

Response from WYCA – 21 June 2022

Dear Assistant Town Clerk,

Thank you for your letter regarding a new railway station in Cornholme.

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 constraints of the railway and our own capacity.

The Combined Authority 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 three, at Elland, Leeds Bradford Airport Parkway and Thorpe Park, are in development together with White Rose which is in construction.

Looking further ahead, the Combined Authority is developing a new Rail Strategy that is looking at ways of improving access to the rail network and potential locations for new stations. As you refer to in your letter a new station study in 2014 did consider Cornholme. Two locations were assessed which were unfortunately not recommended for progression through to stage 2 due to very low demand forecasts.

In 2021 a review was carried out, to consider the two Cornholme locations again and whether the underlying factors that led to that recommendation may have changed. The review found that the population catchment of Cornholme remains low and that even with the increase to 2 trains per hour since the Todmorden curve service started, it did not appear that demand levels could have risen sufficiently as to make further consideration justifiable at this stage. Given the significant capital funding requirements for a new rail station it would struggle to generate sufficient demand to support a positive business case and cover operational costs without subsidy.

Following the review and further assessment of potential new station locations across West Yorkshire a revised position on our priorities for further development of new rail stations is emerging which will form part of our new Rail Strategy when it is published later this year. Although it is clear that no proposed locations are free from constraints making them obvious candidates for delivery.

I understand that it will be disappointing to hear that the Combined Authority has no current plan to develop a new station scheme at Cornholme at this time, however, like other potential locations not prioritised we will continue to review it in the future should circumstances change which could affect a business case.

I hope this information is helpful.

Sent on behalf of Rail Policy Coordinator