

## **WEST YORKSHIRE COMBINED AUTHORITY**

### **The Network Rail (Huddersfield to Westtown (Dewsbury) Improvements) Order**

#### **SUMMARY PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF MARK GREGORY**

##### **HUDDERSFIELD BUS STATION IMPACTS**

- 1.1 I am Mark Gregory and I am Head of Assets, Transport and Property Services at the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (the “Combined Authority”). I hold a Master of Science degree in Information Technology in Property and Construction and a postgraduate Diploma in Management Studies. I have held my Royal Charter in Engineering since 2000 and membership of the Institution of Structural Engineers since 1990 (Associate Membership 1990-2000, full member 2000 to date).
- 1.2 I am a Chartered Structural Engineer with 25 years’ experience in the construction industry and a further 15 years’ experience in public service property management at a senior level.
- 1.3 The Combined Authority is the statutory Local Transport Authority (LTA) for the administrative areas of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield Councils and has duties in that regard. In particular, it owns, manages and operates Huddersfield Bus Station (“Bus Station”).
- 1.4 The concerns for the Combined Authority relate to:
  - 1.4.1 the disruption to the public service transport operation both within the Bus Station and the surrounding network and infrastructure, with associated potential major impacts on mobility, economy and business interests in the area; and
  - 1.4.2 the risks associated with the delivery of a major refurbishment project of the Bus Station anticipated in 2023/24.
- 1.5 The Bus Station is one of the busiest bus stations in West Yorkshire with approximately 1000 bus movements per day and approximately 33,000 people per day passing through the Bus Station (in the pre-Covid period). The Bus Station operates as a terminal point for most services in the town and plays a key role in the operation of buses throughout the Kirklees District. Access to the Bus Station throughout any proposed works is important for the travelling public.
- 1.6 A key cause of concern for the Combined Authority is that the Bus Station operates close to capacity and little spare land is available. There is no land which could be lost at the surface of the Bus Station in relation to Network Rail’s Order proposals. The whole area of the Bus Station is needed in order for the Bus Station to operate efficiently. It is therefore very important to the Combined Authority that no land at the surface is permanently acquired by Network Rail.

- 1.7 For buses and vehicular access, there is only one way in to the Bus Station via Henry Street and one-way out via Market Street which must be maintained at all times. Safe access and egress must also be maintained to the Bus Station, tenants' units, Kirklees Council's premises and the multi-story car park at all times.
- 1.8 When the Bus Station refurbishment project is on site, it will be vital to maintain the access and egress points to the construction site and its site compound. A number of negative impacts could arise if the two projects are implemented with overlapping programmes without adequate interaction and agreements between Network Rail and the Combined Authority.
- 1.9 Concept designs are being finalised so further development work will be required with plans needing to be finalised. The delivery of the Bus Station refurbishment project will be subject to the Combined Authority assurance and approval processes. These are the indicative timescales of the Bus Station refurbishment project:
- Submission of the Outline business case: 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021.
  - Completion of the full business case: late 2022 / early 2023.
  - Commencement of construction: early 2023
  - Completion of construction: mid-2024.
- 1.10 The Combined Authority is also concerned about the impacts of the Network Rail works on the on-going provision of bus services to and from the Bus Station. The Bus Station is a major transport hub for the Kirklees and the West Yorkshire region, it is the busiest in the district and operates 363 days per year (except Christmas Day and New Year's Day) between 0500 and 0000 daily. There is extremely limited space and facilities to provide bus stops outside the Bus Station due to the nature of the town centre of Huddersfield. Seventy bus routes are registered to the Bus Station and this works out at peak periods as a bus every 30 seconds or less accessing the Bus Station entrance from Westgate. With such a high frequency of use any disruption could have a significant effect on the provision of bus services.
- 1.11 Railway Street is a major bus/rail interchange and any plans to close the road or restrict it to rail replacement buses would impact on the boarding location for many residents who interchange from rail to bus at this location. The lack of access to this road may also result in buses bunching on other remaining open sections of highway which could result in gridlock at certain junctions due to the volume of diverted buses.
- 1.12 It is crucial that Network Rail consult and agree with the Combined Authority street closures that may impact the provision of bus services and where such impacts are necessary, agrees mitigating measures with the Combined Authority.
- 1.13 The Combined Authority is concerned about the effect of the Network Rail works on its tenants at the Bus Station in terms of damage to their premises and constraints on access which could cause loss to the Combined Authority as landlord and/or a reduction in customer offering at the Bus Station.
- 1.14 The Combined Authority supports the Transpennine Rail Upgrade project but is concerned that the powers requested could significantly impact on both the proposed major refurbishment of the Bus Station and the general operation of this public transport facility if due consideration is not given to the impacts of the proposed scheme. Any loss would result in major implications for the travelling public and

communities including those accessing vital services such as health and educational facilities. The Combined Authority is confident that all these impacts can be successfully managed provided that there is adequate involvement and oversight by the Combined Authority through agreement with Network Rail.