

Rt Hon John Healey MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Mark Harper MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London, SW1P 4DR

Our Ref: JW/JH30010
13 December 2023

Dear Mark

RE: Rotherham Mainline Train Station

I'm writing to give my support and backing for the exciting plans by Rotherham Council to bring back mainline train services to our borough with a new mainline train station in Parkgate in my constituency.

I recently met with senior council officers at Rotherham Council in October to discuss this proposal directly with them where it was clear to see the commitment, passion and enthusiasm for this project from the local authority and their ambition to drive our local economic growth. I'm also aware the Council have been working on this project for a number of years and they are currently drawing up the Outline Business Case working closely with our South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority and the Department for Transport. I also understand the Minister of State for Rail visited Rotherham last month to meet with senior council officers to hear these plans directly for himself and I'm pleased to know the Minister made this visit.

It is clear the reintroduction of a mainline train station in Rotherham would greatly strengthen our transport connectivity and support economic growth in our area, both for Rotherham and the wider South Yorkshire region. A mainline station would provide the opportunity for residents to benefit from strengthened local connections through South Yorkshire but with greater national connectivity across the country to cities like Leeds, York, Newcastle in the north and Derby, Birmingham and London to the south – indeed this station would see Rotherham receive direct London services for the first time since the 1980s.

Rotherham Council have already undertaken the work to identify an appropriate site for a mainline station in Parkgate in my constituency. This location is ideally placed to offer the greatest benefits of mainline services close to the town centre but to also offer positive impacts to surrounding areas such as Rawmarsh, Swinton, Wath and other communities in the wider Dearne Valley region.

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The identification of this location of a mainline station in Parkgate has also been chosen to incorporate and link up to the local Tram Train services currently accessed in this area. You will be well aware that the introduction of Tram Train services between Sheffield and Rotherham – the first such service in the country utilising train and tram infrastructure – has been a great and popular success for passengers in our area. The incorporation of a mainline station with the existing Tram Train service would provide a significant station hub and interchange in this location.

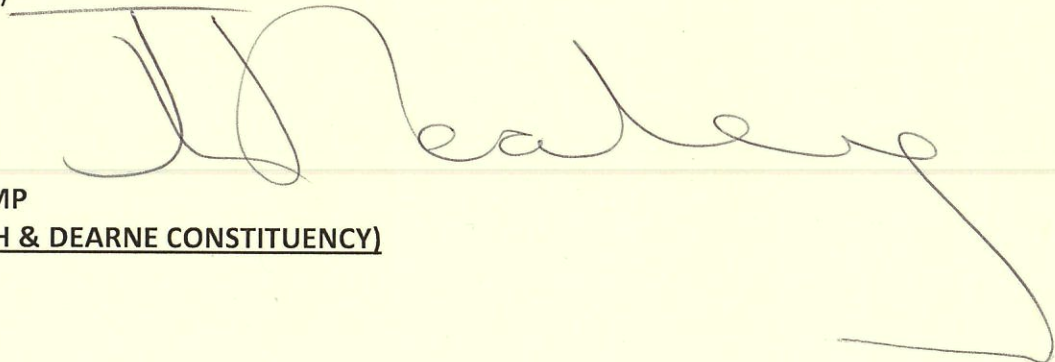
I'm also keen to raise this project with you as Secretary of State as I know this proposal was included in the DfT's Network North document published in October this year. I note this paper states on page 28 under "Our commitment to North" that the Government will take forward a £3billion plan to connect the major cities in the North and this will include: "**b. Upgrade and electrify the line between Sheffield and Leeds.** There is currently 1 fast train per hour taking 40 minutes; these upgrades will enable 3-4 fast trains per hour and include a new mainline station at Rotherham, which could receive direct London services for the first time since the 1980s."

Whilst this recognition from Government of this project for a mainline station in Rotherham is very welcome, it was clear from my discussion with senior officers how there is still some uncertainty on what exactly the funding commitment will be from the DfT and the timescales for this to be given to enable our scheme to be delivered. I'm keen to ensure that our local ambition led by Rotherham Council for our transport and economic growth is matched with the necessary backing and support from central government.

Therefore, I'm writing to both give my support to the plans for a mainline station in Rotherham and to ask for your fullest consideration to back this scheme. It would also be appreciated if you can provide any further information on what funding has been identified for our Rotherham mainline station within the £36billion for Network North, including what the process will be for such funding to be allocated to Rotherham Council and the timeframe for this to take place to enable this much-needed project to be delivered for our area.

Thank you for your consideration of my support for this scheme and I look forward to hearing your response on these exciting plans for a mainline train station and services in Rotherham.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Healey', written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail that extends downwards and to the right.

John Healey MP
(WENTWORTH & DEARNE CONSTITUENCY)