

[Press release: Work gets underway on 'Halton Curve' to boost Liverpool City Region, Cheshire and North Wales rail links](#)

Work has started on the 1.5 miles of rail track, known as the 'Halton Curve', that will unlock leisure and business opportunities between the Liverpool City Region, its airport, Cheshire and North Wales.

Leaders and key officials will today (Friday 14th July) be marking the occasion by going track-side onto the 'Curve'.

The Halton Curve scheme, delivered by Network Rail, is bringing back into full use the section of the line that links the Chester/Warrington line and the Liverpool/Crewe line at Frodsham Junction.

Vital upgrades to track and signalling on the curve will enable a new hourly service, in both directions, between Liverpool and Chester, serving Liverpool Lime Street, Liverpool South Parkway (for Liverpool John Lennon Airport) Runcorn, Frodsham and Helsby.

The services, proposed to start running from December 2018, will generate 250,000 new trips, boosting the economy by £100m.

While the service will be initially one train per hour, it's expected that demand would strengthen the case for increased frequency, especially with plans for services to be extended into North Wales – something currently being considered as part of the forthcoming Wales and Borders franchise.

As journeys between the Liverpool City Region, West Cheshire and North Wales are currently largely car dependent, it's expected that the new service would remove the need for 170,000 road journeys helping reduce demand on key routes such as the M56 and A55.

The upgrade forms part of Network Rail's Great North Rail Project which will see over £1bn invested in the railway across the north, as part of the national Railway Upgrade Plan.

This project, due to cost a maximum £18.75m, is being funded through the UK Government's Growth Deal and the Liverpool City Region. It is being developed by the Liverpool City Region (including Halton Council), Cheshire West and Cheshire Council, the Welsh Government and a consortium of the six county authorities in North Wales.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

This is a significant milestone on the way to making travel between

north-west England and north Wales much easier and I am delighted that the UK Government has been able to help make it happen. When completed, the line will improve links between Liverpool and north Wales, providing benefits for businesses, commuters and tourists, and unlocking the potential for economic growth in North Wales

Said Steve Rotheram, Mayor of the Liverpool City Region:

I welcome the spade being put in the ground on a project that has long been an ambition for many. People shouldn't be constrained in their work or leisure opportunities, as there are so many to be had across our City Region, Cheshire and North Wales. These can start to be fully realised through this much needed link.

This isn't a project in isolation but part of the overarching vision for connectivity within the Liverpool City Region and the wider North to join up north-south HS2 rail infrastructure with west-east Northern Powerhouse Rail to Liverpool.

Northern Powerhouse Minister Jake Berry said:

Liverpool was home to the world's first passenger railway, and now the city region is reclaiming its status at the forefront of rail connectivity with the Halton Curve.

The government has invested more than £16m in the Halton Curve, as part of our plans to improve transport across the Northern Powerhouse.

Just as the Northern Powerhouse is a long term government priority, this investment will provide lasting benefits with a predicted £100 million boost to the local economy.

Notes to Editors

Halton Curve is part of a £340m railway investment programme by Network Rail and Liverpool City Region from now until 2019. For more information click [here](#)

- Liverpool City Region Growth Deal Funding

The project has been allocated just over £16m of funding from the Growth Deal. In March 2014 the Liverpool City Region LEP secured a total of £232m of Local Growth Fund from the Growth Plan that was submitted to Government. This Plan outlined an ambitious vision of unlocking the region's potential with the long term goal of achieving economic growth and job creation.

For more information on the Growth Fund, click [here](#)