

Wednesday November 5, 2025

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Mark Casci, and I am head of policy and representation at West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce, an employer representation body servicing employers across both counties.

We write today in support of the Transpennine Route Upgrade's submission for a Transport Works Act Order as part of its ongoing upgrade programme.

West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce serves circa 2,500 businesses of all sizes around the region and connectivity is consistently cited as one of the principal issues facing employers.

As such we as a Chamber are huge supporters of the TRU programme which we class as a vital project for the North of England's economy and society.

The upgrade will significantly improve capacity, connectivity, economic recovery and growth in the region, as well as assisting with decarbonisation ambitions.

Moreover, improved services will serve a wider societal purpose, not only in giving employers access to a wider geographical pool of talent, but also from a social mobility perspective with faster and more reliable journeys meaning enhanced opportunity for people of all ages and backgrounds.

We are specifically supportive of the improvements between Stalybridge and Diggle and pay tribute to the rate of progress made by TRU and Network Rail on the project.

It is optimal that there is a timely delivery of the both the TWAO and the TRU programme overall, including full electrification, improved line speeds, W8a, W10 & W12 gauge clearance for freight, modern signalling (ETCS) and station accessibility improvements across the route serving our great cities and towns across the North.

The Chamber recognises that while the Transpennine route currently handles a mix of fast express, local stopping and freight services, it has not seen significant infrastructure investment to enhance capacity for many years. The route is increasingly congested and there is limited capacity to accommodate future growth. This not only hampers productivity across the North but also helps to stagnate the UK economy as a whole. Support for the Order scheme — as part of the wider TRU programme — will enable more services, faster and more reliable journey times, and greater resilience for both passenger and freight traffic between Manchester, Huddersfield, Leeds and York.

As a Chamber we would welcome increased emphasis on the role of the TWAO scheme in supporting modal shift, by improving efficiency and capacity, which will help reduce the number of heavy vehicles on the road, alleviate traffic and contribute to national decarbonisation policy. An

effective railway also enables more freight to move by rail, delivering both economic and environmental benefits.

Whilst not on our patch we also support for a fully accessible and compliant station at a new relocated Mossley station, which will allow for full electrification of the order section and provide a safe way of passage across the scheme route for existing users at two level crossings through the provision of alternative routes across the railway.

If granted the TWAO will provide support for the wider upgrade scheme, helping to facilitate the provision of modernised signalling so that trains can run closer together.

Finally, the Chamber also calls for increased emphasis on the need for coordinated delivery with future schemes, including Northern Powerhouse Rail and integration into the Bee Network. Just last month I, along with business and civic leaders from both Leeds and Sheffield spoke at an event at the Houses of Parliament in which we called for improved services between Leeds and Sheffield.

The private sector has been calling out for improved rail connectivity in Britain for many years. We have seen too many false dawns, delays and downgrades to the numerous plans which have been mooted to modernise our transport system.

Following through on requests to invest in upgrades to our network to a proper 21st Century standard can help bolster our poor levels of productivity, give confidence to employers to invest in our regions, act as a magnet for direct foreign investment and lift the life prospects of millions of people.

We hope that the Transport Infrastructure Planning Unit (TIPU) will look favourably on TRU's application and make a progressive and prudent decision.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Casci

Head of Policy and Representation

West & North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce