



25 November 2016

Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP
Secretary of State
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Our Ref: AG/GUES01001/01160848

Your Ref:

Dear Chris

I am writing to you regarding reports that the Rotherham-Sheffield Tram-Train link, which had originally been scheduled to enter service in 2015 has again been delayed and will likely not be operational until 2018.

It is deeply concerning that an important infrastructure project for South Yorkshire has been subject to repeated delays. I am deeply disappointed that the Government have been unable to deliver this relatively modestly budgeted scheme on time.

The 2015 target date has been delayed again and again. Whilst reports suggest a new target of summer 2018 for services to begin, past experience suggests that even this target may in fact not be met.

South Yorkshire has faced repeated disappointments with transport infrastructure projects. Uncertainty still surrounds the electrification of the Midland Mainline and the Government has recently announced that its preferred route for HS2 no longer includes a dedicated station in South Yorkshire, instead relying upon a low-speed spur to Sheffield City Centre. This decision is against the objection of every local authority in South Yorkshire, with the exception of Sheffield City Council.

Sarah Champion

Member of Parliament for Rotherham

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I am concerned that South Yorkshire, which has huge potential as a hub of technology, industry and innovation, risks being left behind due to the Government's abject failure to deliver even modest improvements to our transport network.

The tram-train link was supposed to deliver greener, quicker and more efficient travel between South Yorkshire communities. Instead, we continue to rely on a slow, overcrowded public transport network. For many in South Yorkshire, it remains wholly impractical to commute in any other way than by road.

If the Government remains serious about creating a Northern Powerhouse, as it claims to be, infrastructure projects such as tram-train must be pursued with the same energy, commitment and resources as they are in London. Yet again and again, the North is treated as second class.

I would urge you to do everything that you can to ensure that Network Rail delivers the necessary track improvements without further delay.

I would also encourage the Government to recognise the need for investment in South Yorkshire's public transport and to commit to delivering a 21st century network that will truly enable the region to reach its economic potential.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'S' followed by a long horizontal stroke that curves upwards at the end.

Sarah Champion MP
Member of Parliament for Rotherham