

£137 million investment to upgrade the Hope Valley line

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HS2 Minister Andrew Stephenson has announced government funding to upgrade the Hope Valley train line – a train line between Manchester and Sheffield.

He made the announcement on Thursday in the House of Commons. He said: “The government is committed to levelling up rail infrastructure across the north, and in that spirit I am delighted to confirm that we have awarded £137 million to Network Rail to complete detailed designs and deliver the Hope Valley capacity scheme.

“This scheme will transform journeys between the Northern Powerhouse cities of Manchester and Sheffield by removing bottlenecks on the Hope Valley line.

“I pay tribute to the member for High Peak, who has campaigned relentlessly for this scheme and has helped get it over the line.”

In response High Peak MP Robert Langan Tweeted: “£137 million Hope Valley line upgrade approved. We’ve done it. I’m absolutely delighted the Government have just approved the upgrade to the

Manchester-Sheffield line, which serves New Mills, Chinley, Edale, Hope & Bamford. This is a huge win for High Peak and the North.”

To help meet future demand, the Hope Valley capacity scheme is designed to removed bottlenecks on the line by creating places for fast passenger services to overtake slower moving freight trains, allowing more trains to run and increasing the reliability of services.

Network Rail is now finalising detailed designs that will improve sections of the railway between Bamford station and Jaggars Lane Bridge in Hathersage, and around Dore & Totley station where a second platform will also be added. Work is expected to begin in 2022 and will be completed in 2023.

Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris said: “I am delighted to confirm £137 million for this scheme to remove bottlenecks on the Hope Valley line, transforming journeys between Sheffield and Manchester – two dynamic Northern Powerhouse cities.

“We are committed to levelling up infrastructure across the North, and these important upgrades will make a huge difference to passengers, providing the punctual, reliable services they deserve, as we build back better from COVID-19.”

As part of this project, Network Rail will continue to look at ways to speed up the start of the work, as they have done so in earlier stages by carrying out signalling design work at the same time as the tendering process as well as liaising with train and freight operating companies to agree any changes to the network that may be required during construction.

Planning for the additional fast service through the Hope Valley scheme is being considered as part of work being carried out by the Manchester Recovery Taskforce (MRTF) which is looking at a range of options over the decade to improve performance in and around Manchester.

In response, Dan Jarvis, Mayor of the Sheffield City Region, said: “This is a significant boost for our region. I’m pleased that our persistence has paid off, and that Ministers have finally listened to our calls to deliver long-awaited investment in this critical line between Sheffield and Manchester.

“I’ve pressed Ministers and officials from the Department for Transport and Network Rail for the past three years to ensure that we secure these much-needed improvements for passengers and businesses.

“For too long people in South Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Greater Manchester have been forced to endure endless delays, cancelled and unreliable services. The upgrade to this line – which connects 4.2 million people between Sheffield and Greater Manchester – will reduce these delays, improve reliability of trains and add a third direct train per hour.

“It’s overdue but welcome progress, however we need the Government to go much further if they are to level up South Yorkshire and the North.”

David Hoggarth, Strategic Rail Director at Transport for the North, said: “This money will help remove some of the key rail bottlenecks on the line by providing two vital ‘freight passing loops’ and a second line

through Dore station. It will mark a major step forward towards being able to provide an additional fast train on this route.

“This line has suffered for years with slower trains holding up faster ones, leading to cancellations, delays and unreliable services for passengers. It currently has some of the slowest train speeds on the North’s rail network, meaning people often resort to travelling by car. It’s great news that investment will now go into this vital commuter corridor, whilst longer-term upgrades as part of Northern Powerhouse Rail are finalised.”

Transport for the North’s [latest statutory advice](#) to Government also calls for longer-term, significant investment in the Hope Valley corridor as part of the Northern Powerhouse Rail network. This would eventually speed up journey times and increase frequency. Northern Powerhouse Rail is expected to feature in the Government’s Integrated Rail Plan, anticipated to publish shortly.