



Department
for Transport

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From the Minister of State
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Dear Kevin,

Thank you for your email of 26 May to Andrew Stephenson, asking about Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) options that have been considered for connecting Manchester and Bradford. I am responding as the new Minister responsible for the project.

The Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) sets out to deliver a 40-mile new high-speed line between Warrington and West Yorkshire via Manchester Piccadilly, connecting to the fully electrified TransPennine Route for services via Huddersfield through to Leeds. This will see journey times between Manchester and Leeds cut to just 33 minutes, down from 55 minutes currently.

Early development of options for NPR assessed a range of other choices for improving the rail corridor between Manchester to Leeds capable of serving Bradford, Huddersfield or both. These included:

- a. a new line from Manchester joining the HS2 eastern leg, with trains able to run north (to Leeds) and south (to Sheffield).
- b. a new line from Manchester to Leeds via Bradford, as proposed by TfN.
- c. a further build on the IRP option, reinstating a link between Huddersfield and Bradford, potentially using sections of the former Pickle Bridge railway line.

I recognise that Bradford is a growing economy with great potential, and the limits placed upon it by current transport connectivity. As noted above, we believe the most pressing transport issue for Bradford is local connectivity with the rest of West Yorkshire. That is why we are delivering improvements to the Calder Valley Line between Bradford and Leeds, slashing journey times to as low as 12 minutes.