

Better rail journeys sooner for Leeds, as £161 million upgrade delivered

- rail Minister Wendy Morton visits £161 million upgrade of Leeds Station – the first phase of major improvements set to transform rail journeys
- new tracks, longer platforms and improved reliability will ensure passengers have more seats, more services and more punctual journeys
- upgrade completed following publication of government's £96 billion Integrated Rail Plan – will lead to reduced journey times and transform connections for passengers across Yorkshire

Rail Minister Wendy Morton has today (4 January 2022) hailed the completed Leeds Station upgrades as a major milestone in delivering a modern, fully connected transport hub fit for the future.

Visiting Leeds Station to see the completion of £161 million of upgrade works, the Minister will meet with former apprentices and senior staff of Network Rail responsible for delivering key [upgrades to the Transpennine Route](#).

The visit follows the publication of the [Integrated Rail Plan](#), a £96 billion programme of investment targeted at transforming rail connections across the North and Midlands.

Rail Minister Wendy Morton said:

Leeds station is a major hub right at the heart of the North, not only a gateway to one of the UK's most vibrant and lively cities but a vital transport link enabling people from all over the country to travel for work, pleasure and connect with friends and family.

These upgrades are a huge milestone making these journeys even easier, providing passengers with more seats, more services and more punctual journeys all while building upon our unprecedented Integrated Rail Plan – delivering a modern, fully connected transport hub fit for the future quicker than under previous plans.

Through the unprecedented investment under the Integrated Rail Plan, passengers in Leeds will see dramatic improvements to their journey times, far sooner than under previous proposals.

This includes full electrification to York, and of the Calder Valley line between Bradford and Leeds, cutting journey times to as little as 12 minutes. Our plans for Northern Powerhouse Rail will see services reaching Manchester from Leeds in 33 minutes, a saving of 22 minutes compared to today, and passengers will reach Birmingham 29 minutes faster than at present.

The Integrated Rail Plan has also kickstarted work on the West Yorkshire Mass Transit System, righting the historic wrong that Leeds is the largest city in Western Europe without a mass transit network, and £100 million of development funding is focused on determining the best way to bring HS2 services to Leeds.

Councillor James Lewis, Leader of Leeds City Council, said:

This is an important milestone in our continued ambitions to modernise Leeds' rail connections to make them fit to support what is one of the fastest-growing economies with the busiest railway station in the North of the UK.

These upgrades will improve the passenger experience and are a first step towards beginning to address our capacity issues at Leeds station. We will work with the government to secure a robust strategy for ongoing enhancements to improve connectivity for Leeds that will benefit Yorkshire, the North and the UK.

The upgrades at Leeds Station – one of the country's busiest rail hubs – were finalised by engineers working round the clock over the New Year break.

Paul Tuohy, Chief Executive of Campaign for Better Transport, said:

Expanding and improving the rail network will be key to reducing carbon emissions and helping cities to thrive.

The upgrades at Leeds station will enable more people to travel by rail and make journeys more reliable, an important step towards a greener transport future.

The completion of works has seen the lengthening of platforms, creation of a new Platform 0 and a new concourse delivered, ensuring passengers experience a more modern station with improved connections, longer trains and more seats and services.

The major improvements to tracks will also significantly boost the reliability and punctuality of services entering the station.