

## **Council Meeting**

**29 November 2023**

### **Motion submitted by Councillor Leigh under Council Procedure Rule 14**

#### **Prioritising Electrification of the Calder Valley Railway Line**

##### **This Council notes that:**

- Calder Valley Railway Line (CVRL) plays a crucial role in the public transport system in West Yorkshire, with residents and visitors using it to commute for work and education and leisure.
- Even though CVRL is a key to public transport in the region, it lacks full electrification. The use of diesel-powered trains is not environmentally friendly and reduces its efficiency for residents and visitors
- An efficient, accessible, and affordable rail transport system is the backbone of a successful public transportation network.
- Improving public transport and particular rail is essential to boosting economic growth and reducing inequalities in Calderdale. The Council and West Yorkshire Combined Authority should take inspiration from successful public transportation systems both locally, such as Manchester's Mass Transit System, and globally, with successful transport systems driving economic growth around the world.

##### **This Council Acknowledges that:**

- Trans-Pennine rail infrastructure has been sadly lacking for many years, but thankfully, the go-ahead has been given for the electrification of the TransPennine route (Leeds-Huddersfield-Manchester[Picc]). This development now provides an opportunity for Calderdale to present a stronger and very much more substantial case for the electrification of the CVRL route (Leeds-Bradford-Halifax-Manchester[Victoria]).
- The West Yorkshire Combined Authority has identified the electrification of Calder Valley Rail as a key priority in its Rail Transport Strategy. However, due to previous funding constraints, the Authority has been unable to proceed with the implementation of this project
- The recent cancellation of the northern leg of HS2 came with a promise by the Prime Minister that “every penny of the £40bn saving would be spent” on many other transport projects. This promised major funding now makes the substantial case for the electrification of the CVRL even more compelling – because it is now undoubtedly affordable.
- In our region, the Government investment so far entails £4 billion to improve connectivity in all six Northern City regions, £2.5 billion to improve rural travel, £700 million for enhanced bus services, electrification and upgrades to rail lines,

the reopening of disused train lines to reconnect communities, £1 billion roads package, £3.3 billion road resurfacing fund, £460m for smaller road schemes, £2 bus fare cap extended until the end of 2024, and £2.5 billion for a West Yorkshire mass transit system. It is absolutely essential that the CVRL electrification project should be included, specifically, in this funding package.

**This Council accepts that:**

- This project is of the highest strategic priority to the railway systems in the North of England. Not only will it facilitate faster, smoother and greatly enhanced services, it will also provide rail resilience and reliability to the system and boost economic growth by attracting more businesses and investment to the area and helping Calderdale to achieve its net zero ambitions.
- The TransPennine line, together with the CVRL, will provide all-electric alternative routes for each other. This rail equivalent of orbital motorways (such as the M25 and M60) would provide a solid foundation for further railway developments in the North. This is invaluable if we are to maintain transpennine services in the event of emergencies, essential maintenance, and the worst of the inclement weather which is frequently encountered across the Pennines.
- In our region, businesses and residents have for many years have been crying out for improved East-West links and regional connectivity, and now we have a real prospect of achieving those ambitions.

**This Council resolves:**

- To request the Leader and Chief Executive of the Council to write to the Mayor of West Yorkshire, the Chair of WYCA and the Government's Minister for Transport to designate the Electrification of the CVRL as a project of the highest priority and to include it, specifically, in the investment programme as announced following the recent cancellation of the northern leg of HS2.

**Seconded by Councillor Blagbrough**