



# Craig Whittaker MP

CALDER VALLEY

[www.craigwhittakermp.co.uk](http://www.craigwhittakermp.co.uk)

## Transport for the North

Thank you for contacting me. Because there is so much comment on this issue and so much happening, I have provided a detailed survey of Government policy and action.

I am delighted that Transport for the North (TfN) is set to become the first ever statutory sub-national transport body. This really positive step reflects the Government's commitment to the Northern Powerhouse. New pioneering legislation will provide the North with an unprecedented say on how money is spent on transport.

Transport for the North, which is being supported with up to £260 million of government investment, will help provide the infrastructure needed to drive economic growth, create jobs and boost skills. TfN will allow the North to speak with one voice on northern transport projects, have a greater influence over national infrastructure decisions and provide the certainty needed to push forward vital regional projects.

Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) is one of these such projects which aims to transform connectivity between the key economic centres of the North.

Recently, there have been claims that the Government is prioritising Crossrail 2 over Northern Powerhouse Rail: this is totally untrue.

The fact is that our position on Crossrail 2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail is the same – we're working with Transport for London in exactly the same way as we're working with Transport for the North. As Crossrail 2 has been nine years in the making, it is a few years ahead of Northern Powerhouse Rail, which was first mooted in 2013. That is the only difference.

Crossrail 2 is at an early development stage and the business case will need to be approved before it progresses. It is our intention to work with both projects with the aim of delivering a more reliable railway that delivers for passengers and underpins economic growth.

By 2020 the Government will have spent more than **£13 billion on improving and modernising transport links across the Northern Powerhouse**. This will be on top of the £3.3 billion for local investment priorities through the Local Growth Fund.

**Improvements in West Yorkshire have included signalling upgrade** between Pudsey, Bradford, Halifax, Hebden Bridge, Huddersfield and Shepley. (Great North Rail Project, [link](#))

The Government is committed to agreeing devolution deals with areas across the North. Agreements have been reached with **Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, Tees Valley, and Sheffield City Region**.

In May, people across Greater Manchester, Tees Valley and Liverpool City region voted to elect powerful mayors for the first time. **These newly elected mayors will receive a combined £2.5 billion**

**of additional funding** from the UK government to spend on local priorities and ambitions. (GOV.UK, [link](#))

### **NORTHERN POWERHOUSE RAIL (NPR)**

Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) is the strategic rail programme aiming at transforming connectivity between the key economic centres of the North. **By connecting four or more of the North's largest economic centres, NPR is designed to transform the northern economy.**

**Today, fewer than 10,000 people in the North have access to four or more of the North's largest economic centres within an hour. If NPR is delivered this figure will rise dramatically to 1.3 million.** This revolution of the job market would benefit both businesses and individuals. Businesses would gain access to a larger labour market and individuals would gain greater choice as their careers progress.

NPR would also increase surface access to Manchester Airport by providing faster and more frequent rail connectivity between the airport and the North's main economic centres. (TfN, Northern Powerhouse Rail, [link](#))

### **FUNDING AND NEXT STEPS**

The Government is committed to Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR). **This was recently reflected in the announcement on 2 October 2017 that an extra £300 million will be committed to help push through the ambitious NPR.**

Transport Minister, Jesse Norman, said the extra funding will –

*“Bolster links between Northern towns and cities with more frequent and faster services”.*  
(Jesse Norman, HC Deb, 20.10.17, [link](#))

The £300 million extra funding **will ensure HS2 infrastructure can accommodate future NPR and Midlands Connect services.** This forward planning and future-proofing will make it easier and less disruptive to build NPR in the future. (GOV.UK, [link](#))

Transport for the North (TfN) are currently developing the business case for NPR, which includes investigating serving other significant economic centres. (Paul Maynard, HC Deb, 25.10.17, [link](#))

### **GREAT NORTHERN RAIL PROJECT**

**By 2022 the Great North Rail Project (GNRP) will have delivered over £1 billion of improvements for customers across the North** and is part of the biggest programme of rail modernisation since Victorian times.

The focus of the project will be on connecting the North and beyond, improving journey times, increasing capacity, improving reliability and delivering an environmentally and passenger friendly experience across the rail network of the North.

**The GNRP will deliver 2,000 extra services a week, room for 40,000 more passengers every day and 500 new carriages.** On the East Coast Main Line, the new 'Azuma' fleet of trains which will provide an additional **12,200 seats, reducing journey times by up to 22 minutes.** (Network Rail, [link](#))

**The Great North Rail Project (GNRP) investment will result in the electrification of 300km of the North West rail network.** This electrification combined with other improvements on the network will allow more trains with a greater number of seats to run. (North West electrification, [link](#))

The electrification will improve connections between towns and cities in the region, including **Manchester, Liverpool, Preston and Blackpool.**

The electrified route between Preston and Blackpool will connect the area to the West Coast Mainline which is the key rail artery connecting the North West with London to the South and Scotland to the North. (North West electrification, [link](#))

Projects underway currently include connecting Manchester's three stations with the new Ordsall chord and developing plans for upgrading the Transpennine route between Manchester and Leeds and York. (Great North Rail Project, [link](#))

## **NORTHERN AND TRANSPENNINE FRANCHISES**

The current Northern and TransPennine Express franchises are set to help bring the Northern Powerhouse to life, with **500 brand-new modern carriages, room for 40,000 more passengers, 2,000 extra services a week and a host of improvements.** This will provide the biggest transformation to rail journeys in the north of England in decades, with the operators overseeing a massive £1.2 billion investment. (GOV.UK, [link](#))

## **HS2**

**Manchester and Leeds will also both benefit from the £55.7bn HS2 railway when it opens in 2026.** By 2033 there will be up to 18 trains an hour running in each direction on HS2, carrying up to 1,100 passengers each. (Government response, [link](#))

## **NEW TECHNOLOGY (BI-MODE TRAINS)**

The Government is focused on getting the best possible improvements for passengers rather than only focusing on how a train is powered. **New technology means that full electrification of all lines is no longer necessary on each and every route.**

The Government will continue to electrify where necessary. Since 2010 the Government have electrified a great deal more of the rail network than were electrified between 1997 and 2010.

The purchase of **brand new 125 mile an hour hybrid/bi-mode electric trains** as part of the Midland Main Line modernisation plan, will mean the parts of the route which will make the greatest difference will be electrified.

**CO2 emissions per passenger kilometre on Great Britain's railways are now at a record low and have fallen by nearly 29 per cent since 2005/06.** We expect the new bi-mode trains to deliver a better environmental performance than the existing diesel trains on the Midland Mainline and therefore contribute to further improving this record.

These improvements will reduce journey times between London and Sheffield by up to 20 minutes in the peak. The Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling added:

*“But then if you want to electrify the whole route, every inch of the way, it will cost the taxpayer nearly a billion pounds more than our current plan and it will save one extra minute on the journey time to Sheffield.” (Chris Grayling speech, 21.09.17, [link](#))*

New technologies have the ability to improve journeys for passengers sooner than expected with state of the art trains, **meaning disruptive electrification works are no longer necessary on each and every route**. Instead, new bi-mode train technology will offer a seamless transfer from diesel power to electric. **I also note that the industry is working to develop alternative fuel trains such as battery and hydrogen power.**

### STRATEGIC ROAD NETWORK

The Department for Transport is working hard to improve the UK’s road network. The Government is mid-way through the **first five-year £15 billion Road Investment Strategy for the ‘strategic road network’ (SRN)**. This vital strategy includes a long-term programme for our national motorways and major roads with the stable funding needed to plan ahead. **The planning for the period beyond 2020 is currently underway.** (Road Investment Strategy, [link](#))

### LOCAL AUTHORITY ROADS

Local roads are set to benefit from a share in up to a billion pound improvement fund as part of the new Transport Investment Strategy. The strategy champions a new long-term approach for government infrastructure spending – meaning cash will be targeted at projects that help rebalance the economy.

As part of this, Ministers are creating a **‘Major Road Network’ with access to a fund for improvements such as bypasses**. The new plans mean that main roads currently overseen by local authorities would share the new Vehicle Excise Duty (VED)-funded National Roads Fund which was previously envisaged to be ring-fenced for national routes. VED was £5.8bn for 2016/17. **The Major Road Network will cover the UK’s busiest and most economically important local authority A roads.** (Transport Investment Strategy, [link](#))

**Smart motorway schemes are being rolled out to increase the capacity of the road, without the expense of having to widening all parts of the road network.** This is achieved by temporarily or permanently opening the hard shoulder to traffic. Technology is used to provide a controlled, intuitive environment through use of overhead variable message signs, full coverage CCTV and enforcement systems.

**Motorways including the M6, M11, M60 and M62 will be widened.** The next stage of the rolling programme of much needed improvement on the A1 is about to open. The dualling of rest of the A66 will create another route across the Pennines which will link northern cities. (Chris Grayling speech, 21.09.17, [link](#))

I hope you will agree that these are exciting times. I believe that the Government is laying the foundations of the transport infrastructure of a prosperous and dynamic future.

Kind regards,



Craig Whittaker MP