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**Leader's Office**

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John Larkinson  
PR13programme director  
[sbp.comments@orr.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:sbp.comments@orr.gsi.gov.uk)

Dear Mr Larkinson

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to comment on Network Rail's strategic business plan for Control Period 5.

Calderdale is a large metropolitan borough with over 200,000 residents, situated on the M62 corridor, equidistant from Leeds and Manchester. We are home to the international headquarters of Lloyds Banking Group and have the highest level of manufacturing employment in the country with 1 in 20 jobs found in this sector. In 2009 both Oxford Economics and Ekosgen stressed the need for Calderdale to develop the resilience of its economy, which is heavily dependent on the financial services and manufacturing sectors. Connecting to employment outside of the borough and attracting inward investment is vital to sustaining and growing our local economy and providing stability for our growing population.

Our landscape in the heart of the south Pennines, while beautiful, greatly limits our ability to expand our highway network. A 2009 study by Steers Davis Gleaves showed that our existing network was at capacity and that future housing and employment growth must be met by better utilisation of our public transport assets. Further work by Arup, commissioned by Calderdale, showed an exigent need for continued investment in rail; to enable the 1.1m people commuting in the corridor to access jobs and; for the districts along the line, including those in Bradford and Rochdale, to deliver their growth aspirations.

Calderdale is well connected to the other key cities in the North of England (Bradford, Leeds and Manchester) via the Calder Valley Cross-Pennine rail line. However, the line is grossly overcrowded and unable to meet latent and future demand; it has suffered from chronic underinvestment in the past which has resulted in poor performance. The line suffers from poor quality rolling stock, slow line speeds, inadequate service patterns and a lack of onward journey opportunities beyond Leeds and Manchester.



The movement of goods and people across the trans-Pennine corridor is critical to the sustainability and growth of business across the North. Northern towns and cities consistently lag in productivity when compared to other regions around the world and suffer disproportionately from unemployment, poverty and speed of economic recovery. Therefore Calderdale Council is keen to see Networks Rail's proposals for the Calder Valley Line implemented as soon as possible.

Calderdale Council welcomes the proposed investment in the Calder Valley line facilitated by the Northern hub project. Direct access to Manchester Airport will benefit all businesses along the Calder Valley line corridor. But this benefit must be realised fully by delivering a regular service which runs throughout the night with an improved Sunday service. It is important that there is further investment in developing links between the High Speed 2 network in Manchester and Leeds so that communities along the Calder Valley line will benefit from this new high speed network, contributing to UK economic competitiveness.

It is important that the capacity uplift provided by Network Rail's strategic business plan is not focussed solely on the trans-Pennine rail line and electrification. The potential for increased patronage on other rail routes such as the Calder Valley line needs to be recognised and needs to be confirmed in the Office of Rail regulators' final determination.

The Integrated Transport Authority for West Yorkshire (Metro) has published its objectives for the West Yorkshire rail network which include doubling rail patronage, improving passenger satisfaction, developing a network that secures better value for money for passengers and tax payers; and exploits the benefits of high speed rail. A Yorkshire rail network study (Phase 2) is currently being developed by Network Rail which includes the Calder Valley Line within its scope. Outputs from this study will require development funds to be spent on developing solutions through the Grip process. One such scheme would be the re-opening of the Wortley Curve which would allow direct access from the Calder Valley line to Wakefield, Sheffield, Nottingham and London slashing journey times and providing new travel opportunities to these destinations for Calder Valley users.

An omission apparent in the Network rail business plan is that of facilities and depots associated with a larger and faster train fleet including the reopening of the Halifax 3<sup>rd</sup> platform. Additional rolling stock will be required to provide greater capacity and new services envisaged as part of Northern Hub and wider plans. There is a need to review capacity at existing facilities to ensure this is not a constraint on developing new services on the Calder Valley Line.

The council also requests that transparent governance arrangements are put in place for the 'small scheme pots' and suggest that these are administered by the proposed North of England devolved rail franchisor.

The Calder Valley line connects 2.5 million residents, 23,000 businesses and 120 multi-nationals to the Leeds and Manchester City regions. The working age population is forecast to grow by 400,000 along this corridor by 2030. Improved accessibility and connectivity is crucial to ensure that Calderdale and other districts such as Bradford, Rochdale and Burnley are competitive.

The poor performance of the line needs to be addressed in Control Period 5 to ensure that it operates to its full potential and the line is electrified at the earliest opportunity to help facilitate sustainable growth for this area of the North of England.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Swift". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with two horizontal lines.

Councillor Tim Swift  
Leader of the Council

*Barry Collins*

Councillor Barry Collins  
Portfolio Holder, Economy and Environment,