**West Yorkshire Mass Transit Phase 1 Route Options Consultation response**

**DRAFT RESPONSE**

Baildon Town Council (BTC) welcomes the proposal to construct a Bradford/Leeds tram route terminating at Bradford Forster Square Station. However there is no mention of a proposed new ‘through’ Bradford Railway Station to replace the Bradford Interchange Station. BTC is adamant that to maximise passenger use and interchange the new Tram line must be routed into Bradford Forster Square Station via a new ‘through’ Bradford Railway Station, or if it is not built via the existing Bradford Interchange Station.

BTC believes that this would provide the important opportunity to operate TramTrain services through from the Wharfedale (Ilkley & Baildon) & Airedale (Skipton) Lines on the Tram tracks to the new ‘through’ Railway Station or Interchange Station. To enable this to happen, the profile specified for the rails installed for the Tram track needs to be compatible with existing heavy rail tracks. This would greatly increase passenger usage and revenue and enable residents in all areas of Bradford to access all regional and national services operating to/from Bradford

The attached TramTrain proposal for the Wharfedale and Airedale lines to and through Bradford city centre was endorsed by BTC in January 2023 It provides Light Rail route options via Market Street/Bridge Street or Well Street and options for city centre stops at Broadway Shopping Centre and Bridge Street/Centenary Square.

BTC feels that the information provided for this West Yorkshire Mass Transit Consultation is incomplete as it fails to provide for the different Tram route options indicative costs for land acquisition and Tram Line construction, and how many people live within walking distance. Costs and construction time will vary widely depending on which route option(s) is/are chosen. The number and location of tram stops and through journey times are critical for passenger footfall and fare revenue.

BTC only feels qualified to comment on the three Bradford/Leeds route options.

**Bradford Line Option B1**: Although the most direct option, this is the least beneficial route as it is largely follows the A647 alignment through Stanningley and Armley, does not provide better connections for Pudsey, and it broadly replicates the existing Interchange/New Pudsey/Leeds rail route. In Bradford city centre it appears to run via Well Street, but misses both the Interchange Station and new through Railway Station sites, and is poorly located for employment, leisure and shopping . Within Leeds city centre it appears to run via Wellington Street and the many new office and residential blocks.

**Bradford Line Option B2**: Although this is the slowest option it provides better connections for Pudsey, has the merit of lower construction costs as it re-uses some disused rail route and spare track bed, and should provide important stops for Laisterdyke and Wortley. In Bradford city centre it appears to run via Interchange Station and Market Street to Forster Square Station and close to sites for a new ‘through’ Bradford Railway Station This route would serve important shopping, leisure and employment locations in Bradford city centre. In Leeds it would support regeneration in Holbeck but miss new developments in the city centre’s Wellington Street area

**Bradford Line Option B3**: This appears to be a combination of B2 between Bradford and Bramley and B1 into Leeds city centre. It should provide important stops for Laisterdyke and Armley.

**Baildon Town Council favours Bradford Option B3** as it:

* maximises access to jobs, shopping and leisure activities in Bradford city centre
* connects with Interchange Railway Station and its possible replacement by a new ‘through’ station
* provides the opportunity for running TramTrain services into and through Bradford city centre to its existing Interchange or new ‘through’ railway station from the Wharfedale and Airedale railway lines, which serve communities housing one-third of Bradford’s population
* provides access to more communities en route to Leeds
* improves access to new employment opportunities in the Wellington Street area of Leeds city centre.