

# West Yorkshire Combined Authority stresses rail investment as key to improving connections between UK nations

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The West Yorkshire Combined Authority has told a Government review that improving transport connections in and out of the region is critical to improving ties between the four nations of the United Kingdom.

The eastern leg of HS2, Northern Powerhouse Rail including a new line between Leeds and Manchester via central Bradford, upgrading the Trans-Pennine line and investing in the East Coast Main Line are among projects which would help improve connections with Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The Combined Authority's submission to the Union Connectivity Review, chaired by Sir Peter Hendy, says that poor transport links are a "significant factor in holding back the development of economic links between our region and the other nations within the UK". It calls for investment in rail as an efficient, high capacity, low-carbon form of transport.

The West Yorkshire Combined Authority Transport Committee discussed the submission at its meeting on

Friday 15 January.

Cllr Kim Groves, Chair of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Transport Committee, said: “For West Yorkshire, better connections with the UK nations starts with improved transport links in and out of the region. I hope the Union Connectivity Review will reflect that in its recommendations and that the Government will take this into account when it publishes the Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands.

“Delivering these improvements are essential to accelerating our recovery from the pandemic and addressing the social and economic disparities it has further exposed across Britain. Investment in better connections in and out of West Yorkshire is the path to improved links to the rest of the UK and Europe with all the opportunities that brings.

“To tackle the climate emergency, unlock economic growth and to level-up we need long-term whole-network planning and the delivery of promised rail investment.”

The Transport Committee also discussed the preferred options for the Northern Powerhouse Rail project presented by Transport for the North to the Government. The proposed network includes:

- A new line between Manchester and Leeds via central Bradford
- Significant upgrades of the East Coast Main Line from Leeds to Newcastle
- Electrification and line speed improvements between Leeds and Hull
- Electrification and upgrades connecting Sheffield to the HS2 network at Clayton, to provide onward connectivity to Leeds via HS2

Northern Powerhouse Rail will increase the number of people within an hour journey of four or more of the North’s major centres from 10,000 to 1.3 million. A city centre NPR station could help unlock £14.6 billion to Bradford’s economy, up to 14,250 additional Bradford jobs and 8,500 additional homes.

The Combined Authority [wrote to the Government last month](#) setting out the region’s ambitions for the Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands.