



Department
for Transport

John Cridland
John.cridland@transportforthenorth.com

Barry White
barry.white@transportforthenorth.com

From the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Paul Maynard MP

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Tel: 0300 330 3000
E-Mail: paul.maynard_mp@dft.gov.uk

Web Site: www.gov.uk/dft

Dear John and Barry,

Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU)

I am looking forward to meeting you at the Transport for the North (TfN) Board on 12th September.

I am aware that you have taken a keen interest in TRU and have provided the previous Secretary of State with formal advice laying out TfN's recommendations for the Transpennine Route. Recognising this, and ahead of upcoming discussions at the TfN Board, I thought it would be helpful to provide a further update on TRU subsequent to the previous Secretary of State's reply of 23 October 2018.

Firstly, I want to reassure you of our commitment to transforming rail connectivity across the North, evidenced both by the Prime Minister's recent announcement on Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) and the continued development of, and investment in, the TRU programme. The current TRU programme is likely to form the first phase of a longer-term programme of development that continues beyond Control Period 6 (CP6) and will, together with NPR, form part of a broader northern rail strategy. To bring increased focus to the TRU programme within the DfT, we have recently established a dedicated delivery team and I hope that you are able to meet with our new Programme Director in due course.

Our work on TRU will develop in parallel to the NPR scheme. This will allow us to manage the dependencies between the two programmes and maximise the benefit of the investment, ensuring that we situate TRU, NPR and HS2 within a coherent rail strategy for the North. I have asked my team to work more closely with TfN as these plans mature.

TRU improvements have already been delivered at Micklefield and more are planned which will support faster services and longer trains. We are upgrading the Calder Valley route across the Pennines to provide an essential alternative route for passengers during these works and we have recently authorised Network Rail to begin publicly consulting on an upgrade from two tracks to four between Huddersfield and Ravensthorpe. We are also providing significant funding to continue to develop the remainder of the TRU programme to a higher level of

design maturity, having committed £145m to development activity alone. This will enable us to deliver mature designs from which we can confirm the expected passenger benefits resulting from the TRU programme.

It is particularly important that we balance the significant potential for passenger disruption with the speed of benefit delivery. Whilst we are working closely with TfN and train operating companies through the North of England Programme Board, this is a challenging issue to resolve and it is an area where I would welcome your continued involvement and support.

The provision of capacity and capability for cross-Pennine freight also remains a key priority. We are considering a range of options for how best to enhance the current capability and capacity for cross-Pennine bulk and intermodal rail freight, including the proposed reinstatement of the Skipton - Colne route and consideration of the development of a gauge cleared route. That work should report this year.

I also wanted to address the four points raised in your original letter marked (a) through (d). As you know, the current TRU programme is an evolution of the SDO6 option which we believe represents a deliverable programme that balances competing priorities. However, looking beyond the scope of the current TRU programme, we continue to examine options to “future-proof” a subsequent enhancement programme which takes us further towards the key high level strategic outputs. As an example, we are progressing electrification options to the GRIP3 level of maturity along the full length of the route to allow for a phased approach. Network Rail are also completing a cost challenge exercise to ensure that we deliver the programme as efficiently as possible. Decisions on the allocation of CP7 funding have not yet been made, but will be informed by our TRU development work. Our approach is intended to minimise the cumulative passenger disruption by scheduling work in similar geographical areas to coincide where it is feasible to do so. Should the programme not spend its allocated contingency, we will consider whether there are options within TRU for further enhancement, but this will need to be within the context of the overall portfolio as other projects evolve.

Finally, I would like to reconfirm that we look forward to continuing to work with TfN to deliver the benefits of TRU for the people and economy of the North.



PAUL MAYNARD