

Response to application for the Network Rail (Leeds to Micklefield Enhancements) Transport and Works Act Order

West Yorkshire Combined Authority

Date of submission 24 August 2023

Introduction

The West Yorkshire Combined Authority supports Network Rail in its work to deliver the Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) in full. As a Transport Authority, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority is acutely aware of the importance of rail investment, and the delivery of the right interventions, in the right locations.

For a significant amount of time the infrastructure subject to the proposed TWAO has been a constraint on the growth of the rail network.

The West Yorkshire Combined Authority is fully committed to the successful, efficient and timely delivery of TRU. It is one of the key priorities identified and supported by our emerging Rail Strategy which is now in public consultation [Our Rail Strategy | Your Voice \(westyorks-ca.gov.uk\)](#). TRU forms a critical part on the 'levelling up' of the economy and represents a step change in the rail service, and investment in the North of England. The Combined Authority supports in principle any work that provides a more reliable railway with increased capacity and improved journey times.

Fully accessible stations should be the minimum standard for any modern railway. We look forward to seeing all stations along the route made fully accessible as part of the TRU.

We support the electrification of the route and we would like to reiterate the importance of providing full gauge clearance for rail freight to achieve our region and the government's ambition to cut carbon emissions.

The West Yorkshire Combined Authority is supportive of all works needed, critical to the wider delivery and success of TRU. We urge Network Rail to work closely with us to minimise disruption on the railway and our public transport network and with Leeds City Council regarding any local and highway issues, so that the TRU is delivered in such a way that it meets the requirements and standards of the Local Authority.

There are a number of areas in which we would like to provide specific comments, these are outlined in the following paragraphs.

Specific Comments

Public Transport

As the Transport Authority, we would like to highlight several areas that the programme might have an impact on the public transport network. The works on Austhorpe Lane to remove and rebuild the railway bridge will result in severance of bus routes 21/22. As there will be no public transport route serving the area to the east of the bridge – a temporary shuttle bus service will be required to operate from Kingsmead Crescent to Crossgates centre throughout the period of disruption. It is particularly important due to the length of the works (2024 to 2026). Pedestrian access would also need to be maintained over the rail bridge for school children who

need to walk from Manston Lane as school services will be diverted via Crossgates centre.

Ridge Road, whilst not having any bus stops, is a bus route used by service 175 which will have to be diverted and will not serve Ninelands Lane and part of Selby Road. Mitigation will be required to ensure connectivity is maintained to those bus stops impacted. Traffic management signage will need to direct general diversion traffic away from Ninelands Lane and A642 as these provide the main bus route from the east into Garforth Centre.

In some instances, the proposed scheme stages will impact the operation of bus services. It is unclear, without sight of the mitigation proposals. We would urge Network Rail to provide further details to the Combined Authority, particularly regarding the timings, timescales and details on specific closures and diversions so that we could work together to minimise the impact on users of public transport. Please also note that rural areas could be disproportionately affected through road closures. We will need Network Rail to provide us with the details so that we could assess and mitigate the impact on our communities.

Duke Street and Marsh Lane are major bus routes for services to/from Leeds City Centre. It would be expected that roads would remain open throughout the construction period to allow access for up to 60 buses per hour to access Leeds Bus Station located nearby on St Peter's Street.

Any disruption to the bus network as a result of TRU works would impact bus services operating south out of Leeds and services operating west/east and east/west.

Any disruption to bus movements would incur operational costs to bus operators due to lengthy diversion routes required via alternative routes to the bus station. It would be expected that Leeds City Council would retain open roads in this area under the rail bridge spans as this is a main thoroughfare for traffic south to north and onto the inner motorway now access via City Square has been removed.

There will be cost implications for the Combined Authority or bus operators for running diversion services as this will lead to additional operational costs. We would expect daily shuttle bus costs to exceed £1,000 per day for nearly two years (subject to the details of closures / diversions), this cost will need to be covered by the TRU programme to prevent areas being cut off from the public transport network. We would welcome a further conversation with Network Rail in terms of when the funding is needed and how the funding could be used to minimise the impact on our community.

Planning

The document NR13 provides a planning statement for the scheme for each stage. The proposed development is entirely within the administrative area of the City of

Leeds and therefore we anticipate that, as the Local Planning Authority (LPA), they will have more detailed comments on this section.

The document NR12 would authorise Network Rail to carry out various works along the route. The proposed development is entirely within the administrative area of the City of Leeds and therefore we anticipate that, as the Local Planning Authority (LPA), they will have more detailed comments on this section.

In our capacity as the Transport Authority for West Yorkshire, the planning statement does not appear to adequately address the impact of the scheme during the construction period for active modes and public transport users. It is unclear if analysis has been done identify the issues and appropriate mitigation for these users.

In our capacity as the Transport Authority for West Yorkshire, we note that a Construction Traffic Management Plan will be submitted to the LPA for each stage of works that detail temporary diversions of both highways and rights of way required as part of the Scheme. We also note that 'a package of interventions and mitigation outlined in Section 11.3 of Chapter 11 in Volume One of the Environmental Report including an implementation timetable for each stage'. We would be grateful if this information could be shared with the Combined Authority and the relevant Local Authority when the information is available.

Costs

It seemed that the costs provided in the Order only cover civil engineering and highway works and has not included costs of work that will be carried out under permitted development. We would be grateful if Network Rail could confirm if electrification and Line speed improvements are included in the overall scope of the Transpennine Route Upgrade work which is crucial to the development and growth of the rail network.

Construction

The Combined Authority's delivery colleagues have been working closely with the Network Rail TRU team on the construction programme of Thorpe Park new rail station to maximise the efficiency and benefits of both programmes. The Combined Authority urge the TRU team to continue to work with our delivery colleagues on any design and construction interface issues. It is also important that Network Rail work with the Combined Authority to agree a timetable solution that meets the needs of our passengers.

We note that the Order confirms that any land owned or leased by the Combined Authority is not impacted/subjected to a Compulsory Purchase Order as part of this scheme.

Environment

The Combined Authority welcomes the full electrification of the railway from a climate change perspective.

The Combined Authority would welcome the scheme to consider a methodology similar to the Combined Authority's Carbon Impact Assessments, to quantify carbon emissions sources for transport and non-transport proposals including in operation, additional induced effects and embodied or capital carbon.

Furthermore, the scheme would benefit from providing detail on how it delivers against West Yorkshire's net zero targets, particularly the rail emissions targets in the Carbon Emissions Reduction Pathway report. Additionally, the Combined Authority is interested in the wider impacts/knock-on effects that the upgrade will bring. For example, a consideration of how many cars will be taken off the road. This consideration would be welcome across the entire TRU scheme.

Communication

The Combined Authority already have established governance and meeting arrangement agreed with Network Rail for other areas of our region impacted by TRU and TRU TWAO works. We encourage Network Rail to make use of the existing meetings and governance and if necessary establish further new meetings to work closely with the Combined Authority and the Local Authority to minimise disruptions and impacts on our businesses, public transport users and communities.

It is important that adequate mitigation measures can be in place with a robust communication strategy so that the timing and impact of any disruption can be mitigated and communicated to commuters well in advance.

Working collaboratively with our district partner

We are aware that Leeds City Council have also submitted a response to this consultation and there are a number of areas where further collaboration is required to agree the detail of the scheme, particularly during the construction phases and to understand the extent and timeframe for each construction phase. We are seeking Network Rail to work closely with Leeds City Council to resolve those issues and provide the required details.



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Find out more

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All information correct at time of writing