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Dear David,

Thank you for your letter dated 23 October 2019, and apologies for the delayed response.

West Yorkshire Combined Authority sees a reliable, affordable rail network as crucial to the growth of our economy and delivering a more sustainable, inclusive, low carbon future. However, our ambitions are shaped by levels of government investment, the way they fit with the operational restrictions of train companies and our own capacity.

We have over many years worked with the rail industry, the Government and other partners to deliver improvements to rail services across the region. This has included opening three new stations, Apperley Bridge, Kirkstall Forge and Low Moor, since 2015. And another four, at Elland, Leeds Bradford Airport Parkway, White Rose and Thorpe Park, are in development.

We are also working to increase people's access to local train services by investing £30.5 million from the West Yorkshire- plus Transport Fund, to create new and additional parking spaces at 14 West Yorkshire rail stations.

Looking further ahead, we are now in the early stages of developing a new Rail Strategy that will look at ways of improving access to the rail network and potential locations for new stations.

Once identified by the Transport Committee the Combined Authority would need to develop a business case for each proposed location. This includes the level of demand, feasibility of construction and operation and the economic and environmental benefits. Whilst we can relook at Marsh Lane as part of this, previous studies have indicated that stopping trains so close to

Leeds centre creates dis-benefit for existing passengers. Furthermore the track and signalling constraints in this area affect feasibility which would make it difficult to build a business case. In terms of a second city station, we, along with your colleagues at LCC, are very much focussed on improving the existing station. This is both about the station itself through the development of a new masterplan and also about track capacity. The station is subject to a business case that we are developing to seek Government funding and the track-side infrastructure is subject to an ongoing conversation with Government, Network Rail and train operators about what outcomes we want to achieve and then what infrastructure will be needed – including to the east of the station.

The Combined Authority has been developing its initial approach to embedding clean growth, including reducing carbon emissions and tackling climate change. In June 2019, we formally declared a climate emergency and in consultation with partners backed the City Region's ambition to become net zero-carbon by 2038, with significant progress made by 2030.

We have a Clean Growth Action Plan that sets out how we will support growth by growing our regional economy in an inclusive and sustainable way while also cutting greenhouse emissions, including carbon dioxide. To ensure we achieve these ambitions, we will be assessing all new Combined Authority transport schemes for their impact on clean growth and climate change as alongside their potential to support inclusive economic growth.

I hope this information is helpful.

Regards



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