



Department
for Transport

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From the Secretary of State
The Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps

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17 December 2021

Dear Louise,

Thank you for your letter of 26 November 2021 outlining Transport for the North (TfN) Board's statutory advice regarding the Integrated Rail Plan (IRP).

I have noted the Board's concerns with the proposals set out in the IRP, including the core Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) network. However, let me emphasise again the benefits of the IRP for the North. It represents the single biggest ever government investment in rail infrastructure at £96bn, with £23bn in spending between Liverpool and York alone.

The core NPR network will achieve similar outcomes to previous proposals. I could not justify to the taxpayer spending an extra £18bn to save 4 minutes between Leeds and Manchester and 6 minutes between Liverpool and Manchester. Our proposals will also see NPR services running this decade, with benefits starting sooner than originally envisaged.

In his independent review of HS2, Doug Oakervee recommended the Government look at how projects like HS2, NPR and other major rail schemes work together, with a view to delivering benefits sooner for the North and Midlands.

The IRP sets out, for the first time, a costed and deliverable plan to build NPR. In 2019, the Prime Minister set out his commitment to developing NPR between Manchester and Leeds. Not only will we achieve this, but it has now been extended west to Liverpool and east to York, with intermediate stops at Warrington and Huddersfield. This will see capacity more than trebled between Manchester to Leeds and doubled between Liverpool and Manchester. The journey from Liverpool to Leeds will be cut by over 30 minutes and reaching Manchester Airport from Liverpool will take just 26

minutes, a journey of over 70 minutes today. Trains from Hull, Newcastle and York to Manchester and Liverpool will also see faster journey times.

I agree with your comments on the importance of Bradford. That's why I have committed up to £500 million to deliver electrification and upgrades of the line between Bradford and Leeds, bringing journey times as low as 12 minutes - a saving of almost half compared to today.

In addition, I am providing £100 million to start work on the West Yorkshire Mass Transit system and how best to take HS2 trains to Leeds, including assessing Leeds station capacity. This will seek to provide better connections for residents and businesses of Bradford, not just to Leeds but to the rest of the country including London.

The pandemic has demonstrated how sensitive rail demand is to change. Some have suggested halting all further rail investment until rail demand recovers. The Prime Minister and I rejected this. The case for investment in the rail network in the North and Midlands remains strong. Bringing communities, towns, and cities closer together and improving access to high-wage and high skilled jobs will achieve the levelling up we all wish to see.

Having considered the advice you provided, I do not intend to revisit the decisions reached in the IRP. I believe the core NPR network is the best way to improve journey times and increase capacity from Liverpool to York.

However, as the IRP sets out, the Government intends to take an adaptive approach, meaning that there will be future opportunities to consider building on the core pipeline of the IRP. I would also welcome discussion on any proposals to locally fund infrastructure beyond the scope of that core pipeline; and on how we can maximise the benefits of the investment committed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grant Shapps', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT