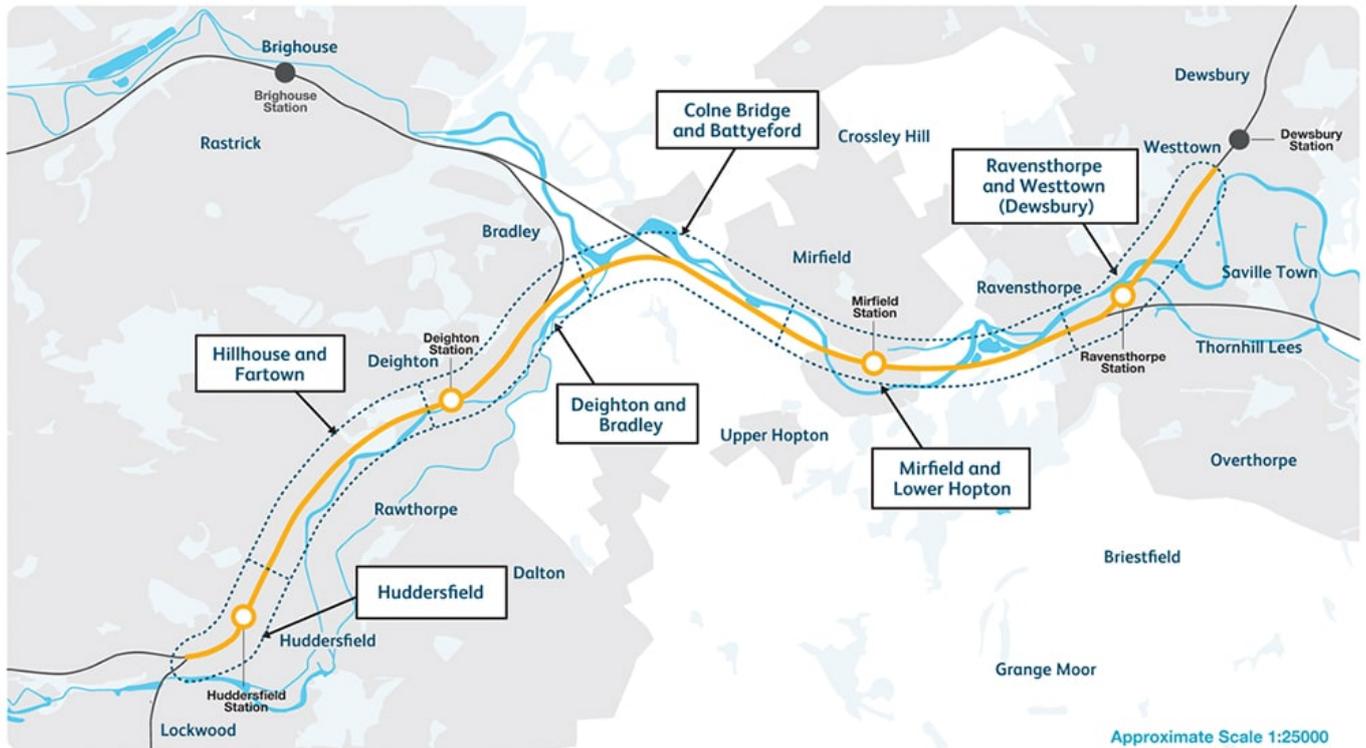


Network Rail submits formal request to begin major improvements in West Yorkshire

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Major work to upgrade the railway in West Yorkshire is now a step closer as Network Rail has submitted plans to transform the line between Huddersfield and Westtown (Dewsbury) following two rounds of public and stakeholder consultations.

As the improvements on the 13km stretch of the line include building new sections of railway outside of the existing network, Network Rail was required to submit a Transport and Works Order Act to the Secretary of State for Transport.

The planned upgrades between Huddersfield and Westtown (Dewsbury) include:

- Doubling the number of tracks from two to four to allow more trains to run
- Major upgrades to stations at Huddersfield, Deighton, Mirfield and providing a relocated station at Ravensthorpe
- Electrifying the lines to bring faster, more reliable services for passengers which are better for the environment
- Building a bridge in Ravensthorpe to separate the lines which run to/from Wakefield with those to/from Leeds to help reduce congestion and bring more reliable journeys.

This work is part of the wider Transpennine Route Upgrade – a programme of works designed to transform journeys between Manchester and York via Huddersfield and Leeds. The plans include measures to protect the heritage of the existing railway, historic landmarks and the environment.

Before submitting the order, Network Rail carried out extensive public and stakeholder consultation. Nine events took place in Autumn 2019 where people could view the plans, ask questions and share their feedback.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the start of the first national lockdown meant the planned face to face events due to take place in in Spring 2020 were cancelled, but people had the opportunity to view the plans online and send further feedback. A further round of information events were held in October 2020. Strict social distancing measures were in place and the public were invited to attend the events if they were unable to access the updated plans online.

Neil Holm, Transpennine Route Upgrade Director for Network Rail, said: “We know improvements are needed on this section of the line between Huddersfield and Westtown (Dewsbury) and submitting the Transport and Works Order Act is a major milestone in the project to upgrade the route and better connect the North.

“The COVID-19 pandemic brought challenges to our extensive public and stakeholder consultation, but we continued to hold our events virtually and made the plans available online. We want to thank everyone who has provided feedback, which has been vital in shaping the plans.

“If approved, the project will bring a more reliable railway with more trains, more seats, faster journeys and more choice for passengers.”

Now the application has been formally submitted, a decision is expected to be made by early 2023. If successful, work will begin on site that year.

All the submission documents for the Order are now available to view online at networkrail.co.uk/TranspennineEngagement. This includes all the Transport and Works Act Order applications documents, Environmental Statement and Listed Buildings Consents.

Photo credit: Network Rail