

Ms Tracy Brabin, Mayor of West Yorkshire

cc Rt Hon Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester
Mr Oliver Coppard, Mayor of South Yorkshire
Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe, Leader of Bradford MDC
Mr Steve Rotheram, Metro Mayor of Liverpool City Region
Lord Ben Houchen, Tees Valley Mayor
Ms Kim McGuinness, North-East Mayor
Mr David Skaith, Mayor of York and North Yorkshire

High Speed UK
Connecting the Nation

www.highspeeduk.co.uk

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10th September 2024

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Dear Mayor Brabin,

We write in respect of our response to West Yorkshire Combined Authority's Consultation on Phase 1 proposals for West Yorkshire Mass Transit, submitted on 4th September 2024. We refer also to our communications to yourself dated 03/09/23, 20/05/24, 18/06/24 and 05/09/24; we would respectfully note that we have yet to receive a substantive response to any of these communications, and accordingly we attach repeat copies for your personal attention.

We submitted our Consultation response, on behalf of High Speed UK and the Network North¹ Partnership, in accordance with the format laid out on the WYCA website. We note that the on-line format precluded submission of the diagrams (WY1 & WY2) that we had prepared, to inform our response. We have therefore included these diagrams (both annotated versions of WYCA diagrams) with a written version of our submission, which we have attached to this message. We would be grateful if you could pass this information on to the officers within West Yorkshire Combined Authority who are responsible for collating public responses.

As noted in our response, we are generally supportive of WYCA's initiative for a future West Yorkshire Mass Transit System. However, as our response notes, this 'light rail' system cannot be planned in isolation from the existing 'heavy rail' network. The ultimate objective must be a multi-modal network comprising heavy rail, light rail, bus etc, offering the greatest possible improvement in connectivity and capacity; this demands full integration of all modes, to achieve the most cost-effective and best-connected design.

We are therefore concerned at the plans for the 'Bradford Line' that have been put forward for consultation. This route essentially duplicates the existing Leeds-New Pudsey-Bradford line, and we believe that it would be much more efficient and equitable to develop this line as a mass transit/urban metro route. This would comprise electrification, increased train frequencies and close-spaced stations to serve the densely-packed intermediate communities of Armley, Bramley, Stanningley, Pudsey and Laisterdyke; this would provide levels of service at least equivalent to the West Yorkshire Mass Transit proposals currently under consultation. Mass transit/light rail development could then be focused upon other corridors where no heavy rail line presently exists.

Such an approach is not possible under the present development philosophy, whereby the existing heavy rail network is left effectively in stasis, while all new-build investment is devoted to mass transit/light rail. No attempt is made to address:

- critical gaps in the existing network, in particular the historic disconnect between Bradford's two terminus stations;
- critical congestion in the existing network, in particular at and around Leeds City Station.

¹ Please note also that 'Network North' should not be confused with erroneously-titled Government transport proposals of the same name, announced in October 2023. By contrast, our 'Network North' scheme, long pre-dating the Government's 'Network North' initiative, has been developed completely independent of HS2, to diametrically opposite principles of full integration, network optimisation, and modular configuration.

We would note that we identified this clear 'silo approach' in the HSUK/Network North response in respect of last year's Consultation upon WYCA's Rail Strategy; this was communicated to you in our letter dated 03/09/23, as noted above. We would strongly commend this response to your reading. It described the major connectivity advantages that our alternative, fully integrated network design philosophy would bring to the entire West Yorkshire network, and specifically to Leeds and Bradford, and to the routes linking the two cities.

Our alternative Network North proposals for the West Yorkshire network are set out in Diagrams **I12A**, **I12B** and **I03J**, included in Appendix C:

- Diagram **I12A** sets out an integrated suite of interventions, including a new cross-Bradford route linking Interchange and Forster Square stations and a reopened Spen Valley route, designed to transform the railway network around Leeds and Bradford. Amongst many other advantages, these interventions will enable regional 'Calder Valley' services to be rerouted through central Bradford, and to approach Leeds via the Aire Valley line. This will in turn allow the New Pudsey line to be devoted to an 'urban metro' operation, with close-spaced stations and frequent services. As noted previously, new stations are proposed at Southern Gateway, Laisterdyke, Stanningley, Gamble Hill, Swallow Hill and Armley to complement the existing New Pudsey and Bramley stations.
- Diagram **I12B** illustrates potential Network North local services that could operate with the above interventions in place. Across the West Yorkshire network, it would represent an approximate doubling of local services; along the New Pudsey corridor, we envisage 6 train per hour, with services continuing beyond Bradford to potential destinations such as Skipton, Ilkley and the Spen Valley. This diagram also shows potential light rail/mass transit routes, generally aligned along corridors not served by heavy rail routes.
- Diagram **I03J** illustrates in schematic form planned Network North services interlinking the principal cities of the Northern Powerhouse, and offering intercity journey times fully compliant with the specification established by Transport for the North (it is significant to note that TfN's own Northern Powerhouse Rail proposals fail most requirements of this same specification). These services, and these journey times, are only possible with the step-change capacity gains achieved through the same HSUK/Network North interventions set out in Diagram **I12A**. These interventions are designed to create independent routes for intercity traffic through major cities, and in Leeds, it is proposed to reopen the abandoned Farnley Viaduct as the new southern 'high speed' access route to Leeds City Station; we have noted in our Consultation response (Items Q1.10 & Q2.7) that proposed WY Mass Transit Options B2 and L7 appear also to follow the same viaduct route, and are therefore in conflict with the HSUK/Network North scheme for an optimised Northern Powerhouse intercity network.

We are sure you would agree that the people of West Yorkshire deserve not any public transport system, but the best possible system, offering the greatest possible improvement in connectivity and capacity; and we are sure you would also agree that all major transport initiatives should be properly coordinated and integrated, to ensure the greatest possible benefit.

To this end we believe it vital that we meet, and present our alternative proposals to you.

Yours sincerely

Colin Elliff BSc CEng MICE, Civil Engineering Principal, High Speed UK

APPENDIX A

HSUK Response to WYMTS Phase 1 Consultation

Response submitted on-line 4th September 2024, referenced to CSE letter to West Yorkshire Mayor Tracy Brabin dated 10th September 2024.

Copy of substantive elements of response in blue below. Responses re race, religion etc omitted.

Additional notes (see Item Q2.7) re Option B2 included in 10/09/24 version in red type. Note that the on-line format did not permit a full answer to be provided to Item ORG.1.

Q0.1 What is your postcode?

HG2 9DQ

Q0.2 How are you responding to this survey?

Responding on behalf of an organisation

ORG.01 Please tell us which business or organisation you are responding on behalf of?

High Speed UK / Network North Partnership

ORG.02 What is your position in this organisation?

Colin Elliff, Civil Engineering Principal

ORG.1 Does your organisation have a connection with the places on, or close to the Leeds Line? If so, please describe

HSUK has no specific connection with Leeds. However, HSUK has a broader interest in rail network development in the Northern Powerhouse. *(No further space in on-line form. Text continues...)*

The HSUK/Network North collective of experienced railway engineers and operators has designed 'Network North', a suite of railway new-build, upgrading and restoration schemes aimed at transforming the rail network of the Northern Powerhouse in full accordance with the intercity journey time and service specification published by Transport for the North. For further details please refer to www.highspeeduk.co.uk.

Q1.4 To what extent do you support or oppose connecting St James's University Hospital and White Rose Shopping Centre via Leeds city centre by Mass Transit?

Tend to oppose L1, L2, L3 & L4

Q1.4.1 Please explain the reasons for your answer

There is nothing wrong in principle with the idea of a mass transit line connecting St James University Hospital (SJUH) and the White Rose Shopping Centre (WRSC), as part of a wider West Yorkshire mass transit system (WYMTS). However, the WYMTS provides no information to explain:

- a) how this specific proposal, and all of its routing sub-options set out in Diagram **WY1** and Section 1.6, fit into the overall WYMTS development strategy.
- b) how WYMTS fits into a broader rail-based (i.e. 'light' and 'heavy' rail) strategy to optimise inter-urban connectivity in West Yorkshire.

It is noted that this on-line response format does not allow the submission of diagrams. Diagram **WY1** will therefore be posted as part of Document W12 on www.highspeeduk.co.uk.

Q1.5 Are there any other features or factors that you believe should be taken into account for the Leeds Line: Leeds city centre section between St James's University Hospital and the River Aire at Victoria Bridge?

The concept of a single mass transit route through Leeds city centre, from Victoria Bridge in the south-west, to SJUH in the north-east, seems inadequate to connect all of the central locations highlighted in Diagram **WY1**. The proposed routes (L1, L2 or L3), generally running from SW to NW to NE, are plainly unable to provide adequate links to Leeds Bus Station and (Route L4 excepted) to the Cultural Quarter. Instead, the concept of a Central Loop should be developed, to form the hub of a series of 'spoke' routes extending to the outer suburbs. This is illustrated in the attached Diagram **WY1** as Route L5, to be complementary to Routes L1, L2 or L3.

It is noted that this on-line response format does not allow the submission of diagrams. Diagram **WY1** will therefore be posted as part of Document W12 on www.highspeeduk.co.uk.

Q1.6 To what extent do you support or oppose the route options for the Leeds Line: Leeds city centre section between St James's University Hospital and the River Aire at Victoria Bridge?

Tend to oppose L1, L2, L3 & L4

Q1.7 Please explain the reasons for your views on the route options:

See response to Item Q1.5

Q1.8 Are there any other features or factors that you believe should be taken into account for the Leeds Line: South Leeds section between the south of the River Aire and White Rose Shopping Centre?

The value of a mass transit route, extending from the centre of Leeds (i.e. one shopping centre) to another (i.e. the White Rose Shopping Centre) must be questioned. It is surely preferable for mass transit to serve the greatest possible population, connecting them from where they live to where they work or shop. In this context, a preferable southern destination might be Middleton/Belle Isle, also compatible with an onward mass transit route towards Dewsbury.

Q1.9 To what extent do you support or oppose the route options for the Leeds Line: South Leeds section between the south of the River Aire and the White Rose Shopping Centre?

Tend to oppose L5 & L6, oppose L7.

Q1.10 Please explain the reasons for your views on the route options

See response to 1.8.

Re Option L7, HSUK notes that the proposed route appears to utilise part of the abandoned Farnley Viaduct in the Holbeck area. This viaduct comprises an essential element of the Network North system of intercity routes interlinking the principal cities of the Northern Powerhouse – the only scheme that fully delivers on TfN's specification for intercity journey times.

ORG.2 Does your organisation have a connection with the places on, or close to, the Bradford Line? If so, please describe

HSUK has no specific connection with Bradford. However, HSUK has a broader interest in rail network development in the Northern Powerhouse.

The HSUK/Network North collective of experienced railway engineers and operators has designed 'Network North', a suite of railway new-build, upgrading and restoration schemes aimed at transforming the rail network of the Northern Powerhouse in full accordance with the intercity journey time and service specification published by Transport for the North. For further details please refer to www.highspeeduk.co.uk.

Q2.4 To what extent do you support or oppose connecting Bradford city centre and Leeds city centre by Mass Transit?

Oppose

Q2.4.1 Please explain the reasons for your answer:

The 'Bradford Line' options B1, B2 and B3 as presented for this Consultation have been developed as a 'stand-alone' initiative, without the necessary consideration of how necessary improvements along the 'A647 corridor' linking Bradford-Pudsey-Leeds might be achieved through proper integration with wider upgrades of the existing 'heavy rail' network.

With the Bradford Interchange – New Pudsey – Bramley – Leeds line already in place along the A647 corridor, it must be questioned:

- a) whether the addition of a new mass transit (or any form of light rail) route along the same corridor is the most appropriate public transport intervention.
- b) whether the existing Bradford-New Pudsey-Leeds line could be developed, with additional stations, additional tracks and increased train frequencies, to offer a 'metro' level of service equivalent to that envisaged under the WYMTS initiative.
- c) whether a mass transit route could be more usefully introduced along another corridor not duplicated by an existing rail route – for instance westwards from central Bradford to Queensbury.

This alternative philosophy is embodied in the Network North proposals for the lines linking Bradford and Leeds, as illustrated in Diagram **WY2**:

- 1) New cross-Bradford link, connecting networks to north and south of city.
- 2) Spenn Valley line via Cleckheaton restored as southern intercity access to Bradford.
- 3) No need for transpennine regional and local services via Calder Valley to reverse at Bradford Interchange and continue to Leeds via New Pudsey – instead, continue to Leeds via Shipley and Aire Valley.
- 4) New Pudsey line developed as 'metro' route with additional stations and higher frequencies.
- 5) Services extend beyond Bradford to Ilkley, Skipton and via restored Hammerton Chord to Low Moor and Spenn Valley.

It is noted that this on-line response format does not allow the submission of diagrams. Diagram **WY2** will therefore be posted as part of Document W12 on www.highspeeduk.co.uk.

Q2.5 Are there any other features or factors that you believe should be taken into account for the Bradford Line between Bradford city centre and Leeds city centre?

As noted in Item Q2.4.1, HSUK believes that a stand-alone mass transit/light rail line along the A647 Leeds-Pudsey-Bradford corridor is not an appropriate public transport intervention. Far better outcomes can be achieved if mass transit/light rail initiatives are developed to integrate with and complement strategic developments of the existing heavy rail network.

Q2.6 To what extent do you support or oppose the route options for the Bradford Line between Bradford city centre and Leeds city centre?

Oppose B1, B2 & B3

Q2.7 Please explain the reasons for your views on the route options:

See Items Q2.4.1 and Q2.5 above.

As per Item Q1.10 concerning Option L7, HSUK notes that the proposed route for Option B2 appears to utilise part of the abandoned Farnley Viaduct in the Holbeck area. This viaduct comprises an essential element of the Network North system of intercity routes interlinking the principal cities of the Northern Powerhouse – the only scheme that fully delivers on TfN's specification for intercity journey times.

Q3.1 Do you have any further comments about the phase one Mass Transit proposals? If so, please explain below:

While a West Yorkshire Mass Transit System will undoubtedly bring major benefits to the people of West Yorkshire, it is crucial that this system is developed in a holistic manner, fully integrated with parallel developments to the existing 'heavy rail' system (and other public and personal transport initiatives). This integrated, network-wide approach is essential to deliver maximum connectivity benefits and achieve greatest possible value for money.

The HSUK/Network North proposals described in this submission provide the perfect exemplar of this more integrated approach. Further details can be found on www.highspeeduk.co.uk, and particular reference should be made to documents I03, J03 and K03.

Q4.1 To what extent do you agree that our Mass Transit proposals will improve the opportunities for placemaking?

No comment (neither agree nor disagree)

Q4.2 Do you have any other suggestions for ways that we could improve places along the routes as part of our placemaking plans? If so, please describe them below:

'Placemaking' should only be considered when the transport proposal in question is properly optimised in terms of its network performance and the connectivity achieved. Currently, this does not appear to be the case.

Q5.1 Which of the following outcomes are most important to you for West Yorkshire Mass Transit phase one to achieve?

The most important outcome for West Yorkshire is a properly integrated and optimised public transport system in which mass transit/light rail, heavy rail, bus transport, walking and cycling all play their proper part. As noted previously, HSUK would observe that currently, there is little sign of the necessary integration and optimisation actually happening.

Q6.1 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the approach to sustainability for Mass Transit set out in the Sustainability Strategy?

Tend to disagree

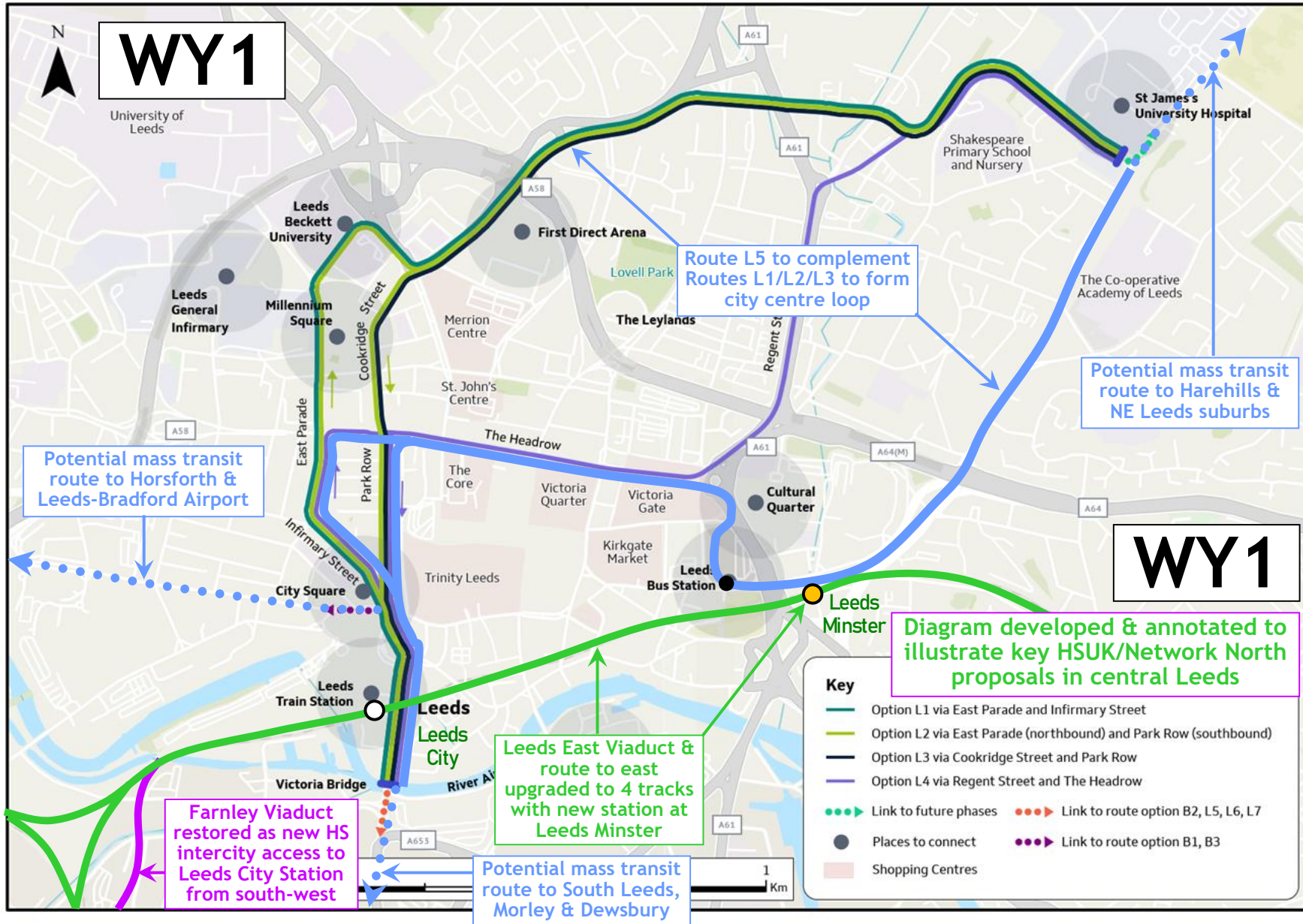
Q6.1.1 Please explain the reasons for your answer:

Without the necessary rigorous and professional technical approach to achieving an integrated and optimised public transport network across West Yorkshire – surely the fundamental aim of the proposed West Yorkshire Mass Transit System – there is little if any point in developing a Sustainability Strategy.

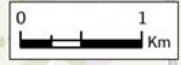
Q6.2 The Sustainability Strategy sets out a series of priority outcomes for Mass Transit. How important is it to you that Mass Transit achieves each of the following?

Noting the above, all outcomes deemed 'neither important nor unimportant'

APPENDIX B : DRAWINGS REFERENCED IN HSUK CONSULTATION RESPONSE



WY2



New cross-city link & new Bradford Central 'through' station eliminating reversal in Bradford & allowing rerouting of Calder Valley services via Shipley & Aire Valley

Potential mass transit route linking Queensbury-Bradford-LBA Airport

New cross-city link enabling Leeds-New Pudsey-Skipton/Ilkley through services

Potential mass transit route linking Leeds-Horsforth-LBA Airport

Mass transit routes in central Leeds not illustrated

Leeds-New Pudsey-Bradford Interchange line upgraded & electrified, with ~9 intermediate stations

Farnley Viaduct restored as new HS intercity access to Leeds City Station from south-west

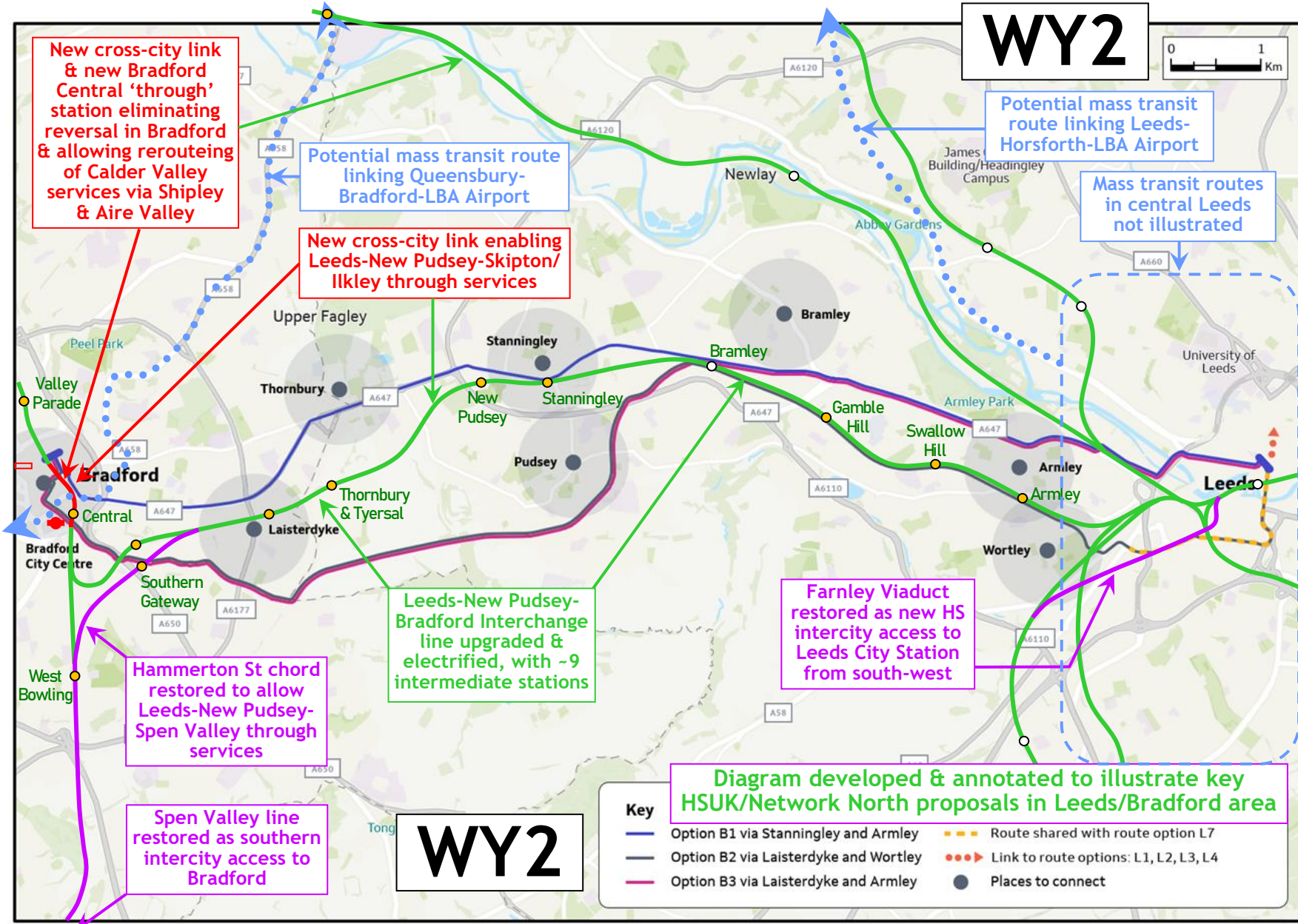
Hammerton St chord restored to allow Leeds-New Pudsey-Spen Valley through services

Spen Valley line restored as southern intercity access to Bradford

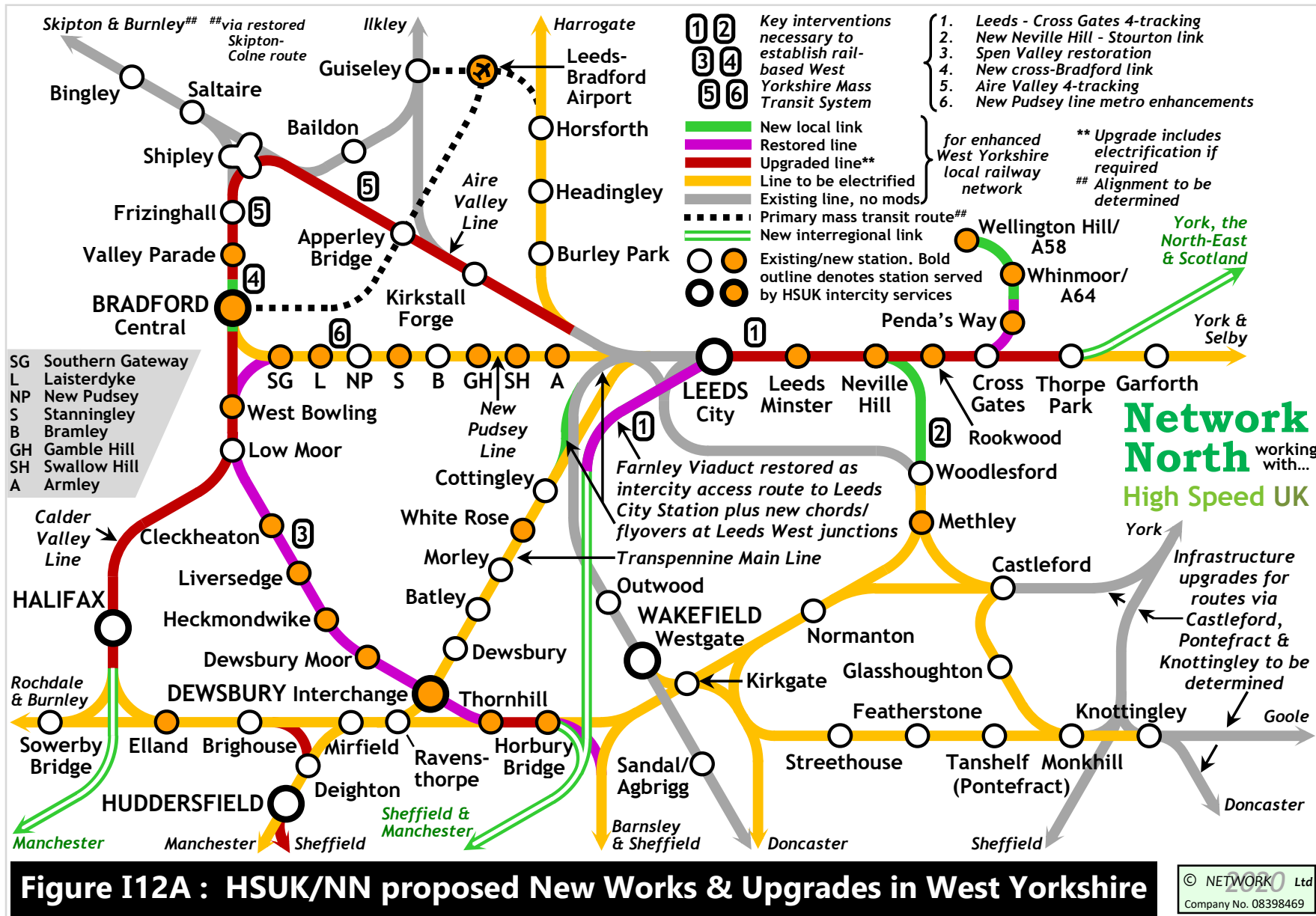
WY2

Diagram developed & annotated to illustrate key HSUK/Network North proposals in Leeds/Bradford area

- Key**
- Option B1 via Stanningley and Armley
 - Option B2 via Laisterdyke and Wortley
 - Option B3 via Laisterdyke and Armley
 - Route shared with route option L7
 - Link to route options: L1, L2, L3, L4
 - Places to connect



APPENDIX C : DRAWINGS ILLUSTRATING HSUK/NETWORK NORTH PROPOSALS IN WEST YORKSHIRE



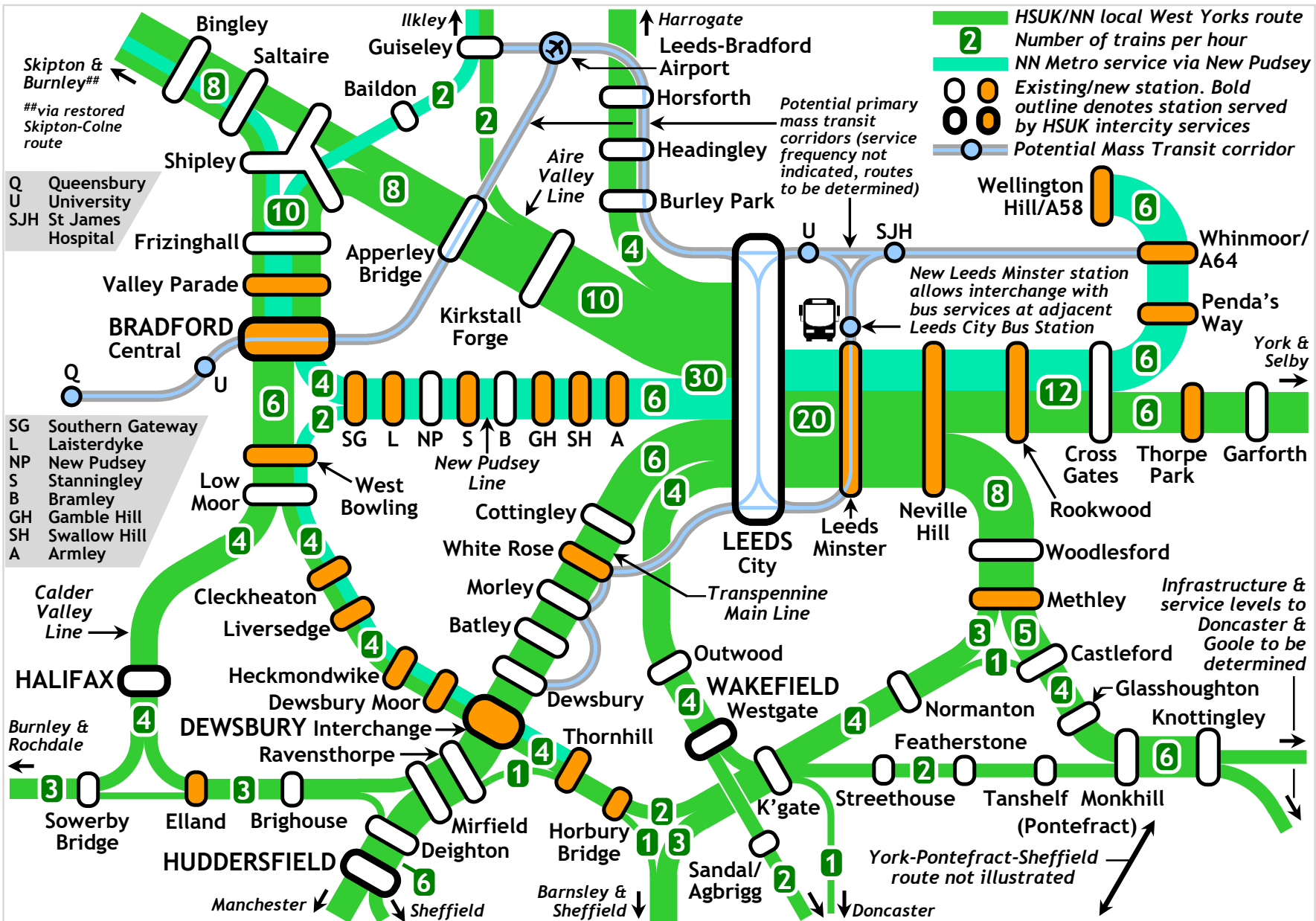
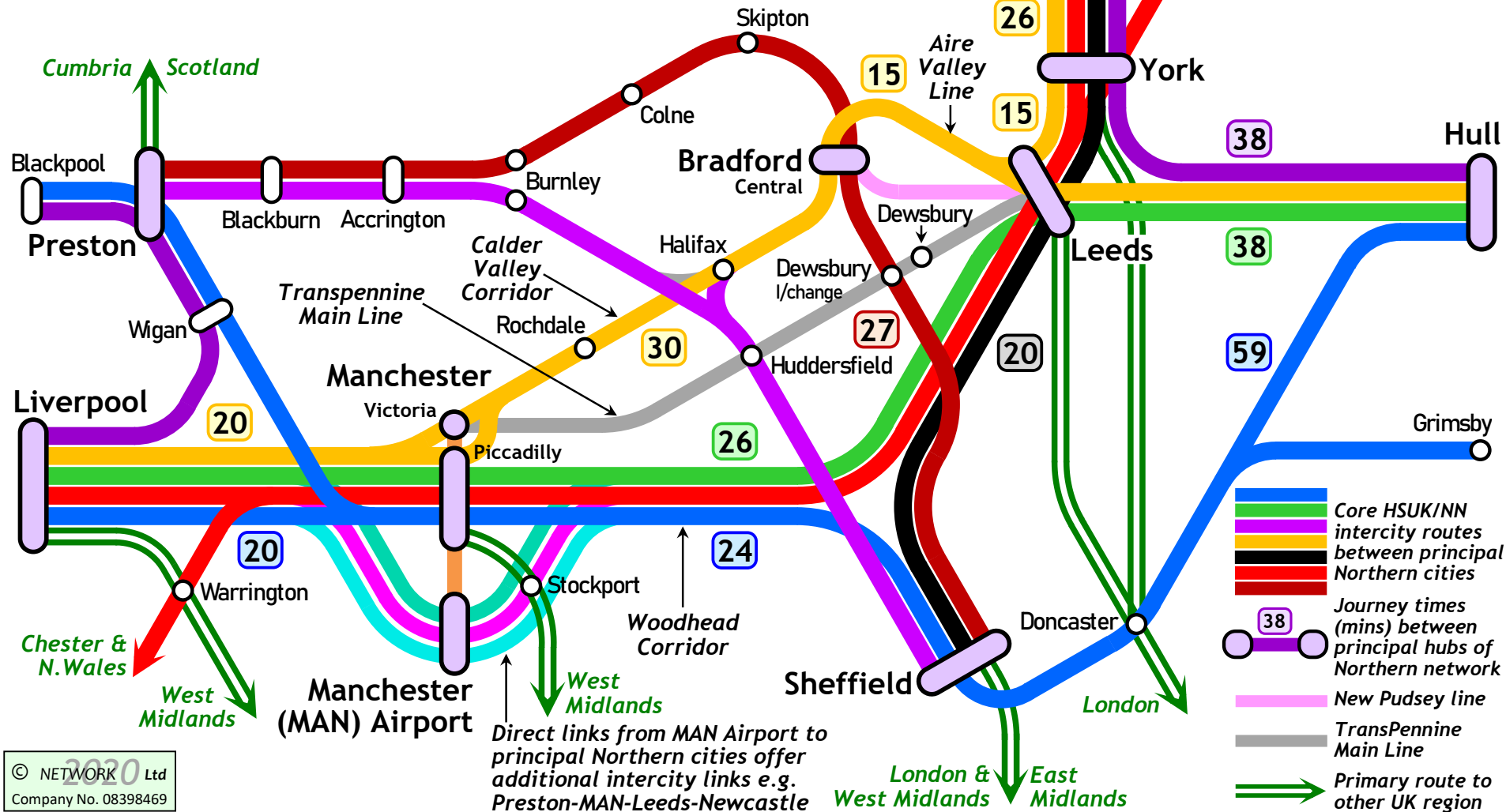


Figure I12B : Indicative HSUK/NN suburban services in West Yorkshire

'TUBE MAP' ILLUSTRATING PRINCIPAL TRANSPENNINE NETWORK NORTH INTERCITY SERVICES

Network North services continue to Edinburgh & Glasgow via new HSUK cross-Border high speed line
 Newcastle-Edinburgh: 37 mins
 Edinburgh-Glasgow: 20 mins

Network North working with... High Speed UK



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Figure I03J : 'Tube Map' illustrating Principal Transpennine Network North Intercity Services