

Councillors, MPs and businesses join forces to ‘make voices heard’ on Hull rail electrification

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Local councillors, MPs and businesses are being urged to join forces to make the case for electrifying and upgrading the railway lines in and out of Hull, amid fears rail infrastructure investment plans could be watered down.

Councillor Daren Hale, leader of Hull City Council, has written to councillors, MPs and businesses across Hull and the East Riding, calling on them to “collectively raise the profile for electrification and make clear that the city needs and demands it”.

It is thought the Government’s long-awaited Integrated Rail Plan could be published on October 27 alongside Chancellor Rishi Sunak’s autumn spending review, and there are concerns the impact of Covid-19 could have a negative effect on the proposed electrification of the lines from Hull to Leeds and Hull to Sheffield.

In the letter, Cllr Hale, the city’s representative on the [Transport for the North](#) Board, said: “In the current economic environment and without significant lobbying to ministers, electrification of the routes to Hull risks being dismissed as unnecessary and unwanted by the city.

“We must make our voice heard to ensure that Government is clear about the demand and the urgent need for electrification and the benefits to the city it will bring.”

Reliable rail connectivity is crucial for the city's economic growth, and if plans for the [Northern Powerhouse Rail](#) go ahead, it could potentially put 1.1million people and 31,000 businesses within 90 minutes of Hull.

The [electrification](#) would form part of plans to electrify the full TransPennine route between Manchester and Hull. Upgrading this critical route would be make travel more environmentally friendly, improve reliability and journey times, and ensure that new rolling stock could run right across the network.

It could cut journey times from Hull to Leeds from 57 minutes to 38 minutes, and Hull to Sheffield from 86 minutes to 50 minutes.

Cllr Hale's letter also highlighted other fundamental concerns about the city's "poor" rail connectivity, including the connections to Manchester and Bridlington.

He said: "For years we have strived to increase our rail connection to Manchester from one train per hour to two. Instead, we are constantly pushing back against the proposals to add more stops into our service in order to provide a local stopping service for the Manchester and Leeds conurbations.

"We do understand that large numbers of people are seeking to move between Leeds and Manchester by rail, but it should not be at the expense of another city's only connection.

"In addition, the Bridlington service has been downgraded to peak travel times only until May 2022, completely removing the evening provision on this service. Whilst this retains some ability to commute (assuming full days) it will have a significant impact on our evening economy."

To support the campaign for electrification on social media, use the hashtag [#electrifyhull](#) or email electrifyhull@hullcc.gov.uk

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