

Professor John Holden
**Vice-President for Civic Engagement
& Innovation**
The University of Manchester
Oxford Road
Manchester
M13 9PL

email: john.a.holden@manchester.ac.uk
www.manchester.ac.uk

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Transport Infrastructure Planning Unit (TIPU)
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR

To whom it may concern:

RE: TRU Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) Stalybridge to Diggle (Saddleworth)

On behalf of the University of Manchester I am writing to express our strong support for the proposed Transport and Works Act Order for the Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) between Stalybridge and Diggle (Saddleworth). As one of the UK's leading higher education institutions, with over 44,000 students, 12,000 staff The University of Manchester is invested in the success of major infrastructure programmes that drive economic, social and environmental progress in the North.

The University of Manchester plays a vital role in the North as an anchor institution supporting social mobility, economic development, innovation and research excellence across Greater Manchester and the wider region. Our work has a direct positive impact on students, academics, businesses and communities who all rely on efficient, accessible and sustainable transport to realise their ambitions and connect with opportunity.

We see TRU as critical to the success of the North and the nation, unlocking much-needed capacity and improving reliability on a vital east-west transport corridor that has long suffered from chronic underinvestment and congestion. We specifically welcome the progress to date on the Stalybridge to Diggle (Saddleworth) scheme and the wider programme, which will modernise the route and address long-standing capacity and reliability constraints.

The current mix of express, local and freight services already strains the network, limiting future growth and regional connectivity. The Order scheme, incorporating full electrification, enhanced line speeds, and modernisation of key stations, will deliver faster, more frequent, and more reliable journeys between Manchester, Huddersfield, Leeds and York. Improved connectivity will benefit our staff and students, expand recruitment catchment, support innovative partnerships and strengthen the University's place within a connected innovation corridor.

The University of Manchester recognises the particular importance of accessibility improvements for groups we serve and partner with, including those with limited mobility, disabilities, older people and caregivers. Enhanced facilities and a relocated, more accessible Mossley station will transform public transport in the local area and reduce barriers to participation, education and employment. Safer, more accessible alternative routes at level crossings will make daily journeys more inclusive.

Investment in TRU, including the Stalybridge to Diggle section is important to the University's sustainability strategy and decarbonisation aims. Supporting modal shift to rail through increased capacity and electrification will help lower regional and national emissions, reduce road congestion and enable increased rail freight, contributing to climate targets and supporting the sustainability and social responsibility goals of the University and our partners. Finally, The University of Manchester also calls for increased emphasis on the need for coordinated delivery with future schemes, including Northern Powerhouse Rail and integration into the Bee Network.

We urge the Department for Transport to deliver the Order in a timely manner, progressing improvements without delay, so that the economic, social and environmental rewards of this vital project can be realised as soon as possible.

The University of Manchester hopes that the Transport and Infrastructure Planning Unit (TIPU) will look TRU's application favourably and we look forward to the benefits the project will bring to the region. Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Holden', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Professor John Holden, FRSA
Vice-President for Civic Engagement and Innovation