

Executive Summary & BRTA Position

The **British Regional Transport Association (BRTA)** welcomes the launch of the Mayor's Local Transport Plan (LTP) consultation for York and North Yorkshire. For decades, North Yorkshire's transport network has suffered from chronic underinvestment, leaving rural communities isolated and forcing heavy car dependency across key economic corridors.

While BRTA strongly supports the Combined Authority's proposed target to increase public transport usage to 10% and active travel to 40% by 2045, **these targets cannot be met through incremental bus improvements alone.**

Achieving genuine modal shift and a low-carbon transport network requires an ambitious, regional **"Re-Railing and Modal Integration Strategy."**

Key Priorities & Recommendations

1. Protect & Reopen Strategic Rail Corridors (Re-Railing the Region)

Rail forms the natural backbone of sustainable regional transport. To build network resilience, remove operational bottlenecks, and provide a viable alternative to private road vehicles, the LTP must explicitly back the following rail infrastructure enhancements:

Electrification & Upgrade of the York–Scarborough Corridor (Transpennine Extension):

BRTA strongly advocates that the ongoing multi-billion-pound **Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU)** must not terminate at York. Full electrification, track doubling, and signal upgrades should be extended along the **York to Scarborough line**. As BRTA representatives highlighted during our constructive Zoom meeting with **Mayor David Skaith** and **Alison Hume MP** (Scarborough and Whitby), extending TRU electrification to the coast is vital to deliver seamless, zero-emission Transpennine passenger services straight through to East Yorkshire, dramatically improving journey times, capacity, and reliability while eliminating diesel rolling stock from this heavily used corridor.

Complete Double-Tracking & Modernisation of the York–Harrogate Line:

While minor signalling and loop improvements at Cattal delivered localized benefits, the remaining single-track bottlenecks between Knaresborough–Cattal and Hammerton–Poppleton severely limit line capacity, frequency, and resilience. BRTA calls on the Combined Authority to champion the **full redoubling and electrification of the Harrogate to York line**, alongside unpauing the **York Area Capacity Scheme (YACS)** at Skelton Junction.

Removing single-track bottlenecks will enable higher frequency services, eliminate cascading delays into Leeds and York, and support sustainable growth along the A59 corridor.

Upgrading the York–Sheffield Regional Rail Corridor:

While slightly outside the immediate Combined Authority boundary, the **York to Sheffield service** (via Pontefract, Castleford, Moorthorpe, and Rotherham) forms a vital cross-boundary economic spine linking North Yorkshire with South Yorkshire. BRTA urges the Combined Authority to collaborate with the South Yorkshire Mayor to campaign for **line speed enhancements, additional capacity, and electrification** along this route. Modernising this corridor is essential to provide a fast, frequent, and reliable direct rail link between York and Sheffield, taking regional commuters off the congested M1 and A1(M).

Reopening the Skipton–Colne "Missing Link":

The LTP must formally back the reopening of the 12-mile **Skipton to Colne railway line**. Restoring this missing cross-Pennine rail link—working alongside Lancashire and West Yorkshire combined authorities—would establish a vital alternative east-west freight and passenger corridor between East Lancashire and North Yorkshire. It would relieve severe road congestion in Skipton and the Dales, unlock significant economic growth, and provide direct rail access for employment and sustainable tourism.

Protection of Former Trackbeds:

Adopt strict spatial planning policies across North Yorkshire councils to prevent building encroachment on disused rail corridors (including the **York to Beverley** corridor), preserving them for future re-railing.

Wensleydale Railway Link:

Support restoring the through-route for regular passenger and freight operations, linking the East Coast Main Line (ECML) at Northallerton with the Settle–Carlisle Line at Garsdale.

Skipton to Grassington / National Park Access:

Explore reopening or expanding passenger services into the Yorkshire Dales to reduce tourist traffic on fragile National Park roads.

Harrogate to Ripon Link:

Re-examine the feasibility of restoring rail access to Ripon—currently the only city in Yorkshire without a train station.

2. Freight by Rail: Unclogging Trunk Roads

North Yorkshire's road infrastructure suffers heavily from long-distance Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) traffic.

The LTP must include a dedicated **Rail Freight Strategy**, identifying sites for intermodal freight hubs along main lines (e.g., A1(M)/ECML corridors).

Shift heavy aggregate, agricultural, and industrial freight from road to rail to reduce road wear, lower carbon emissions, and improve safety.

3. Seamless Public Transport Integration

Modal shift requires simple, convenient connectivity between transport modes:

Integrated Smart Ticketing: Establish a unified, smart-ticketing system across all rail, bus, and community transport operators throughout York and North Yorkshire.

Timed Rail-Bus Connections: Re-time rural feeder buses to align directly with train arrivals and departures at key hubs (e.g., Northallerton, Skipton, Harrogate, Malton, Selby, and Scarborough).

Station Accessibility & Interchange Hubs: Upgrade stations with secure cycle storage, electric vehicle charge points, clear real-time passenger information, and level step-free accessibility.

4. Protecting and Restoring Rural Bus Networks

Buses serve as vital feeders to the rail network and essential lifeline services for non-drivers in sparse rural communities.

BRTA supports expanding local bus franchising and Enhanced Partnerships to guarantee minimum service frequencies (e.g., standard hourly or bi-hourly services) across rural routes, rather than focusing investment solely on high-density urban corridors.

5. Spatial Planning & Transport Alignment

Ensure future housing and commercial developments across York and North Yorkshire are strictly planned around existing or reopened rail stations and high-frequency bus corridors to prevent lock-in car dependency from the outset.

Conclusion & Offer to Engage

The BRTA commends Mayor David Skaith for identifying that regional transport in York and North Yorkshire requires transformational change. However, high-level vision must be backed by infrastructure restoration. By combining active travel in urban centres with a bold commitment to restoring key regional rail

corridors and integrating rural public transport, York and North Yorkshire can establish a truly sustainable transport network.

BRTA representatives welcome the opportunity to meet with the Combined Authority's transport team or participate in stakeholder workshops during this consultation period.

Submitted on behalf of:

British Regional Transport Association (BRTA) – Northern Branch

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