for investments in other modes of transport in our local transport network, so rail be a good value choice.

In our experience, rail projects are time consuming to develop and have unduly complex decision-making approaches attached to them. These factors are significant cost-drivers in addition to the high capital-cost of rail projects in the delivery phase. This experience frames our suggestions below.

Empowering accountable local decision-makers. Whilst there is a balance to be struck, decision-making needs to be devolved to ensure that investment decisions are being taken with good understanding of local circumstances. For example, there is significant scope to drive efficiency out of better local coordination of renewal and enhancement activities on the network. Not only can this drive value for money, but it also has the potential to improve reliability (make sure projects address local known issues) and minimise passenger disruption. Marriage of accountability across different programmes at a regional level is also crucial to secure these efficiencies. The structure will need to secure a high degree of

operational independence to achieve this. Traditional public-sector programme accountabilities and approaches are unlikely to realise the full benefits.

Benchmarking costs is required to drive best practice within the railway for more cost-effective approaches. Regionalisation of Great British Railways creates an opportunity to benchmark unit costs between parts of the organisation, driven by the increased accountability for cost control that this should generate.

Joining accountability for revenue and cost will drive value for money and more effective investment planning. The current industry structure splits accountability for costs and revenue, disincentivising rational decision-making, because operation savings often accrue to different parts of the industry to those that bear the capital costs. This has been a major barrier to the natural case for railway electrification projects, for example. Work by TfN has demonstrated that the industry structure has overlooked relatively small-scale actions to increase line-speeds with anticipated journey-time and / or reliability benefits that would drive revenue and recover the costs many times over. Across the industry there is significant scope for cost saving and revenue growth in an entire range of activities at the large and small scale by joining accountability for revenue and revenue at the right level.

The WISP has a key role to secure better investment planning by ensuring a coherent basis against which investment decision-making can take occur, including through times of uncertainty, such as the one the sector currently faces. In the medium and long term this can ensure that individual schemes contribute to the bigger picture in what is a complex and inter-linked network.

Better investment planning in the short-term horizon will maximise the environment for securing co-investment from local partners such as Combined Authorities. The most cost-effective opportunities to deliver additional local benefits are likely to be found alongside existing planned investment in renewal or enhancement projects. The opaque decision making surrounding the RNEP process makes this difficult to plan for at present, and there is little visibility given to either the supply industry or potential co-investors in asset renewal plans, for example for station buildings and facilities. A key component of the WISP should therefore be transparent short-term regional delivery plans to help drive supplier efficiency and maximise co-investment opportunities.

Finally, **establishing the conditions for revenue growth** is crucial to financial sustainability. This means ensuring the structure of the industry is reformed swiftly to ensure those with commercial expertise find a home in the new Great British Railways structure quickly. The best commercial expertise was inevitably with the train operating companies and their owning groups as this is where revenue risk was held. The commercial expertise in pricing, marketing, yield management and growing railway's market share is vital to driving growth and recovery. Separating accountability for revenue from the expertise in growing revenue will lead to poor decision making and hinder the sector's recovery at a crucial time and needs to be resolved urgently.

The Great British Railways structure should ensure that a commercial focus on growing rail's overall market share, rather than maximising returns within a narrowly defined contractual framework, often with perverse outcomes in terms of

ticketing complexity, irrational timing of trains (from a customer perspective), or even wasteful duplication of services between operators.

Contributing to long-term economic growth

Rail helps to boost productivity and growth through improved connectivity and job creation, enables supply chains, delivers goods to businesses and consumers and directly employs over 240,000 people (source: [the rail sector in numbers](#)). Among other factors, such as population growth, long term economic growth is influenced by emerging technology, and innovative, more effective ways of thinking and doing things. Over the next 30 years, wider economic, social, environmental and technological trends will change the role rail plays in our economy. It will be for the whole sector to demonstrate that it cannot only continue to deliver wide economic benefits in the face of a changed economy but that it can find new ways to catalyse growth and prosperity.

When considering your answer to the questions below, please share examples of any relevant local, regional and national growth and productivity, and examples of innovations and technology from the UK and abroad, research into trends that may influence rail's contribution to economic growth, and/or new ways of thinking that should be used in or for the rail sector over the coming 5, 10 and 30 years.

Question 4

- a. As Britain recovers from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, what evidence do you have for how rail can contribute to wider economic growth over the next 5, 10, and 30 years? What is a stretching yet realistic ambition for this objective and what measures can we most effectively use to consider success over the coming 5, 10 and 30 years? What type of interventions over that period will provide maximum value for money from rail's economic contribution, and what evidence can you share to support your views?**

In terms of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic the region from a transport perspective has bounced back quite quickly and this is evidenced from passenger footfall at Leeds station. Passenger numbers at the station have recovered quickly since restrictions have been relaxed with weekdays at around 70%^[1] of pre-pandemic levels (nationally 66%) and exceeding pre-pandemic footfall on a weekend by as much as 49% in October 2021.

Providing a rail network that has capacity to grow is crucial to support economic recovery. Prior to the pandemic, the region was experiencing a significant increase in rail patronage. For example, passenger numbers at Leeds station have more than trebled between 1997 and 2017 with an average of one million extra trips added every year^[2].

To support growth in the short term the Combined Authority is focusing on three action areas which are good jobs & resilient businesses, skills & training and accelerated infrastructure. These are aligned to two overarching goals which cover inclusive growth and sustainable environment.

We have four distinctive West Yorkshire propositions that are priority asks for Government support. These build on existing regional strengths, that not only contribute to the UK's recovery and to levelling up and as follows:

Health innovation – building on the region's strengths in devices, data and diagnostics, unlocking industry collaboration, skills and a globally positioned Act Early institution on disease prevention.

Lives transformed by digital tech - ensure no one is left behind in a digital-enabled future, by driving infrastructure, digital skills and Made Smarter investment to support digital adoption in manufacturing.

Entrepreneurship – focussed on our diverse communities, existing scale-up performance and learning from our MIT REAP programme for high growth pre-starts, unleash an entrepreneurial revolution, transforming empty properties and supporting high-growth potential start-ups.

Transition to Net Zero Carbon Resilient Economy – supporting our net zero 2038 target, with unique industry strengths in low carbon transport, clean agri-tech, construction and circular economy. Will deliver up to 71,300 jobs, and training to help people into low carbon opportunities.

We have developed an economic recovery plan^[3] which sets out our short term goals over the next five years across all modes of transport. This is illustrated below -



Figure 1 - West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan

To support our strategic objectives, we need the rail industry to deliver the following:

- **Capacity** –to reduce over-crowding and to cater for forecast growth in both passengers and freight traffic, as well as to allow more frequent services.

- **Reliability** – to improve reliability and resilience of the railway and provide a better-quality customer experience, seamless interchange between rail services and other modes to reduce car use.
- **Connectivity** – reduced journey times and improved and new journey opportunities across all rail sectors, creating more attractive labour markets.
- **Emissions** – reduced to support a zero-carbon economy, improved air quality and to protect the environment.

This requires a strategic programme of investment in rail covering the next 30 years. The programme must include:

- Trans-Pennine Route Upgrade (TRU) – Completion in full, including electrification between Manchester, Huddersfield, Leeds and York, to provide additional capacity now to support economic recovery.
- Leeds Station – With the station approaching pedestrian capacity, investment is urgently required. We also need to create significant additional capacity on the eastern and western approaches to the station to relieve the current bottleneck.
- Electrification – A rolling programme to create an electrified City Region rail network, starting with the Calder Valley line. This would provide an electrified alternative to the Trans-Pennine route in times of perturbation and help support wider objectives to decarbonise the railway and the economy, and to open up opportunities to transform connectivity.
- East Coast Main Line (ECML) – Continued investment in this vital economic artery – optimising links to London .
- In the longer term The IRP as it stands is simply not good enough for West Yorkshire. It does not support the Combined Authorities ambitions for a stronger, fairer and better-connected region. The plan will limit the growth and potential of West Yorkshire for decades to come. The Combined Authority will still make the case for the following
- HS2 Eastern Leg – Completion of HS2 Phase 2b east between Leeds and the Midlands. This includes early delivery of the Leeds HS2 station along with a link south to a junction with the existing network.
- Northern **Powerhouse Rail (NPR)** – Delivery of the full NPR network linking Leeds, Bradford, and Manchester – with a new through station in the centre of Bradford to accommodate both NPR and Calder Valley services. The current plan does not deliver the capacity required to cater for local stopping, freight and inter-regional services.

To ensure sustained economic growth over the coming decades, businesses will need to draw on pan-northern resources including access to labour markets, research centres and supply chains. The Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review^[4] outlines how better transport links across the North could create 850,000 more jobs by 2050. This is achieved by focussing and better connecting the North's prime capabilities in advanced manufacturing, digital development, health innovation and energy supported by enabling capabilities that cover education, logistics and financial and professional services.

Building better, faster and more frequent transport links between key settlements and increasing the pool of workers to work in higher productivity urban locations will increase productivity across the wider economy. This will provide new opportunities especially for young people to specialise and allow a retention of skills and labour in the North. Rail is a key enabler in respect to this as indicated in the integrated rail plan - 'It can transform the prospects of the places they serve, helping businesses to grow, generating new jobs and opportunities, and improving the lives of people who live and work there. An investment in rail is an investment in more prosperous communities.'^[5]

^[1] <https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/media/7741/lcr-economic-and-transport-insights-20211220.pdf>

^[2] <https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/statistics/usage/estimates-of-station-usage>

^[3] <https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/media/4240/draft-west-yorkshire-economic-recovery-plan.pdf>

^[4] <https://transportforthenorth.com/wp-content/uploads/NPIER-Core-Messages.pdf>

^[5] Page 10 – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/integrated-rail-plan-for-the-north-and-the-midlands>

b. In the context of enabling development and regeneration opportunities both in the immediate vicinity of stations and within the surrounding area, how can rail best facilitate improvements to places and local growth, through improved connectivity and unlocking commercial activity, housing, and employment over the next 5, 10 and 30 years?

A modern, integrated transport system is essential for an economy to flourish and communities to thrive. West Yorkshire is a significant and growing economy. To fulfil its full potential as a major player in the Northern Powerhouse, our region needs a transformation in its transport system, to one that is fit for the 21st Century and for a decarbonising economy.

West Yorkshire Combined Authority published our Infrastructure Connectivity Plan. The plan sets out a long-term transport infrastructure investment programme for the next 20 years, providing a spatial picture of where improvements are most needed to improve people's quality of life and stimulate inward investment. The plan also includes a lot of powerful evidence which support the case for a long-term transport Infrastructure investment programme. The plan and its evidence can be accessed in here [Connectivity Infrastructure Plan | Your Voice \(westyorks-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/Connectivity-Infrastructure-Plan-Your-Voice).

The rail network performs a vital role in connecting our people and businesses to opportunities across the country and within the region. We have published our West Yorkshire Rail Vision, the vision document sets out how better rail services can support out ambitions for the region. The vision document can be accessed in here [Rail Strategy 'vision' v3.3 2021-01-14 - FINAL.pdf 72977c248bc9369c905bfe05d700947a \(amazonaws.com\)](https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/Rail-Strategy-vision-v3.3-2021-01-14-FINAL.pdf).

The Combined Authority has an important role in establishing a transport strategy for West Yorkshire. This includes ensuring that transport needs of places are met across all modes to achieve our wider policy objectives and investment plans. This must be informed by the best available evidence. Restructuring the rail industry is an important opportunity to ensure data that was until recently considered

commercially confidential can be freely shared, so investment is prioritised in the most effective way.

Capacity

One of the key factors to enable development and regeneration opportunities both in the immediate vicinity of stations, along the rail network and within the region is to make sure the rail network has the capacity to grow, so that it can cater for the growth in national, regional and local services. The rail network in West Yorkshire is unique in the sense that it is a victim of its own success and of years of under investment. Our rail network is overcrowded and current planned investment is insufficient to support the economic ambition of this region and the levelling up agenda. .

Here are a number of examples that indicate the capacity issues in our rail network which limit development and regeneration opportunities:

Leeds Capacity

Leeds station including its approaches is a known bottleneck on the rail network, impacting reliability across the North. At the moment, there is no concrete commitment to resolve the capacity issue at Leeds as part of the published IRP. Instead, the IRP seeks to resolve the rail capacity problem with a mass transit solution. The IRP cites that a future West Yorkshire Mass Transit system could potentially relieve capacity issues at Leeds station and provides Manchester Metrolink as an example of how this could be achieved. Whilst not wanting to pre-empt the outcome of any further study, the rail network in and around Leeds is very different to that in Manchester. Routes in our region carry a mixture of local, inter-regional, inter-city and freight services and are not self-contained, unlike Manchester. All our rail corridors are already well utilised and therefore it would be very disruptive and not suitable for conversion to Mass Transit, which offers less capacity than heavy rail services.

Network Rail has already completed extensive technical and business case work on the required improvements at and around Leeds. What is needed is agreement and commitment to progress developed proposals to increase track and pedestrian capacity at Leeds and approaches as soon as possible to provide long term resilience for the region and the rail network. The Government has recently funded £161m investment towards increasing capacity at Leeds station (separately from the IRP). This investment enables some of the 2016 franchise commitments to be delivered (late). It is not a long-term plan and whilst welcome, falls short of what is needed to support future growth in passengers, freight and services to enable a thriving West Yorkshire economy.

Limited capacity of the Victorian railway

Provision of new lines including delivering HS2 East in full plus Northern Powerhouse Rail with a stop in central Bradford would improve both speed and capacity between our cities and relieve pressure on our existing lines, which would allow more local, inter-urban and freight services to operate. The recently published IRP, however, did not deliver the needed new lines.

Instead, we are offered a series of upgrades to the existing Victorian infrastructure, which will cause significant disruption for decades, not deliver the capacity required

or the journey times promised and at the expense of local services. We are not confident that IRP will deliver the claimed journey time benefits without a detrimental impact on development of our local services. We believe in evidenced based policy making but without the technical evidence that underpins the IRP being made available to us, we are unable to assess the full impact on our regional network. For example, we are aware that alternative options for HS2 East have been looked at by consultant Mott MacDonald on behalf of the Department for Transport (DfT) but this report has not been released.

Transpennine route

Transpennine railway route is the main route linking two major cities with large volumes of traffic, it currently handles a mix of fast express, local stopping services and freight traffic. The route has suffered from crowding and congestion and journeys have often been slow and unreliable.

We welcome the recent firmer commitment on Transpennine Rail Upgrade as part of the IRP. We look forward to seeing the committed improvements to be delivered as soon as possible. However, rail improvements on existing railway lines could be very disruptive for communities and businesses during construction. By merging the NPR and TRU programmes together, this disruption will now extend westwards from Huddersfield to Marsden. It also means that this strategic rail line between Manchester and York could be subject to disruption for a 20-year period between 2025 and 2045, as it is upgraded for TRU and then NPR. This would have been mitigated to some extent if the preferred NPR new line option via Bradford was taken forward.

We need to understand the costs, scale and extent of this disruption and the mitigation proposed to minimise impact on communities and businesses to prevent further pressure on the already congested M62 and the already fragile economy.

At the moment, we are also sceptical about the deliverability of the journey time quoted in the Integrated Rail Plan without impacting on the local services. We are looking forward to see the detailed timetable.

ECML

East Coast Mainline is our key corridor which connects our region with North East, Scotland and London. The limited capacity of the route limits the growth and regeneration opportunities of our region. The recent East Coast Main Line May 2022 timetable consultation highlights the capacity issue of the route. We are pleased that there is commitment to upgrade this route in the published IRP. However, this route has been on the table for investment for over two decades and whilst there has been some recent progress with delivery, it does not constitute a full route upgrade, so the main impacts on rail infrastructure and services have yet to be seen. Without HS2 East, it is not possible to operate HS2 services on the ECML to York, Darlington and Newcastle. In the absence of HS2, further improvements to the north of York on the ECML will be needed to improve connectivity on the eastern side of the country. The IRP, however, is silent about infrastructure improvement beyond York on ECML, we are keen to see firm commitment on ECML north of York.

The IRP indicates that there will be journey time reductions (a reduction of 20-25 mins between Leeds, Wakefield and London) as a result of higher track speeds and digital signalling. We remain sceptical in how achievable this is.

New rail stations

The Combined Authority has delivered a number of new rail stations in the recent years such as Kirkstall Forge, Apperley Bridge and Low Moor. New rail stations play a key role to unlock local development and regeneration opportunities. For example, Kirkstall Forge is already home to the 'Best commercial workplace in the UK' and has over 850 people working in Number One (a 100,000sqft commercial development). It is home to the global headquarters of Zenith, the Northern office of CEG (Commercial Estates Group), Mercedes-Benz Vans and Bupa. The next office building, Number 2, Kirkstall Forge will deliver another 200,000 sq ft of development.

The Combined Authority has an ambitious new rail stations programme to unlock more local development. This includes the development and delivery of stations at Leeds Bradford Airport, White Rose, Thorpe Park and Elland. While we are at an advanced stage of development for these new rail stations, the potential of running better rail services is constrained by the capacity of the rail network. It is particularly relevant in the case of Thorpe Park station. Whilst east of Leeds is a congested corridor with a mix of local, regional and national services, the infrastructure improvements have not been confirmed yet and IRP only commits to ask Network Rail to assess options for short-to-medium term interventions as part of the TRU between Leeds and York. This uncertainty will limit the potential to unlock local growth and regeneration opportunities.

Two of our major cities are constrained by the limitation of the rail network

Bradford

Bradford is the UK's 7th largest and youngest city with 25% of its population aged under eighteen. It is home to 540,000 people, 17,000 businesses and a £10.5 billion economy. It is the UK's worst connected city by rail with no direct connections to other major centres such as Liverpool, Newcastle, Sheffield and the Midlands. The current direct services to Leeds, Manchester, Preston and York are slow and unreliable.

As a major city, Bradford, is effectively on a branch line. It desperately needs improved rail services but is constantly let down with promises of service improvements that never materialise. For example, in 2015 Bradford was promised new direct services to Liverpool, Manchester Airport, Sheffield and Nottingham as part a new Northern franchise which would begin in 2019. These have never been delivered and there are no timescales for their potential introduction.

NPR via central Bradford would have revolutionised rail travel for the city, providing direct and frequent services to Liverpool, Birmingham, and Newcastle with journey times at least halved to Leeds, Manchester, York and Hull.

This is a massive lost opportunity and completely counter to the Governments ambitions around decarbonisation and levelling up. Of all the NPR options that were considered, the one via central Bradford creates the greatest number of new jobs, generates the most rail trips, has the highest GVA impacts and results in the biggest

reduction in car travel. This information is contained in the unpublished Strategic Outline Case for NPR developed by TfN.

It also unlocks urban regeneration and transforms connectivity for both deprived and black, Asian, and minority ethnic communities located near the proposed NPR station, who would benefit for better access to job opportunities in Manchester, Leeds, York and beyond.

The case for Bradford is also clearly made in several studies. Work undertaken by consultant Arup found that a Bradford NPR station could boost the economy by £30bn, create 27,000 new jobs and generate a 10% uplift in land values over a decade by bringing 6.7m people and £137bn of annual economic output within a 35-minute journey of central Bradford.

Mott MacDonald consultancy in a recent report cited that NPR via Bradford could deliver a £22bn boost to the Northern economy. It also states that traditional Treasury analysis fails to recognise the true economic potential when simultaneous action across skills planning utility provision education tourism leisure and industrial policy is considered.

The IRP commits to electrifying the Calder Valley line between Leeds and Bradford and reducing journey times down to 12 minutes subject to a satisfactory business case. This is welcomed, although given most services do not terminate at Bradford Interchange but continue to Halifax, Manchester and East Lancashire, it would only be sensible to commit to full electrification of the Calder Valley line. This, however, is not included in the IRP.

In the short term, we need to understand the scope of electrification between Leeds and Bradford. At the moment, we are sceptical about the quoted 12 minutes journey time in the IRP, it is uncertain if this can be delivered without impact on the local connectivity. In the short – medium term, we need to have the commitment to electrify the Calder Valley Line. Electrification of the Calder Valley line remains a key priority for both Calderdale and the Combined Authority and this corridor is identified as a “tier-one” priority for electrification as part of the Northern Sparks report, led by Andrew Jones MP and published in 2015. Bradford will require a step change in rail connectivity. We urgently need Government to give clarity to people in Bradford about how they will better connect to the North and the rest of the country.

Leeds

The whole central city growth strategy in Leeds has been based around HS2 coming and the creation of a new T-shaped station, therefore, as a city, it is particularly hard hit by the recently published IRP.

Leeds station and the network around Leeds has suffered from capacity issues. As all the services are either terminated at Leeds or run through Leeds, the limited capacity at Leeds (track, platform and pedestrian capacity) impacts local, regional and national rail services. There is limited opportunity to increase rail capacity at Leeds due to its constrained station footprint surrounded by development. The western approach to Leeds is particularly constrained and that is the reason the T-

shaped station is the most deliverable option to deliver additional capacity for the region.

The Leeds city strategy is shaped around a new HS2 station and the potential for redevelopment of the Southbank area of Leeds City Centre, one of the biggest regeneration projects in Europe. South Bank Leeds is a massive regeneration project aiming to double the size of Leeds city centre by transforming the ex-industrial area south of the River Aire. The area is the size of 350 football pitches.

According to the South Bank Leeds Regeneration Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), 8,000 new homes and 35,000 new jobs are due to be created as part of the regeneration programme. It is already a home for major companies such as ASDA European headquarters and to SKY and currently, there are 3,000 people living on the South Bank, alongside over 250 businesses. Without the T-shaped station, the development of South Bank will be jeopardised and unable to achieve its full potential.

Leeds is the largest legal and financial centre outside London with the financial services and insurance industry worth £13 billion to the city's economy which accounts for 38% of total output with more than 30 national and international banks located in the city, including an office of the Bank of England. Given its importance it is disappointing that Leeds is no longer connected to the HS2 network. Instead the IRP only commits to further study looking at *'how to take HS2 services to Leeds and the most optimal solution for Leeds station capacity – particularly in light of post COVID-19 demand'*

Leeds has substantial amounts of land safeguarded for HS2, until the issue of how to get HS2 services to the city is resolved, it will mean no development can take place which is very damaging to the city's economic recovery and regeneration opportunities in the post-pandemic world.

What is required for Leeds in the short term is a clear commitment to resolve the capacity issue at Leeds and around (both track and pedestrian capacity), a clear position in relation to T-shaped station and a clear roadmap to bring HS2 services to Leeds.

c. What innovative and modernising ideas do you have which would benefit the railway while supporting the strategic objectives? Please give evidence and make reference to how they would maintain or enhance the railway's safety record.

The critical point for the future of our railway is that the framework within which it operates – and therefore the way in which GBRTT works – must:

- **Set the railway and its managers clear objectives** in social, economic and environmental terms, so that all are operating to a common and shared purpose. If this is achieved and the right people can be attracted, fostered and retained in the railway within a strong culture

driven by those shared goals, then the history of the railway shows that this can drive achieving (and achieving cost-effectively) outcomes that are as good as, or better than, those driven by direct (but often distorted) financial incentives as under the former franchising system, or by the “KPI mentality” that characterised some public contracting with the private sector such as the PPP arrangements common in the 1990s/2000s. As such, we consider that concerns regarding the loss of TOC incentives, arising out of revenue risk transferring to government, are likely to be overstated.

- **Give the railway and its managers the freedom to act** in pursuance of those objectives. Again, history has shown that the railway can, with the right people in the right places, certainly innovate and modernise. Numerous examples existing especially from the late British Rail era, especially when sectorisation allowed skilled managers to focus on the markets they understood best and to act to develop them. Examples are numerous, but include the branding, sales and marketing activities of Network South-East; numerous fares and ticketing initiatives such as in Regional Rail (including at local level such as the Dales Railcard); agreeing investment with third parties (including WYCA’s predecessor, WYPTE, which financed several new stations with local BR agreement); technical innovations such as low-cost signalling and train control solutions to reduce the operating costs of rural lines; and close cooperation between Freight sector managers (and those of the subsectors serving particular flows) and their customers leading to the optimisation of freight traffic around the customers’ real needs in a highly competitive market. Allowing this freedom will be critical to achieving a railway that can grow its way out of Covid and successfully meet the national objectives we require of it – and it includes the freedom to take appropriate risks without being micro-managed and second-guessed by Government or central authority.

The critical point arising from the above is that, as Combined Authority, we see it as our role primarily to be involved in the setting of the objectives that the railway should be serving, and to an extent to assist in the planning of the outcomes that they should drive in terms of, for example, service provision – but that once these have been set, the most fertile ground in which innovative and modernising ideas will flourish is likely to be the railway itself, if and when it is allowed to do so. We are, in this regard, concerned that the messages coming from Government at present, and some of the wording surrounding this WISP call for evidence, risk running directly counter to this, and indeed there is some evidence already of moves in the wrong direction:

- There appears to be increasing evidence of central Government (which appears to be driven from the Treasury rather than even the Department for Transport) taking an ever-closer role in what amounts to micromanaging many aspects of the railway and second-guessing what should be decisions made by railway managers. For example, in 2020 the long-delayed introduction of the desperately needed flexible season tickets finally took place – but seemingly on Treasury insistence the

discount offered by this product as against the purchase of one-off return tickets has been too small to enable these to take off, potentially stifling the recovery of rail commuting in the “new normal” where daily travel to a fixed place of work is no longer the overwhelming norm. Similarly, we have in conversation with TOC managers repeatedly heard complaints that initiatives they wish to pursue, in fares, ticketing and even service adjustments or new ways of providing for passengers’ needs, have been stymied by the withdrawal of their ability to push such things forward without a stamp of approval from London.

- Similarly, and as discussed in more detail elsewhere in this evidence submission, several of the statements GBRTT has included in [its call for evidence](#) appear potentially unhelpful in terms of allowing the railway the freedom to manage its affairs, to develop its markets, and to take appropriate risks. For example, it states:

Responses that identify opportunities for prioritisation, efficiency, and cost reduction in order to drive value for money for the taxpayer and rail user, will be particularly welcome. Any responses that focus solely on requests for new investments or enhancements will not be considered, and any proposals for new funding will need to evidence the cost reductions or efficiencies such proposals would realise. The purpose of the Strategic Plan will not be to present an investment pipeline, and as question 3 sets out below, the unprecedented taxpayer support given to the railway during the pandemic combined with the long-term cost challenge of providing rail service means that it will be crucial for the Strategic Plan to recognise the restraints on public finances.

The first two sentences in the above are inimical to the ability for the railway to innovate, to modernise and to move forward through growth rather than to retreat through austerity and retrenchment – with a real risk of a spiral of decline. Applying the principles suggested would reduce greatly the ability of managers to move our industry forward, and of the industry as a whole to grow revenue. We therefore, urge that they be reconsidered.

Nonetheless, it is clear that “innovation for innovation’s sake” is not needed on the railway – for example, it is arguable that too much attention being paid to alternatives to “traditional” rail electrification has produced purported “solutions” to a problem that does not really exist, and solutions that perform less well than the “problem” they are meant to address, while distracting attention from the overwhelming case for pressing forward with a rolling programme of electrification, which, while a long-established technology, remains by far the best way to run a busy railway.

Running parallel with the freedom for on-the-ground rail managers to innovate is therefore the need to create space for more radical, “blue-sky” thinking and the innovation this can drive. This is another area in which Britain was historically a genuine world leader, but where this lead was lost after privatisation: specialised rail-industry research. There is a good case for GBR (and the railway as a whole) to develop, based on the existing skills and resources across the industry, a centre of rail research excellence, potentially not unlike the old British Rail Research Division. The BRRD, while run on a heavily constrained budget,

pioneered innovative and highly successful developments such as passenger demand forecasting, computerised traffic management and signalling (e.g. solid-state interlocking and integrated electronic control centres), many aspects of track and train design, safety systems, vehicle dynamics and electrification – to name but a few. Here too, it is instructive that BRRD had a high degree of “headspace”, that is, the freedom to conduct clean-sheet research based on its own initiatives as well as on needs communicated from elsewhere in the industry.

All of this leads to the conclusion that a two-pronged approach looks to be the one that GBR should work towards for our railway: on the one hand, clear objectives and the freedom for rail managers to innovate (and take appropriate commercial risks) to meet them; but on the other, a reinvigorated and semi-independent rail research function. Taking these together, there is a real prospect that Britain’s railway could develop new and better ways to meet its objectives in terms of providing efficient, attractive and cost-effective passenger services and freight capacity, while maintaining its excellent safety record – and developing products and services that are marketable around the world, as well as making the railway an exciting and attractive career option for talented people

Levelling up and connectivity

The Secretary of State for Levelling Up has outlined four key outcomes on which the government will focus:

Rail has an important part to play in working toward these outcomes, and particularly so in connecting the nations, regions and communities of the UK. Improved rail links can connect people to jobs, education and skills, high-quality housing, social opportunities, services, and green spaces, as well as encouraging the growth of businesses, and attracting leisure visitors into an area. Improving stations and surrounding areas can also act as a catalyst for regeneration and development and a cause for local pride.

At present, usage of rail differs widely across the UK; before the pandemic, almost two thirds of all rail journeys made were in London and the south east ([Rail Sector in Numbers report](#) from 2019).

When answering your questions, consider the ways in which rail can be used to improve connectivity and local economic growth over the next 5, 10, and 30 years.

Question 5

- a. What evidence can you provide for how the rail sector contributes to the four levelling up outcomes and to improving connectivity in across Great Britain, including through cross-border services? How does this change depending on the type of place where the sector operates (including in cities, towns and rural areas), and what are the most cost-effective ways at the sector’s disposal to improve that further during the next 5, 10, and 30 years?**

Levelling up will require systemic change, radical intervention and significant investment to address poverty and inequality it should aim to improve opportunities for all. From a West Yorkshire perspective, we must:

- Have greater cross-government engagement shape understanding of local needs
- Be empowered to allow us to enact tailored solutions to boost productivity tackle inequalities and drive inclusive growth
- be able to deliver over the long term and base our actions on robust evidence and clear accountability.

To level up West Yorkshire we need to:

- Enable disadvantaged groups and communities within the region to reach their potential and access work and training opportunities.
- For the region overall to increase his economic contribution in terms of higher income employment and productivity and close the gap with more prosperous regions.

We require greater certainty of secure, stable, and fair local government funding and public sector resourcing that enables confidence, long term planning flexibility and innovation.

Our 'State of the region' report^[1] sets out how our region is performing, our strengths and going forwards how we can rebuild and create a more inclusive and sustainable economy.

We are the largest hub for banking, legal and professional services outside of London, and an international leader in digital technology, healthcare innovation, advanced manufacturing, and engineering. We are one of the UK's leading regions for creative industries, home to global and national brands, as well as small enterprises working across gaming, technology, digital media, TV and film. All these are knowledge based intensive sectors which benefit from agglomeration and access to a wider labour market as possible. Therefore connectivity plays a key role and in particular that provided by rail to enable growth in our urban centres. Despite our strengths the 'State of the region report' particularly highlights the productivity gap between West Yorkshire and the rest of the UK – the main barrier to improving living standards across the region in the long run and something we need to address to tackle inequality. More than a fifth of our workforce has no or low qualifications, placing huge limits on earning potential and the contribution they can make to the economy. A fifth of jobs in West Yorkshire pay below the Real Living Wage, the amount needed for a decent standard of living, and we can see the impact of this all around us.

Closing the gaps, and addressing the inequalities, requires that we act in a systematic way to boost the social mobility of our most disadvantaged people. We can do this by increasing skill levels, innovation, growing businesses and creating jobs. Inclusive approaches are needed to improve personal wellbeing; relevant and transferable skills; transport; business support; housing; and digital connectivity, connecting our towns and cities to economic opportunities. A significant challenge to

prevent us realising our vision is that our transport network is under increasing pressure but constrained by trying to balance the needs of local, regional, and national connectivity. We need significant investment in transport to connect communities, making it easier to get to work, do business and connect with each other sustainably.

Our strategic economic framework^[2] sets out the ambitious vision for the ongoing transformation of West Yorkshire.

- Boosting productivity - Helping businesses to grow and invest in the region and their workforce, to drive economic growth, increase innovation and create jobs.
- Enabling inclusive growth - Enabling as many people as possible to contribute to, and benefit from, economic growth in our communities, towns and cities.
- Tackling the climate emergency - Growing our economy while cutting emissions and caring for our environment.
- Delivering 21st-century transport - Creating efficient transport infrastructure to connect our communities, making it easier to get to work, do business and connect with each other.
- Securing money and powers - Empowering the region by negotiating a devolution deal and successfully bidding for substantial additional funds.

The priority based upon delivering 21st Century transport is set out in our connectivity strategy. Much of this was predicated on the provision of the HS2 eastern leg and Northern Powerhouse Rail in full. Unfortunately, the Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) which sets out Government's future investment in the rail network falls way short of what is needed to deliver a 21st century rail system for our region. It does not create the capacity needed to expand our rail network particularly around Leeds or deliver the transformational connectivity that Bradford requires to support its growing population.

Work undertaken by our district partners sets out how rail can transform their local economies. Mott MacDonald consultancy in a recent report^[3] cited that NPR via Bradford could deliver a £22bn boost to the Northern economy and that traditional Treasury analysis fails to recognise the true economic potential when simultaneous action across skills planning utility provision education tourism leisure and industrial policy is considered.

Economic analysis undertaken on behalf of the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council forecast that NPR could boost the local economy by £30.bn and deliver 27,000 additional jobs^[4]. It would unlock urban regeneration and transform connectivity for both deprived and black, Asian, and minority ethnic communities located near a proposed NPR station. who would benefit from better access to job opportunities in Manchester, Leeds, York and beyond.

In Leeds the Leeds city strategy is shaped around a new HS2 station and the potential for redevelopment of the Southbank area of Leeds City Centre, one of the biggest regeneration projects in Europe. The continuing delay in delivering the connectivity promised by HS2 costs the Leeds City region economy £1.7 billion a

year. The Leeds City Region HS2 Growth strategy, published in 2018, identified that HS2 connectivity would generate 50,000 new jobs, 8,000 new homes and generate £54bn of GVA for the local economy.^[5]

Work undertaken on behalf of HS2 East Partnership illustrates why the Eastern leg of HS2 connecting Leeds to the Midlands could underpin the national levelling up strategy by:

- Generating 150,000 jobs through delivery of local HS2 growth strategies.
- Increasing frequency and reducing journey times between key economic centres in the North and Midlands, benefiting 13 million people, supporting 6 million jobs which equates to 20% of the UK GVA.
- Supporting the development of supply chains and advanced industrial clusters.
- Creating new and better jobs in areas with high levels of deprivation.

As highlighted, strengthening connectivity for example between city regions such as Leeds and Sheffield or cities like Bradford and Manchester enables their economic centres to function more like a single economy. This occurs by creating greater agglomeration between businesses, better knowledge transfer between industry and academic institutions, and stronger and wider labour markets. This will improve productivity and enable regions such as West Yorkshire to compete globally with the most productive and prosperous places across the world.

Better rail services are critical for improving access to labour markets, to enable businesses to draw on a wider catchment of apprentices, graduates and skilled workers and create more opportunities to access jobs.

In terms of improvements, our emerging rail strategy sets out what is needed in the future¹

^[1] <https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/media/7533/west-yorkshire-state-of-the-region-full-report-2021.pdf>

^[2] <https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/growing-the-economy/strategic-economic-framework/>

^[3] https://www.northernpowerhousepartnership.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/FINAL-3541_WhitePaper_MW_NorthernPowerhouseRail.pdf

^[4] <https://www.bradford.gov.uk/regeneration/northern-powerhouse-rail/northern-powerhouse-rail-plans-for-bradford-city-centre>

^[5] <https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk/media/2804/hs2-growth-strategy-20122017.pdf>

b. How could the rail industry, over the next 5, 10, and 30 years, become more responsive to, and more accountable to, local communities and passengers? Please give evidence and examples in your response.

Our suggestions for how the railway can be more responsive to passengers is considered in responses to other questions. This response focuses on responsiveness to local areas.

It is important that the structure of the industry is radically simplified in a way that manifests accountable decision makers at a local and regional level with whom we can do business and forge strong working relationships. This is promised in the White Paper, and it is crucial the Great British Railways structure realises this as prerequisite to being locally responsive and accountable.

Rail is important to West Yorkshire because of the fundamental role it plays in our transport mix, and in turn to our communities and businesses. Almost 7 in 10 passengers using trains in West Yorkshire are making trips within West Yorkshire, underlining its important local role. The role of rail will need to continue to grow significantly to realise our ambition to be a net zero carbon economy by 2038. Rail also has a vital role in our regional and national connectivity which is crucial to our economic competitiveness.

This significant local role for rail underpins the substantial direct investments we make into the rail network locally (set out in our response to Question 3). In preparation for the reforms to come, we have established the West Yorkshire Strategic Rail Partnership through which we will establish the direct and honest relationship we need with the railway to ensure it responds to our needs and contributes to our potential.

By securing a strong relationship through our Strategic Rail Partnership we can:

- Deepen our relationship on ticketing, fares, and modal integration as part of our proposals for an integrated transport network for West Yorkshire where rail also continues to function as part of the national network.
- Establish a strong and effective delivery partner relationship, particularly where the railway is delivering projects on our behalf.
- Engage with the rail industry as we develop West Yorkshire's mass transit proposals, which will have several interfaces with the rail network.
- Establish a common understanding of the opportunities to realise shared social, economic, and environmental goals with the railway (e.g. on skills, employment, recovery, decarbonisation, community involvement).
- Realise opportunities for co-investment in development and delivery of projects through sharing investment plans and priorities.
- Secure accountability on behalf of passengers when things go wrong and act as a local passenger champion.

In return, the railway benefits from a strong local partner that is not only investing in the network to achieve growth but ensuring that the railway is fully equipped to understand the local opportunities and benefits that the West Yorkshire market presents.

The railway is an operationally complex network with almost no operational self-containment to the West Yorkshire geography. Our response to other questions respects that the most effective operational decisions will be driven by those with clear accountability in the railway. A strong local partnership will build the trust between ourselves and the railway necessary to ensure that the inevitable trade-offs that are made in the operation of the railway are fully informed of the benefits and

implications those trade-offs may involve for West Yorkshire, as well as for passengers more generally.

c. What is a stretching yet realistic ambition for this objective and what measures can we most effectively use to consider success over the coming 5, 10 and 30 years? What are the interventions over that period which will be the maximum value for money, and what evidence can you share to support your views?

In the short term we need greater investment in **transport** and we also want to secure **devolution of control of our rail stations** in partnership with Great British Railways. Stations are important community and economic assets, as gateways to our towns and cities, and must offer a consistent high quality, attractive and accessible offer of information, staffing, retail, and facilities to enable seamless multimodal travel options, step free access and toilet facilities. Stations are integral to our ambition to deliver an integrated London-style transport network. We want to meet the high expectations passengers and communities across our region deserve and ensure everyone can be confident and feel safe in our stations, to drive up public transport use.

Most of our rail stations are over 100 years old. Whilst we continue to invest in local stations, progress and focus is frustrated by complex ownership and management arrangements under the current rail industry structure and blighted by stop-start investment programmes. With devolution of control, we can bring renewed focus to ensure station management and investment responds to our economic and social priorities, delivering growth and regeneration, and ensuring rail performs an integral part in our integrated transport network.

We are developing a future mobility strategy which will set out our ambitions to make the best use of advancements in technology across all of our transport networks, and to develop a world class transport system that connects different modes of transport seamlessly into one comprehensive easy-to-use network. This will also help to improve the customer journey and improve information provision of end to end journey options through the development of digital ticketing options and Mobility as a service (MaaS).

The Williams-Shapps White Paper commits to a radically simpler structure for the railway under a heavily devolved Great British Railways. It commits to ensuring greater control for local people and places. Partial devolution of rail revenue support will enable a local financial partnership with Great British Railways to ensure that rail performs an integrated role in our local transport network responding to local needs and opportunities, and secure local accountability.

In terms of infrastructure, to enable levelling up of the West Yorkshire economy then delivery of the following long-term programmes is crucial. This will require measures to reverse decades of underinvestment in our region and to address the imbalance in transport spending which per head across Yorkshire & Humberside is £1,434 per annum less than that spent in London, £803 less than the North-West and £131 less than the West Midlands^[1].

The measures below also supporting decarbonisation by providing a sustainable alternative to our congested road networks by encouraging modal shift.

Trans-Pennine Route Upgrade (TRU) – Completion in full, including electrification between Manchester, Huddersfield, Leeds and York, to provide additional capacity now to support economic recovery.

Leeds Station – With the station approaching pedestrian capacity, investment is urgently required. We also need to create significant additional capacity on the eastern and western approaches to the station to relieve the current bottleneck.

Electrification – A rolling programme to create an electrified City Region rail network, starting with the Calder Valley line, to decarbonise the railway and the economy, and to open up opportunities to transform connectivity.

East Coast Main Line (ECML) – Continued investment in this vital economic artery – optimising links to London .

In the longer term The IRP as it stands is simply not good enough for West Yorkshire. It does not support ambitions for a stronger, fairer and better-connected region. The plan will limit the growth and potential of West Yorkshire for decades to come. The Combined Authority will still make the case for the following

HS2 Eastern Leg – Completion of HS2 Phase 2b east between Leeds and the Midlands. This includes early delivery of the Leeds HS2 station along with a link south to a junction with the existing network.

Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) – Delivery of the full NPR network linking Leeds, Bradford, and Manchester – with a new through station in the centre of Bradford to accommodate both NPR and Calder Valley services.

In wider socio-economic terms beyond transport then positive progress against the following to address longstanding inequalities including poor health, transport and fuel poverty, housing affordability and poor social mobility impacting many of our deprived communities is needed.

- Productivity is persistently below national levels at around 86% of the UK average, with implications for earnings and prosperity,
- Children born between 2016-2018 in Yorkshire and the Humber have significantly lower life expectancies in relation to the England average, and could expect to live around two years shorter than people in London and the South East
- A fifth of jobs in West Yorkshire pay below the Real Living Wage,
- The income gap between West Yorkshire and the national average has increased over last decade, West Yorkshire's Gross Disposable Household Income per head is only 79% of national average – as compared with 82% in 2008,
- 10% of households in Leeds City Region are in fuel poverty,
- More than a quarter of adults in West Yorkshire are only qualified to Level 2 or below,

- Around a quarter of West Yorkshire vacancies are skill shortage vacancies, and 23% of adults in Yorkshire lack the full range of Essential Digital Skills for Life
- The disability employment rate gap is 23% in West Yorkshire,
- The employment rate gap for ethnic minorities in West Yorkshire is 18 points compared with 11 points nationally.

^[1] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/country-and-regional-analysis-2020/country-and-regional-analysis-november-2020>

Delivering environmental sustainability

The Plan for Rail commits to the creation of a comprehensive environment plan that will establish rail as the backbone of a cleaner future transport system, one that aims to protect and enhance biodiversity and the natural environment. That plan, the Sustainable Rail Strategy (SRS), will be one of the inputs to the Strategic Plan, and will build on and develop a strategy for achieving the policy commitments set out in both the UK's [Transport Decarbonisation Plan](#) and the [Rail Environment Policy Statement](#) that were published in July 2021, as well as the Net Zero Strategy from October 2021.

In addition to tackling the causes of climate change, the rail network must also be able to adapt to the changes already being seen. This means preparing for the impact of extreme weather events and increasing the resilience of the rail network to the impacts of these events – for example, flooding.

When answering your questions, consider the ways in which rail and the rail estate can contribute to wider national and regional environmental policy agendas, support decarbonisation, conserve and enhance biodiversity, improve air quality and increase renewable power generation.

Question 6

- What is a stretching yet realistic ambition for this objective and what measures can we most effectively use to consider success over the coming 5, 10 and 30 years?**

Whilst the three ambitions already set out in the call for evidence document for this objective seem sound, they would benefit from being 'SMART' - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timed. Also, the ambitions for this objective need to be defined and framed by taking a lead from the UK's commitments under the United Nations 'Sustainable Development Goals'. These can be found here: [Home | Sustainable Development \(un.org\)](#), and more specifically at a UK level, here: [Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). These goals refer to social and economic sustainability as well as environmental sustainability. It is important that the ambitions proposed by GBR in the strategic plan for delivering environmental sustainability, is done so in the context of wider policies across Government, the economy and society. This is principally

down to rail being a great enabler and means to an end, rather than an end in its own right. To this end in setting an ambition, GBR may wish to consider wider thinking from academia around concepts for defining success and setting ambitions in the field of sustainability, such as:

- Natural capital - Natural Capital (worldbank.org)
- The natural step - [Our Approach: The Natural Step Framework | The Natural Step](#)

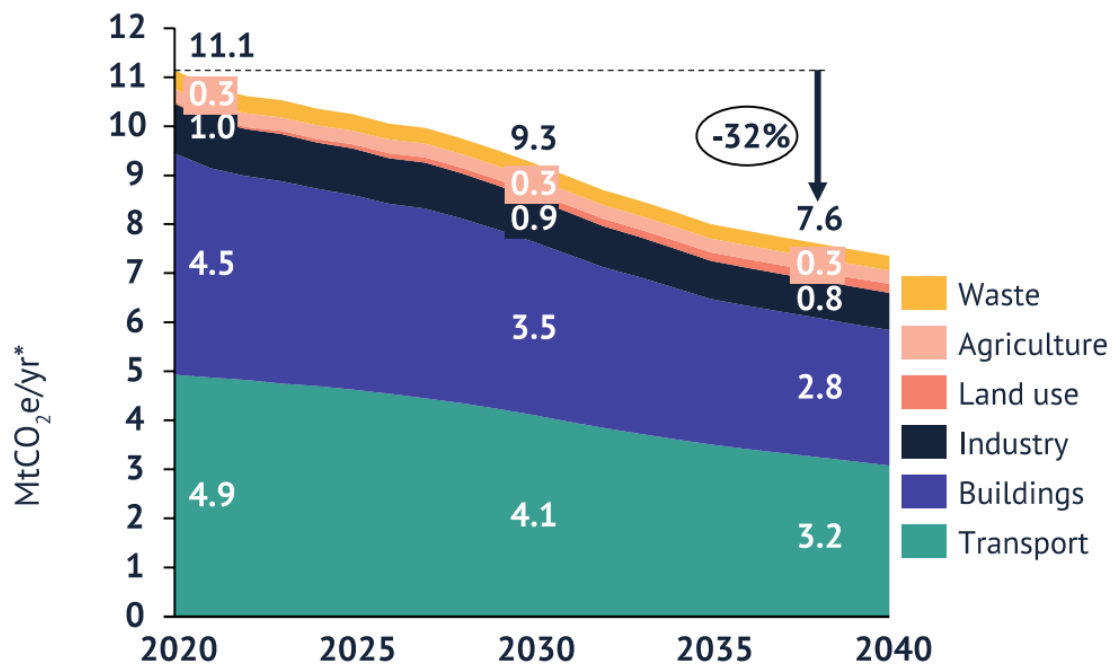
The West Yorkshire Leaders declared a climate emergency in June 2019, and set an ambitious science-based target for the region to be net zero carbon by 2038, with significant progress by 2030. Building on our recently published [Climate and Environment Plan](#), West Yorkshire Combined Authority considers that the Strategic Plan for rail ought to have as a minimum the following environmental sustainability ambitions:

- Create a cleaner, greener and more affordable transport system;
- Improve the energy efficiency of rail businesses and contribute significantly to our country's overall transportation system energy efficiency;
- Accelerate investment in climate and nature solutions like natural flood management; and
- Create new green jobs so people can excel in the careers of the future

An ambition that makes constant and cumulative progress on environmental sustainability with big in-roads early on is required. This is driven by the need to "[keep 1.5 alive](#)" following the COP26 Climate Summit in Glasgow, responding to the climate and environmental emergencies. To this end, we suggest that whilst the plan needs to have ambitions across all areas of environmental sustainability across all timeframes, the one where rail can have most impact is on the climate emergency. This is because of rail's inherent environmentally sustainable credentials as a mode of transport (and critically the potential for it to do a whole lot more), and because transport is the sector of the economy where emissions reduction has been way off target.

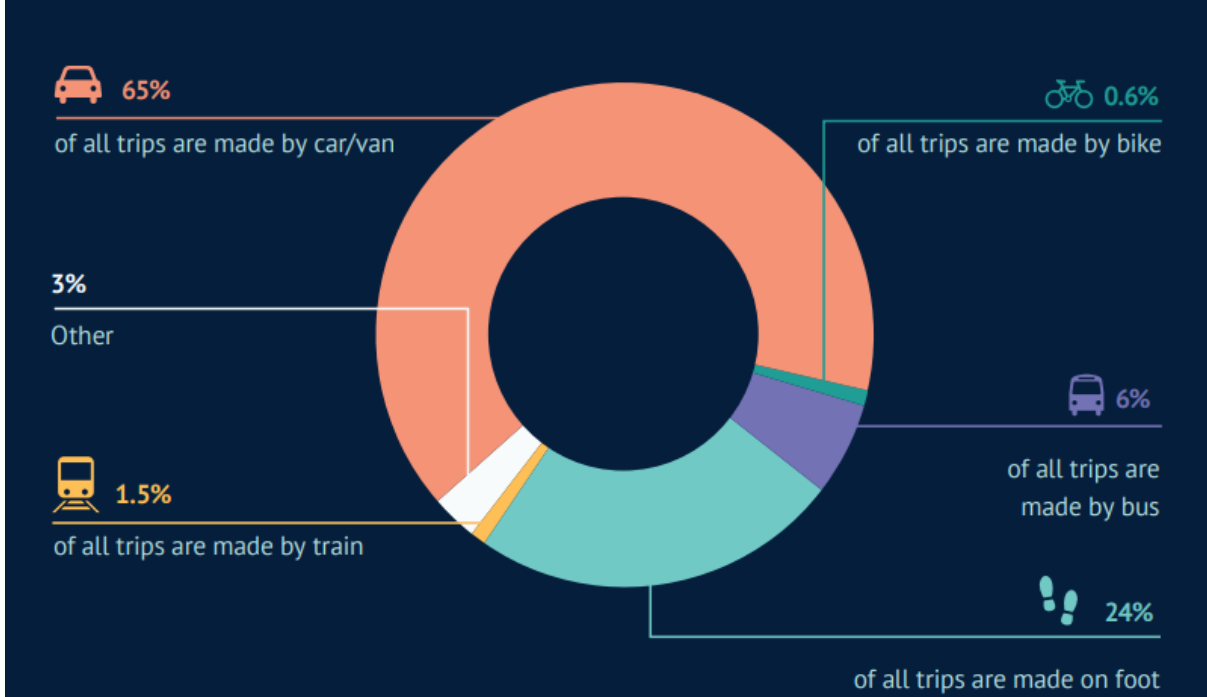
Our Climate Emission Reduction Pathways evidence base suggests the likely emission reductions we could expect to see in West Yorkshire because of current policies. In the absence of new policies, incentives and regulations, the Pathway suggests there will be a relatively low uptake of most technologies beyond 2025. The Baseline Pathway estimates a 32% reduction in emissions could be achieved in the region if we did not implement interventions beyond current policies. Under this Pathway emissions would be 7.6 MtCO₂ in 2038, a long way short of our ambition.

Chart Showing Baseline West Yorkshire Climate Emission Reduction Pathway

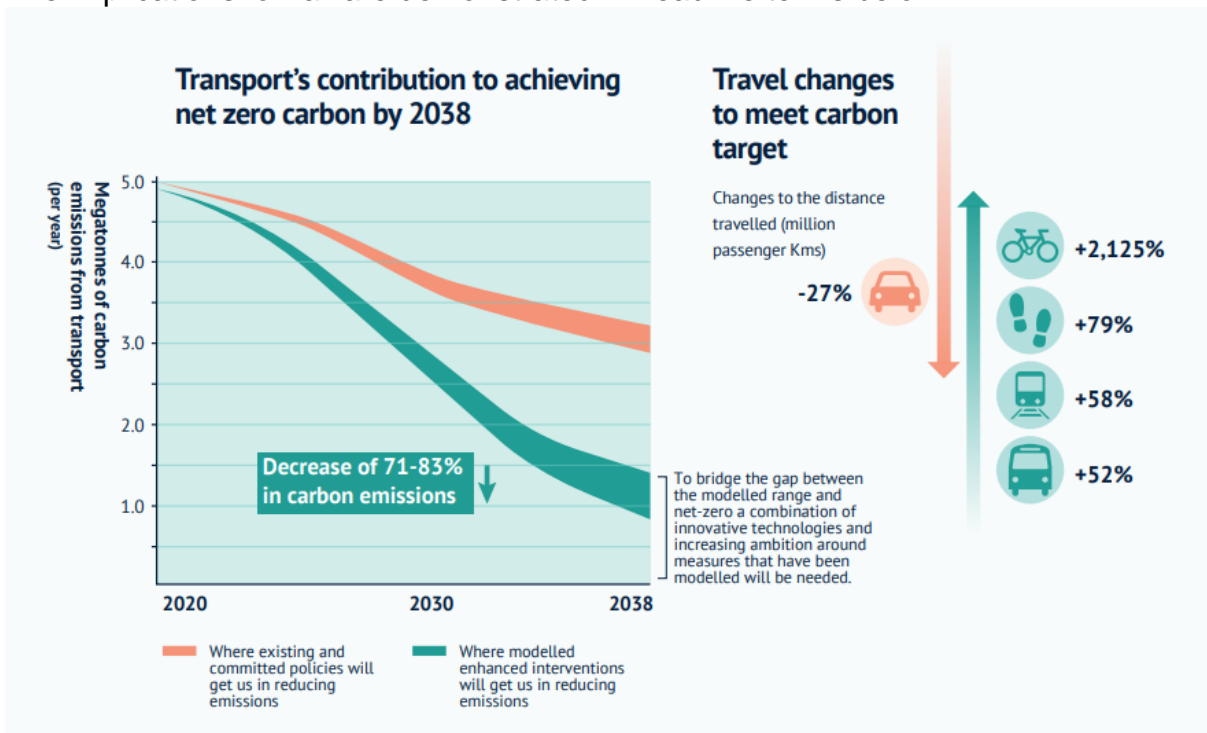


A lot more detail and the underpinning evidence base around different emission reduction scenarios and actions plans can be found on our [climate webpage](#). In short though, as well as continuing to “green” itself, we need the railway to be able to cater for a much larger market share of the total travel market within and to/from our region i.e. it needs to carry more journeys for passengers and goods. We set out in our plan a series of ‘roadmaps’ for different areas of the economy. For transport, we need rail to carry between 1.5 and 2 times the current level of passenger and freight kilometres by 2029, and as part of this, integrate with all other modes of transport so that it becomes an integral part of the door to door journey. The diagram below (from our [Connectivity Infrastructure Plan](#)) of transport mode shares for all West Yorkshire journeys demonstrates clearly the need for public transport and active modes to make significant inroads into the market for journeys:

Mode share for all journeys in West Yorkshire



Finally, we would welcome GBR proposing a ‘SMART’ ambition across the differing time periods that would enable West Yorkshire to achieve net zero carbon by 2038. The implications for rail are demonstrated in headline terms below.



b. What are the interventions over that period which will be the maximum value for money, and what evidence can you share to support your views?

Firstly we ask that value for money be defined in the context of the broader sustainable development goals seeking to be achieved, as outlined above. The method for calculating value for money should not be defined by whether or not something has a financial case or indeed, we also question whether the Treasury Green Book definition truly helps here, given its dominant goal of increasing Gross Domestic Product. It needs to be defined in the wider sustainable context – one concept that has been utilised for a number of decades is that of the '[Triple Bottom Line](#)'. Value for money ought to be assessed on all three of the '3 Ps' - profit, people and planet.

In the context of the Triple Bottom Line, we would suggest that the sort of interventions that are likely to deliver best value for money will be those which enable, facilitate and indeed positively encourage a modal shift of passenger and freight journeys away from private road transport, and to rail/public transport and active modes. This will necessitate the GBR Strategic Plan for rail taking a broader look beyond the boundary of the railway and the services it provides. Instead, a plan that joins up different modes of transport in terms of timetables, ticketing and information, alongside potential fiscal push and pull measures, to enable door to door journeys, is required. As well as this, our region also requires an ongoing programme of rail electrification if we are to meet our net zero targets. This is so that the increased demand for rail use can be de-coupled from rises in rail based emissions. You can read more about the underpinning evidence for this in our West Yorkshire decarbonisation pathways report, which indicates the sorts of interventions that are needed and by when, if we are to achieve net zero by 2038 – [Emission Reduction Pathways Report](#) and associated [Technical Report](#).

We would also point you towards Transport for the North's (TfN) [Decarbonisation Strategy](#) for further evidence to support your deliberations in the area of value for money of interventions. Whilst TfN have adopted a different timescale than West Yorkshire in terms of net zero, there is a lot of helpful thinking about the scenarios, timing and scope of interventions for transport in the round. In doing so, we would also point you towards some very helpful, emerging work by TfN on transport related social exclusion. It is important that in delivering value for money environmental sustainability, interventions are determined that also help tackle transport related social exclusion. You can find an interim report [here](#).

c. How can rail best invest in climate resilience, supported by smarter forecasting, planning and technology, over the next 5, 10, and 30 years and what evidence do you have to support your view?

We consider that rail can play an important role in investing in the overall climate resilience of the country as a whole. It is important to plan using a risk based approach in an holistic way alongside resilience plans for other infrastructure. For example, if our power supply network is not resilient enough and we have as a country invested heavily in a programme of rail electrification, then the risk to the system as a whole is still present. To this end we would urge the strategic rail plan team to work closely with other actors in this area of policy making, including national Government who have recently published the latest [UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). We would also urge close working with

the [National Infrastructure Commission](#) who have done their own work on a framework for resilience in recent years.

Regionally in Yorkshire, we participate in the work of the [Yorkshire & Humberside Climate Commission | \(yorksandhumberclimate.org.uk\)](#). We would welcome a further dialogue through this forum on how rail can best invest at a regional level in climate resilience, alongside plans for other infrastructure. You can find the Commission's recent Climate Action Plan [here](#).

At a city region level, one of the major climate resilience risks we are already living with is that of flooding. This has been a repeated issue for our places but also the infrastructure that connects them, including the railway in parts of West Yorkshire.

You can find our flood review report here: [leeds-city-region-flood-review-report-final.pdf \(the-lep.com\)](#). We have in recent years established our own policy thinking and it will be important to ensure collaboration between West Yorkshire partners and the railway in climate resilience going forwards. To this end we would point you towards our [Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy](#). There have been useful collaborations in recent years between ourselves, the Environment Agency (EA), our Local Authority partners and Network Rail on addressing flood risk (see the following examples), but it would be more beneficial to put this arrangement on a longer term and wider footing i.e. other areas of climate resilience:

- [Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme 2](#) provided flood resilience to the Airedale and Wharfedale lines
- Walsden ([Calderdale](#)) where a scheme is being developed jointly between Network Rail and the EA to reduce flood risk to the railway line.
- Copley ([Calderdale](#)) where the railway line is being used as part of a wider flood alleviation scheme.

Finally, we would ask that consideration be given in the strategic plan for a similar approach to be taken by that of National Highways for Designated Funds. These funds have been used to invest in retrofitting measures to improve the existing road network to, amongst other things, improve its climate resilience. We think there is potential for Great British Railways to consider a similar approach for rail. You can find some further material on these funds here: [Highways England Designated Funds \(nationalhighways.co.uk\)](#)