

'Greener, Faster, Better' – RIA's vision for rail travel in the North

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The [Railway Industry Association \(RIA\)](#) North has published a new vision for how they believe the North's railway should be electrified.

The plan, entitled "Greener, Faster, Better – Decarbonisation Route Prioritisation for the North's Railways", sets out to improve journeys and help decarbonise rail freight and passenger lines across the region.

The document was written by RIA North's Decarbonisation working group, made up of cross-industry experts, and forms part of their ongoing engagement with partners in the supply chain, government, [Transport for the North](#) and [Network Rail](#).

It details a long-term vision, looking forward to 2050, and outlines which passenger and freight routes, intercity corridors and suburban networks should be prioritised for electrification. According to RIA North, the Midland Main Line (MML) and TransPennine Route Upgrade (TRU) offer the greatest decarbonisation benefits – both of which the Government announced it will electrify as part of the Integrated Rail Plan. [You can download a copy in full here.](#)

It also highlights a range of connections between major towns and cities in the North as 'first priority', including:

- Sheffield to Doncaster/Moorthorpe
- Manchester Victoria to Leeds via Bradford Interchange
- Northallerton to Saltburn via Middlesbrough
- Manchester to Sheffield (Hope Valley)
- Leeds to Hull

There are also and providing details of other low carbon technologies such as battery and hydrogen power, in a further bid to remove polluting diesel trains from the network.

Justin Moss, chair of RIA North, commented: "Rail will be essential for the UK to reach its Net Zero transport targets, as a clean form of mass transit. However, many of the North's major freight and passenger routes continue to rely on diesel trains and critical connections between some of our largest cities are in need of major upgrades.

"Electrification is the solution to many of these challenges. That is why we have published a roadmap for how our railway network can be not only decarbonised through electrification, but also deliver faster journey times. We also identify where other decarbonisation solutions such as battery and hydrogen trains will be most appropriate.

"Whilst we have seen some progress with commitments from the Government in the Integrated Rail Plan, these do not go far or fast enough to reach our climate targets. To ensure they can be delivered at good value to the taxpayer the industry needs a long-term programme of electrification work starting immediately, which would also help support thousands of green jobs in the sector and drive economic growth around the country.

"We look forward to continue working with Transport for the North and our partners in government to build a world-class, Net Zero railway not just for the North of England but for whole of the UK."

Julie Carrier, decarbonisation lead at RIA North and co-author of the report, added: "We know the North has ambitious targets for Net Zero emissions from transport by 2040, and the railway industry is eager to play its part in this. Not only do we need to decarbonise our industry, but we need to increase the capacity of our railways to take even more passengers and freight through a pipeline of electrification projects.

"We hope that our proposals will help inform the debate about how the industry can deliver these, providing the greatest benefits to passengers and the North's economy."