BRITISH REGIONAL TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION NORTHERN
Consultation Response Submission

To: West Yorkshire Combined Authority (via Your Voice consultation platform)
Subject: Response to Thorpe Park Rail Station Consultation
Date: September 2026

Introduction

The British Regional Transport Association Northern welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation regarding the proposed **Thorpe Park Rail Station**. As an organisation dedicated to the promotion, enhancement, and strategic growth of regional rail and integrated transport networks across the North of England, we recognise the importance of improving local connectivity, supporting sustainable economic development, and expanding passenger access to the rail network.

Below is our formal evaluation and feedback concerning the current proposals.

Key Areas of Support

1. **Strategic Regional Integration:**
   We support the integration of the proposed station into the wider *Weaver Network* and the provision of a direct rail link serving the growing employment, retail, and residential hub at Thorpe Park. A 10–12 minute journey time to Leeds city centre provides a competitive alternative to car travel, supporting regional modal shift targets.
2. **Proactive Futureproofing:**
   We strongly commend the decision to futureproof the station layout for a potential four-track railway and future electrification. Designing infrastructure upfront to accommodate long-term national rail aspirations—thereby avoiding costly retrofits or disruptive reconstruction later—is a prudent use of public capital (£40m) and demonstrates excellent forward-planning.
3. **Sustainable Access & Multi-modal Connectivity:**
   The inclusion of electric vehicle charging points, cycle storage, and a reduced, demand-led 300-space car park reflects a balanced approach that prioritises active travel and public transport interchange while avoiding excessive car-dependency.

Areas of Concern and Recommendations

1. **Impact on East Garforth Station Timetable:**

We note with significant concern that the proposal requires a reduction of **one train per hour in each direction at East Garforth Station** to maintain timetable reliability across the section.

Recommendation: We urge Network Rail and the train operating companies to re-examine scheduling models to see if timetable adjustments or future capacity enhancements can avoid service degradation at existing local stations. Penalising an established community's rail accessibility to fund a new station runs counter to equitable regional transport provision.

2. **Station Amenities and Unstaffed Status:**
   The current proposals indicate that Thorpe Park will open as an **unstaffed station with no ticket office and no public toilet facilities**, relying solely on self-service ticket machines and digital infrastructure.

   Recommendation: Modern stations intended to serve a major commercial and residential workforce should prioritize passenger security, inclusivity, and customer assistance. An unstaffed model with limited amenities risks creating barriers for elderly, disabled, or infrequent passengers. We recommend reviewing staffing models—at least during peak commuting hours—and providing essential welfare facilities.

3. **Bus and Active Travel Integration:**
   While the provision for a rail replacement bus service area and drop-off points is noted, the long-term success of the station depends heavily on high-frequency, integrated local bus feeder services connecting surrounding residential areas (such as Whinmoor, Colton, and Cross Gates) directly to the station interchange.

Conclusion

The British Regional Transport Association Northern supports the principle of the Thorpe Park Rail Station as a vital catalyst for East Leeds economic growth and sustainable travel. However, for this scheme to be a genuine asset to the wider regional network, the Combined Authority and Network Rail must address the local service trade-offs at East Garforth and commit to high standards of passenger accessibility and station facilities.

Submitted on behalf of the British Regional Transport Association Northern.