

Speech: Government invests in northern transport infrastructure

Good morning ladies and gentlemen.

Thank you for inviting me to speak to this conference today.

I particularly wanted to come and talk to you today because I care deeply about developing and strengthening the north...

And I want to make absolutely clear what this government is doing to modernise, expand and improve transport across the region...

Something that has not been reflected in recent coverage of our plans.

Let me start by saying that I know a bit about transport here in the north west.

I wrote my university dissertation on the first transport improvements in and around Manchester and how they drove the growth of the city.

I did my research in Manchester Central Library after getting the bus in from Worsley each morning. I used to live less than 20 miles from here, under the flight path into and out of the airport.

I have been travelling up and down the M6 since I was 8 weeks old to my family's home area in Lancashire. And while my politics are not red, I do enjoy supporting the red side of this city on a Saturday afternoon.

And let me be clear, I am proud to be Transport Secretary in a government that is in the middle of implementing the biggest transport investment programme in the north west for decades.

Yet in recent weeks you may have read that we spend far more in the south than in the north.

But the figures used were misleading, and certainly do not represent the true picture of investment. They give a very partial view of what is happening.

Let me give you just one example.

One of the most important new transport schemes completed by this government is the new link road between the M6 and Heysham in the north-west, unlocking a part of the economy of north Lancashire which has been held back by poor infrastructure.

It was promoted and secured by two local MPs who sit on the government's benches, David Morris and Eric Ollerenshaw, delivered by Lancashire County Council, but almost entirely funded by this government. Because it was a locally driven project rather than a national scheme, it and scores of

schemes like it weren't counted in the IPPR figures.

But the road is completed and serving the people and businesses of north Lancashire.

The reality is that when you include those centrally funded and locally delivered projects, this government is spending more per head on transport in the north west than we are in the south east. There are regional discrepancies, but they are nothing like those suggested by critics.

And promoting them only serves to misinform the travelling public and risks undermining confidence in the north. That's incredibly frustrating when we're working so hard to overcome decades of underinvestment in the north. What we are actually delivering is somewhat different:

- crucial road schemes completed and underway all across the north
- the biggest upgrade of railways in the north since the steam age
- better road and rail connections to our regional airports, opening up global possibilities for the local economy

Let me start with the roads. Projects completed. Projects being developed on both sides of the Pennines.

- that Heysham link.
- the new link road between the M56 and the M6 near my old home in Cheshire
- the smart motorway schemes, on the key motorways of the north, which includes widening on the M6, the M1, the M60 and the M62
- the A1, a rolling programme of much-needed improvement, next stage about to open
- dualling the rest of the A66 so that we create another proper route across the Pennines to link our great northern cities
- the Mottram Moor Link Road. To help meet that Transpennine challenge
- the road links to the Port of Immingham
- the A5036 Princess Way access to the Port of Liverpool
- the Manchester Airport relief road
- the vital bypass on the A585 at Fleetwood

Part of the biggest road building programme that this region has seen for a very long time.

In the next few months I will be starting work on another dimension of that programme. The Major Road Network, focusing attention on roads of most importance to regional economies...

Significant new investment on local and regional schemes...

Including much needed bypasses to tackle problems in places that have been missed out in the past.

Many of these crucial routes were detrunked between 2001 and 2009 and have received too little investment since.

So I'm determined to address this.

And for those who really believe that our opponents have the smartest approach to transport, let me share one fact with you about roads.

In the 13 years up to 2010, the government of the day cancelled as many road schemes as they actually completed.

We aren't just announcing these projects, we are working nationally and with local authorities to deliver them.

Then there's the trains.

Let me give you one statistic on the topic of the moment, electrification.

And I'll talk a bit about our strategy on that in a moment.

Since 2010 – at a time of financial challenges – we have electrified 4 times as many miles in the north-west alone than the previous government did in the whole of England and Wales in 13 years of office, when the money flowed freely.

And here's the truth on the railways of the north.

This government has launched the biggest modernisation programme of railways in the north since the steam age. An age that started here in the north.

It includes better infrastructure now, new trains, more services, more seats and bold plans to carry on that expansion for the future.

Let's start with those old Pacer trains.

The hideous old noisy trains that were built on the cheap in British Rail days. They have no place on a modern railway. And so they are off to the scrap yard. By the end of 2019, all of them will be cut up for recycling, to be replaced by the kind of modern replacements that this region needs so badly. This isn't a vague promise. It is already happening.

Under the new Northern and Transpennine franchises every single train in the North West- some of the oldest carriages in the country- will be replaced or refurbished.

And there will be more of them, with extra seats and carriages for commuters into Manchester in the rush hour. There will be more services and new services.

Not just here in Greater Manchester, but across the North West.

Trudy Harrison, the new MP for Copeland, excitedly stopped me in the corridor recently when she discovered that the Cumbrian Coast line is going to get a Sunday service for the first time.

Because these are real improvements for people.

Then there are the radical upgrades happening now to some of the oldest train tracks in the world.

We are upgrading Liverpool Lime Street, delivering a new platform, extending two platforms, straightening track and improving signalling to support more train services across the region from 2019.

It is part of a £340 million railway investment programme. A major upgrade which is starting next week with more work to follow next year.

Here in Manchester, the Ordsall chord – a world-class piece of engineering to finally connect Piccadilly and Victoria.

The Victorians didn't do it. We did.

So let's not hear any rhetoric from our opponents about us not caring for Liverpool or Manchester.

In Leeds we are building new stations.

We modernised the Calder Valley line.

We are working on plans for new Metro trains in Newcastle.

Let me say a couple of things about the two issues that created most noise over the summer.

Firstly the expansion of Piccadilly station.

I am limited in what I can say because this is subject to a live planning application. However, I am ambitious for Manchester and its vital connections, not least to the North West and the Airport and I am keen to see Manchester have connections as good as London.

My ambitions for the link for the Piccadilly to Victoria link, and the route through Oxford Road – so vital for the connections between much of the North West and the Airport – are to do more than is currently planned to allow more services through Manchester.

The current plan involves expanding the route to take up to fifteen trains an hour.

But in London the new Thameslink core uses digital technology to take up to 24 trains an hour, on just two tracks with two platforms.

Why does Manchester have to settle for an analogue solution in a digital age? Why does Manchester have to get an old-fashioned solution where London gets state of the art technology?

So I have asked Network Rail to look at better solutions.

Then there's the question of the Transpennine modernisation.

All the talk seems to be about electrification.

And let's be clear. Our programme of electrification is continuing, and soon we will have electrified not three times, but dozens of times more railway than were electrified in the years between 1997 and 2010. That means more electrification in and around Manchester, and looking at electrification as part of passenger improvements across the Pennines.

But people have got to stop only thinking about how a train is powered, and focus instead on getting the best possible improvement for passengers.

And what delivers better journey times is primarily the way you upgrade the tracks and the signalling, and how you invest in trains.

If you take the case of the Midland Main Line, we have an ambitious modernisation plan in place for between now and 2020.

We are adding extra tracks for part of the route. We are putting in place better signalling. We are working on straightening the curves on the route right now, so that trains can run faster. We are buying brand new 125 mile an hour hybrid/bi-mode electric trains for the route. We will electrify those parts of the route where it will make the biggest difference.

And by doing all of that we will reduce the journey time from London to Sheffield by up to 20 minutes in the peak. It will be the biggest set of improvements to journeys on that route since it opened in 1870.

Improvements that passengers can see and feel.

Easier and more comfortable and quicker journeys.

But then if you want to electrify the whole route, every inch of the way, it will cost the taxpayer nearly a billion pounds more than our current plan and it will save one extra minute on the journey time to Sheffield.

Yes that's right. A billion pounds to save one minute.

How many people would think that should be a transport priority for us?

The thing that makes the difference is the arrival of a new generation of bi-mode, hybrid trains. Like hybrid cars they can run on electricity or diesel or for that matter battery or hydrogen. And they switch seamlessly between different technologies. We're bringing these trains to the Great Western mainline to Penzance.

To the East Coast Mainline to Aberdeen. To cross-country routes in East Anglia. Even to the tram system in Birmingham. And to Manchester, to this City, in 2019. Brand new trains running from Liverpool to Hull. On electric tracks where they are present. Using diesel when they are not.

For passengers, it's the train and the timetable that really matters.

So this government will deliver the improved journey times promised. And of course there are plenty of electric tracks for them to run on. We've just completed the electrification between Liverpool and Manchester.

We're electrifying Manchester's suburban railways, because that makes a real difference for commuters. And we are cracking on with the modernisation of the Transpennine railway line.

With straighter tracks. Faster journey times. But it also means that places like Scarborough can have access to the electric trains as well meaning they can keep their direct access to Manchester Airport.

And ask this question. If the trains can run seamlessly in diesel and electric, do we really need to cause disruption and close the Standedge tunnel for weeks to put wires through it, as we did with the Severn Tunnel, if the trains can run through it anyway?

But there's something more.

I am ambitious for the transpennine routes. I want a big increase in transpennine capacity. On roads. And on rail. It's why we are pressing ahead with the A66, and looking for new road corridors.

And it's why I want the modernisation of the transpennine rail route to use the latest technology to maximise its potential for the future.

We're already seeing how digital technology is transforming the London underground. And some metro lines.

Digital technology and digital control rooms mean a more reliable service, an even safer railway, and more capacity for passengers.

With this in mind, I have asked Network Rail to put together a plan setting out how they could embed digital technology in the transpennine upgrade, and I have set aside an initial £5m of development funding to scope this work.

This means that the trans Pennine route could be Britain's first digitally controlled intercity main line railway. My goal is simple.

I want to put the passenger first, and use the newest, best smartest technology to disrupt their lives as little as possible.

To be honest, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have been baffled by the accusations coming from some of our opponents.

They have been telling us that we are doing nothing.

And yet some of those same opponents are sitting at the table with us, in Transport for the North, planning the detail of this modernisation programme.

They co-designed the transformation of Northern and TransPennine.

They help us manage the franchises and the replacement of all those trains.

They are also sitting beside us planning the detail of Northern Powerhouse Rail.

A commitment to the North that was in our manifesto.

I am waiting for TfN to tell us where they believe the priorities for that project lie, so we can begin to plan in detail. That's why I'm surprised to hear some accuse us of doing nothing, while they are a part of the work to deliver transformational and exciting improvements to the North.

Then there's the biggest project of all.

Our commitment to bring HS2 to Manchester.

A project that will join up North and South – but equally importantly will create the opportunity for thousands of extra seats on commuter trains south of Manchester and will help take lorries off our roads and onto the existing railway.

One of the biggest transport infrastructure projects happening anywhere in the world right now, all conceived to help build connectivity in and to the north.

The development of HS2 will create a link between the Midlands and the North unparalleled in the history of our transport system.

But before then we will continue to see the transformation of the road network in the north.

A future that will see the biggest modernisation of rail in the North since the steam age. Not to mention the private sector's ambitious plans for Manchester Airport's new terminal, and ours for more links to an expanded Heathrow. I am very happy to stand up and be counted on our record on transport in the North. Yes there have been decades of underinvestment. Yes things needed to change. Between 1997 and 2010 the transport system of the north stood still. But today there's amazing work going on across Northern transport. Bold, visionary work. Fantastic engineering. But also lots of local upgrades to make everyday journeys better. All backed by unprecedented investment. With northern authorities, northern businesses and northern people working with Government to deliver that vision. I'm proud to be part of that effort. To put transport right at the heart of the Northern Powerhouse.

Thank you.

[News story: Landmark containers move radioactive waste from Harwell, Oxfordshire](#)

The Type B Novapak stainless steel containers were commissioned by the Low

Level Waste Repository (LLWR), near Drigg, as part of its transport services, and will replace an existing fleet of containers for Intermediate Level Waste (ILW).

Each container is intricate to manufacture, requiring:

- 12 welders
- more than 750 welds
- 1,500 items of material

The final containers provide 2 layers of thermal shielding and impact protection.

They will transport the Harwell ILW as well as plutonium-contaminated material (PCM) from the LLWR site to Sellafield for long-term storage.

LLWR's Type B (Novapak) project team members were on hand to witness the historic initial delivery to Sellafield in the first pair of containers, which were manufactured by Cumbrian firm Bendalls Engineering at Carlisle.

Marc Goodwin, LLWR Project Support, said:

This is a key milestone for the NDA estate. The first pair have now returned empty to Harwell, to successfully complete the first full cycle.

The delivery of the second pair to LLWR will signal a re-start of transports by rail of legacy PCM for storage at Sellafield, which had been on hold for over 3 years until the Novapaks became available. Inactive handling trials will start in mid-September, before they enter service.

Alan Jackson, LLWR Programme Manager, said:

It has taken us over 2 years to get to this point, and it has been a huge team effort, involving Sellafield, Magnox Ltd Harwell, ourselves, Bendalls Engineering and the Design Authority Nuvia.

We've had a few issues along the way, but it's the attitude that counts and the team was always been motivated to solve any problems and make progress. They've had a steely determination which was nice to see.

Bendalls won the £multi-million contract to produce six pairs of Novapaks, all of which will be completed and in service by mid-2018. Each package, around 2m³, will be in operation for a minimum of eight years and carry up to four, 200 litre drums of material.

Simon Williams, of Bendalls Engineering, said:

Turning ideas and design into an actual manufactured high specification piece of kit is always a challenge.

By working closely with the LLWR team and the Design Authority, we have together reached this significant milestone and captured a lot of learning and experience that can be applied to the remaining pairs yet to be manufactured.

In addition to supporting manufacture, Nuvia, through commercial arrangements with LLWR, will support the Novapaks' full life cycle operation.

[Find out more about Low Level Waste Repository in Cumbria](#)

[Find out more about radioactive waste in the UK](#)

Press release: CMA clears Cardtronics and DirectCash Payments merger

Both companies supply pay-to-use and free-to-use cashpoints (ATMs) at sites across the UK.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) began investigating the merger in January, referring it for a phase 2 inquiry by an independent group of panel members in May.

This group considered whether the merger would reduce competition and result in higher surcharges at pay-to-use cashpoints.

In their [final report](#), published today, the inquiry group found that the presence of free-to-use ATMs, and the availability of alternative non-cash payment methods, are likely to constrain such surcharges at pay-to-use machines.

The group also found that contracts and relationships with the owners of sites at which ATMs are installed would limit the merged company's incentives to increase surcharges.

There was also evidence that ATM surcharges are not set according to local competition and that the merger would be unlikely to change this.

Alasdair Smith, CMA Inquiry Chair, said:

We've looked carefully at the scope for the merger to result in cashpoint users paying higher charges at pay-to-use ATMs. As part of our in-depth inquiry, we surveyed consumers and spoke to the

owners of a wide range of premises at which these machines are installed.

We've found that the merger does not provide the merged company with an incentive to increase surcharges for people using pay-to-use ATMs, not least because of the increasing use of non-cash payment methods and the decline in the use of pay-to-use ATMs relative to free-to-use ATMs.

The final report has been published on the [case page](#), where all other information relating to the inquiry is available.

Notes for editors

1. The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It is an independent non-ministerial government department with responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and consumer law.
2. The CMA referred the case for in-depth investigation on 15 May 2017. The group published its provisional findings report on 25 August 2017.
3. The members of the inquiry group are: [Alasdair Smith](#) (Chair), [Rosalind Hedley-Miller](#) and [Gavin Robert](#).
4. All the CMA's functions in phase 2 merger inquiries are performed by independent inquiry groups chosen from the CMA's panel members. The appointed inquiry group are the decision-makers on phase 2 inquiries.
5. The CMA's panel members come from a variety of backgrounds, including economics, law, accountancy and business; the membership of an inquiry group usually reflects a mix of expertise and experience.
6. For more information on the CMA see our homepage or follow us on Twitter [@CMAgovuk](#), [Flickr](#) and [LinkedIn](#) and like our [Facebook page](#). Sign up to our [email alerts](#) to receive updates on mergers cases.
7. Media enquiries should be directed to press@cma.gsi.gov.uk or 020 3738 6798.

[News story: Government invests in northern digital railway plans to improve trans-Pennine journeys](#)

The government is developing plans for Britain's first digital intercity railway in the north, Transport Secretary Chris Grayling announced today (22 September 2017) as the government invests a record £13 billion in improving journeys across the region.

As part of the Great North Rail Project, major upgrades are being developed

for the TransPennine route between Manchester, Leeds and York from 2022 – to slash journey times between Leeds and Manchester to 40 minutes.

Digital signalling technology is already in operation on the London Underground, and Network Rail will now develop options to make the TransPennine route the first digitally controlled intercity rail line in the country.

Network Rail will receive up to £5 million to develop proposals for embedding digital technology between Manchester and York, to help us deliver a more reliable and safer railway. This includes looking at a system of advanced train traffic management – so that a computer works out how to route the trains most efficiently along the line.

This government has launched the biggest modernisation programme of railways in the north since the steam age – and we are investing £40 billion in our network across the country.

The government is also bringing HS2 – Britain's new railway – to the north, the Pacer trains are being scrapped by the end of 2019 and major investment in motorways is also underway across the region.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

We are about to see a digital revolution in our railways, and we want the north to lead the way.

New technology on the Manchester to York route will help us deliver a more reliable and safer railway, with more space for passengers.

Travel will be transformed across the north as we invest £13 billion to improve journeys, expand our motorways, scrap the outdated Pacer trains, and spend £55 billion on HS2 to cut journey times between our great northern cities.

Developing proposals for digital-control on the TransPennine route is to be paid for from a £450 million digital railway fund announced by the Chancellor in the [Autumn Statement](#) last year.

On the London Underground 3 lines already have in-cab signalling, which has meant trains can safely run closer together.

Also in the capital, the Thameslink programme will use digital technologies so 24 trains per hour can run through the centre of the city from December 2018 on just 2 tracks with 2 platforms. Crossrail trains will also run with in-cab signalling.

Work to deliver improvements to the TransPennine railway line have already begun.

The Great North Rail Project has already delivered improved services between

Liverpool and Manchester, with the fastest journey cut by 15 minutes, new direct services between Manchester Airport and Glasgow, and the upgrade of Manchester Victoria station.

The government is working with Rail North and councils across the region on the project, and Network Rail is working on plans for the upgrade.

The government is also investing £55 billion in HS2 which will slash journey times between Leeds and Birmingham to 57 minutes from 1 hour 58 minutes today. Journeys between Manchester and London will be reduced to 1 hour and 8 minutes from 2 hours and 8 minutes today.

All of the Pacer trains which run on Northern trains will be phased out by the end of 2019 and sent to the scrapyard, as the government delivers a 21st century revolution to transport.

Press release: Bazalgette review sets recommendations for continued growth of UK's Creative Industries

The [review](#) commissioned by the government and led by the current Chair of ITV Sir Peter Bazalgette, outlines key recommendations for how the Creative Industries can underpin the UK's future economic growth. It highlights how the sector is continuing to outperform other sectors in terms of employment, having already grown 300,000 jobs between 2011 and 2015.

The review makes a number of recommendations on how government and the Creative Industries can work together to remove barriers to growth. It spans issues from access to finance, intellectual property, trade and creative clusters – areas with high concentrations of ambitious companies who will drive regional growth.

Culture Secretary Karen Bradley said:

The UK's Creative Industries are an economic powerhouse and the government is committed to removing the barriers to its growth.

The key challenge now is turning these ideas into a strong partnership, which is credible and has buy-in from both government and industry.

I encourage the sector to do what it does best – think creatively and work with us on achieving a compelling and ambitious deal that allows the UK Creative Industries to continue to thrive.

Other asks include a strategy to attract and develop young talent to make the Creative Industries more accessible, including a careers programme for secondary schools and expanding the UK's network of Saturday Clubs.

The review's recommendations will now be considered carefully by the Government as part of its [Industrial Strategy](#) and used to inform work towards a sector deal in the coming months. In response the Government has already announced the opening of the £80 million Creative Industries Clusters Programme competition, led by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

The UK's booming Creative Industries contribute nearly £90 billion to the economy and employ more than two million people.

The review unveiled today demonstrates our world-class talent and expertise in these areas and reflects the industry's vision for how we build on these strengths, now and in the future. We are grateful to Sir Peter Bazalgette for his excellent work. We will be working with him in the coming months towards a sector deal that helps us grasp the opportunities ahead.

The £80 million Creative Industries Clusters Programme being launched today will deliver a further boost to our creative industries, help spread prosperity and grow the creative skills base across the UK.

This funding means that from today, eight areas of the country will be able to establish creative Research and Development (R&D) Partnerships between universities and businesses. The Programme, which is supported by £39 million from the [Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund](#) and matched by industry, will help catalyse economic growth and provide the skills needed for the jobs of the future and respond to challenges identified by the creative industries in their cluster.

And a new Policy and Evidence Centre will help fill the gaps in our understanding of the creative industries – from the full value of their economic contribution to how they compare internationally.

Sir Peter Bazalgette said:

In every scenario the Creative Industries are set to be of central importance to the UK's future success. We have two great assets: the English language and our creativity, but the skills and business models of this sector are of increasing importance.

My report recommends simple ways of maximising the potential of this crucial sector which I'd like to see become part of the government's developing Industrial Strategy.

I urge government to ensure the final strategy is based on a fundamental understanding of what these industries need to thrive.

Nicola Mendelsohn, Vice President for Europe, the Middle East and Africa at Facebook and chair of the Creative Industries Council, said:

On behalf of the Creative Industries Council, I welcome Sir Peter Balzalgette's report, which makes clear how vital our industries are to the economy of the 21st century, and frames an exciting ambition for growth and jobs over the next decade.

Sir Peter has identified some important priorities for action: we strongly share his desire to promote innovation, intellectual property and access to finance for growing creative enterprises; to support growth in international trade and creative clusters around the UK; and to secure the pipeline of diverse talent which our industries need in order to thrive.

The Council looks forward to working with Government, and all parts of the industry, over the coming weeks in order to secure a Sector Deal which builds on Sir Peter's review and cements the UK's position at the heart of a thriving global creative economy.

John Kampfner, CEO of Creative Industries Federation said:

The Federation welcomes Sir Peter Bazalgette's review and the growing acknowledgement by government that the creative industries are an essential part of the country's future growth. We are also pleased to see that many of the recommendations the Federation and our membership submitted to the review have been reflected within it.

Building the pipeline of talent to supply the creative workforce is crucial to ensure the continued success of the sector – the fastest growing of the UK economy worth £87bn. That is why the Federation particularly welcomes the initiatives around skills including our idea for a Creative Careers Campaign within the Bazalgette review.

Sir Peter was commissioned to undertake the review by Culture Secretary Karen Bradley and Business Secretary Greg Clark following the Government's Industrial Strategy Green Paper in January.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

- The review's findings show the industry played a key role in the UK's economic recovery. It contributed £87.4 billion in GVA in 2015, 5.3% of

the UK economy (comparable to the Construction or Information sectors) and between 2010 and 2015 grew by 34% – faster than any other sector.

- It also outperformed other sectors in terms of employment growth: between 2011 and 2015, employment in the sector increased by 19.5% (circa 300,000 jobs) compared to 6.3% average across the wider UK. The sector is also a net exporter of services (£11.1bn surplus in 2014).
- The report also finds that creative occupations, which make up a high proportion of Creative Industries jobs, are highly resistant to automation with 87% of creative workers in the UK at low or no risk, meaning their share of the workforce is likely to rise steadily in coming years.
- Sir Peter Bazalgette is Chairman of ITV and Chair of HM Government's Holocaust Memorial Foundation. He serves on the Advisory Boards of BBH and YouGov and is currently Chair of the Baillie Gifford Non-Fiction Book Prize. From 2013 until 2017 he was Chair of Arts Council England. He is also a former Non-Executive Director of the DCMS.