

# Bradford leaders urge government to seize £30 billion prize

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Bradford Council is seeking government support to deliver Britain's number one levelling-up opportunity.

In a letter to Michael Gove MP, the new Secretary of State for Levelling-up, Housing and Communities, the Council has asked for his support in delivering a new Bradford city-centre rail station which would boost the Bradford's economy by around £30 billion over ten years.

The Council, along with many politicians and business leaders in West Yorkshire, believes that backing the new rail station in the Integrated Rail Plan will unlock a transformational levelling-up opportunity.

Bradford has the worst rail connectivity of any major British city with just four direct trains to London per day and poor-quality services to Leeds - 25 minutes to travel just 9 miles - and Manchester - 60 minutes to travel 29 miles - at average speeds of less than 40mph.

Economic analysis highlights the potential benefits a Bradford city-centre station would provide. In addition to the £30billion boost it would:

- Bring 6.7 million people and an area of over £167bn of annual economic output within a 35-minute journey of central Bradford.
- Create 27,000 new jobs
- Generate a 10% uplift in land values
- Unlock 1.3m additional accessible jobs within 90 minutes of Bradford

The location chosen for Bradford's new station is the St James Market site at the southern tip of Bradford City Centre. This location is owned by the Council which would allow for the project to be delivered quickly if the proposals secure a green light in the Integrated Rail Plan.

The new station would form a key part in regenerating Bradford's Southern Gateway with a development area three times larger than Canary Wharf.

Councillor Susan Hinchcliffe, Leader of Bradford Council, said: "A new city-centre station for Bradford would be the epitome of levelling up in action. It would transform the connectivity of three of Britain's largest cities using existing rail services while also delivering a station able to handle Northern Powerhouse Rail services.

"We've made rapid progress on the critical steps needed to realise this opportunity including identification of an affordable and deliverable site.

"Bradford is the UK's youngest city with a population bigger than Liverpool, Hull and Newcastle so a new station represents a unique and unrivalled opportunity to unlock the potential of Britain's seventh largest city."

Councillor James Lewis, Leader of Leeds City Council, said: "Delivering a new station in Bradford is a critical part of the Integrated Rail Plan and one Leeds City Council fully supports. The economies of Bradford and Leeds combined represent the biggest economy outside London but our poor connectivity holds us back. We urgently need to see Leeds and Bradford better connected on mainline rail, and this should form the first part of the much-needed NPR route.

"Building new stations in both Bradford and Leeds to make us NPR and HS2 ready is essential if we are to transform the economy of our region and accelerate the levelling-up agenda. Detailed plans are in place as to how we can better connect our great cities. We need the green light and investment from government to deliver this so we can cut congestion and deliver greener, more sustainable transport across the North."

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