



Grant Shapps MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

1st March 2021

Dear Grant,

We are writing you about the consultation launched by the Department for Transport on 14th January 2021 on Manchester's rail network. We support the objectives of the review and would go further in seeking much improved services between our two cities. However, we are deeply concerned that two of the three options under consideration would scrap the direct link between Sheffield and Manchester Airport station.

Any review of Manchester services should not be undertaken in isolation but must consider the impact on the wider northern region. Sheffield needs international connectivity to attract inward investment and enable business to improve productivity. The long-established direct rail link is a vital part of that and strongly supported by local business. Removing it would undermine the Government's "levelling up" agenda for cities in the north.

Our world-class universities in Sheffield also rely on this link to recruit international students who are worth more than £200 million a year to our local economy. A key selling point in attracting students is that there is a direct rail connection from campus to airport, and the service is also used by staff and UK students in undertaking work or study abroad.

Furthermore, road connectivity between Sheffield and Manchester Airport is very poor. There is no direct motorway or dual carriageway linking the cities, and journey times are highly variable and weather dependent. The loss of a direct rail connection will drive more road traffic onto already congested trans-Pennine routes.

We would be grateful if you could outline what consideration you have given to these points and urge you to support us in seeking to retain this important direct service.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul Blomfield".

Paul Blomfield MP
Member of Parliament for Sheffield Central



Co-signatories:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clive Betts'.

Clive Betts MP
Member of Parliament for Sheffield South East

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Olivia Blake'.

Olivia Blake MP
Member of Parliament for Sheffield Hallam

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gill Furniss'.

Gill Furniss MP
Member of Parliament for Sheffield Brightside and Hillsborough

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Louise Haigh'.

Louise Haigh MP
Member of Parliament for Sheffield Heeley