

# Bradford stations: mobility driven prosperity

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“In 2020, Bradford ranked as the second most entrepreneurial city in the UK, measured by start-ups per population, but the idea that Bradford is a place of entrepreneurialism is much older. Bradford has incubated entrepreneurs for over 200 years and has fostered a global culture that is renown and respected across Europe and beyond.

The Bradford spirit of two centuries ago established a growing and thriving town with civic amenities to rival anywhere in Western Europe. Growth was rapid and experienced across the local community with new jobs and new skills founded on smart thinking and new technology.

These traits continue to underpin Bradford’s current successes, where a young digitally-savvy and culturally mature community is like a tightly coiled spring ready to step-up and drive greater productivity and prosperity across the City Region and the Northern Powerhouse.

However, the example of successful cities worldwide shows Bradford needs more than sound foundations, start-ups and unbounded ambition – it needs mobility. It needs fast, reliable and accessible connectivity to

keep successful businesses in Bradford, allowing them to grow and expand to their full potential within the city.

The people of Bradford need better mobility to access wider job opportunities and better homes. Access that is affordable and meaningful, focusing on people's needs and wants rather than pandering to the economic convenience of the few.

Mobility must add value to Bradford as a place – improving quality of life and cultivating its prosperous future. For prosperity to be felt by every part of Bradford's richly diverse community, the power of mobility must be fully unlocked – and quickly.

Bradford understands how quality of life impacts prosperity as much as the other way around – you need look no further than the impact the City Park has had on galvanising and articulating Bradford's identity as a city for its people.

Bradford also clearly understands the importance of investing in its people – to drive innovation and continually refresh the Bradford experience to make it relevant and aspirational. Investment in skills and education, and the University in particular, is demonstrated by the number of start-ups.

Now the focus must shift to investing in mobility. It is vital that Bradford is connected into the Northern Powerhouse Rail network and that HS2 delivery serves the people. The city's campaigning on both programmes highlights how important sustainability and mobility really are. There is now more to address and it is at the heart of how Bradford will define itself both as a connected city and Gateway to the region.

Like many cities, Bradford has been defined for almost a century by the car. The ring-road and M606, once arteries of growth borne from an age when mobility utopia was 'independent' travel, are becoming ineffective and unsustainable. The world is changing rapidly and growth towards a future for Bradford means active travel, integrated public transport systems and accessibility to provide the future mobility we need and want.

As a country, we have historically underplayed how critical fluid and dynamic mobility are as a catalyst for growth. Purposeful mobility, mobility that is accessible, enjoyable, efficient and takes you where you want to go is invaluable in changing the fortunes of a town or city.

Places constricted by a lack of genuine mobility, like Bradford, with too much focus on journeys that use only one travel mode – reminiscent of the Metropolis dystopia of long concrete aerial walkways from home to office or factory – have repeatedly suffered in comparison to truly 'connected' towns and cities.

The power of the integrated network must now be harnessed to gain maximum benefits – integrated through a dynamic, inspiring hub which elevates civic pride and shapes the city's and City Region's brand.

Now is the time to invest in a strategic transport infrastructure that will underpin the future sustainability, prosperity and inclusivity of Bradford. This means a structured portfolio of investment that must centre on connectivity. Steady, methodical and focussed mobility-based change will incubate and sustain the next stage of the city's evolution.

The challenge is to blend the past with the present around a clear vision of the future and to formulate an affordable, deliverable and coordinated strategy that over time will progressively adapt and transform the city's transport networks and connectivity.

A strategy that addresses Bradford's separated rail stations – neither of which currently present themselves as the regional gateway aspired to – and joins together a broader range of travel modes into an integrated NPR hub.

What Bradford needs now, more than ever, is investment in mobility and a new gateway that celebrates the city and City Region, provides fast efficient access to and for people and allows the city to step-up to drive our national recovery and future prosperity.”

– [Arcadis](#) recently announced it had joined forces with [Linxon](#) and [SSE Contracting](#), to power up a greener and more effective railway, delivering the HV solution as one.

*Photo credit: Getty Images*