

# West Yorkshire Development Conference

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## Conference Report

Wednesday, 5th June 2019

New Dock, Leeds

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# Foreword



**Keith Griffiths,**  
Managing Director,  
Built Environment  
Networking

The West Yorkshire development conference is always somewhat of an anniversary for Built Environment Networking because it was the location of our first full day conference in September 2017. Since then, we have undergone a period of accelerated growth and whereas before we would organise 5 or 6 full day events per year, in 2020 we will be organising 40!

As with the third edition of any series, it was vitally important to move the story along. This year, the team managed to construct a finely balanced set of panels which hit on all the important agenda items such as environmentally friendly development, tackling infrastructure challenges and imagining a Leeds city region of the future. Taking into account feedback from previous events, this year we put a big focus on the private sector and the work they are doing to contribute to economic growth in a sustainable manner. We also held a lively Transport and Infrastructure session with a host of senior level speakers from a variety of key infrastructure providers who set out their priorities for the region but perhaps had different ideas on how to deliver.

The day was headlined by the always inspirational and proactive Cllr Susan

Hinchcliffe who is spearheading West Yorkshire's ambition with her usual high energy and community focused approach. This is the third time Cllr Hinchcliffe has lent her time to our conference and each occasion it sets the tone of the discussion and gets our audience talking.

One of the highlights of the day was hearing from one of MIPIM 2019's Best Future Mega Project Finalist's - Fallon's Future Park. This is truly an exciting and iconic scheme which will give a new dimension to the region.

The work doesn't stop here for Built Environment Networking, we will be returning to Leeds with the official HS2 Economic Growth Conference which promises to be one of our biggest events of 2019 with 40+ leading speakers from across the UK descending on New Dock Hall to talk about major schemes that are being enabled by HS2. Check out our website or contact one of the team to find out the benefits of attending or if you'd like to be one of our official partners!

**Until next time,  
Keith**

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# From the Keynote

## TORY LEADERSHIP HOPEFULS URGED TO BACK HS2



Councillor  
Susan Hinchcliffe

Chair, West Yorkshire  
Combined Authority

[@WestYorkshireCA](https://twitter.com/WestYorkshireCA)

The Conservative party's leadership candidates have been urged to take HS2 "really seriously" by the Chair of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

Presenting the keynote address at this year's West Yorkshire Development Conference, the authority's Chair Susan Hinchcliffe emphasised the importance of the high-speed line and Northern Powerhouse Rail for the region's growth. She said:

**THERE IS A REAL OPPORTUNITY WITH HS2 TO MAKE THE TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE THAT THE NORTH NEEDS. INVESTMENT IN HIGH SPEED RAIL IS SOMETHING THAT THE NEXT LEADER OF THE TORY PARTY NEEDS TO TAKE REALLY SERIOUSLY. INVESTMENT IN THE NORTH IS ABSOLUTELY VITAL. PUSHING FOR HS2 CAN'T JUST BE AN ELECTIVE POLICY**

Hinchcliffe also expressed hope that the stalled One Yorkshire

devolution deal can be concluded in the "not too distant future", noting that James Brokenshire has been "positive" about the concept of a Yorkshire-wide devolution.

Revealing that the secretary of state for housing and communities had convened a private meeting of leaders from across the county, she said:

**IT'S NOT EASY TO ACHIEVE BUT HOPEFULLY WE WILL GET THERE IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE.**

In the meantime, Hinchcliffe said the combined authority's officials are currently discussing an interim deal with civil servants in Whitehall.

Over the last year, the authority has invested in services and projects worth £390m, including the delivery of 17 "significant" transport projects.

Hinchcliffe also said that the re-election of all five West Yorkshire council leaders in last month's local polls has given "some continuity" of leadership and decision making in the sub-region.



# West Yorkshire; The state of the market

## Panel Members:



**Chair: Phil Laycock**

Director,  
Built Environment  
Networking

[@BENetworking](#)



**Councillor  
Susan Hinchcliffe**

Chair, West Yorkshire  
Combined Authority

[@WestYorkshireCA](#)



**Peter Dodd**

Commercial Director,  
Welcome to Yorkshire

[@Welcome2Yorks](#)



**Nicola Turner**

Head of Sector Practice,  
Office for Students

[@officestudents](#)



**Paul Pavia**

Head of Development,  
MEPC



**Nevil Muncaster**

Director of  
Asset Management,  
Yorkshire Water

[@YorkshireWater](#)

## CALL FOR LEEDS NOT TO DECLARE WAR ON CAR

Leeds must avoid declaring war on the motorist as it seeks to curb car use in the city centre, MEPC's Head of Development has warned.

Speaking at our West Yorkshire Development Conference, Paul Pavia said:

**YOU HAVE TO DO THIS IN A WELL-RESEARCHED WAY. IF YOU START HAVING A WAR ON THE CAR, LEEDS WILL DECLINE AS AN ECONOMY. YOU HAVE TO HAVE STRATEGY THAT CAN BE GRADUALLY IMPLEMENTED, AND IT HAS TO WORK FOR THE PEOPLE OF LEEDS**

Pavia told delegates that MEPC will be providing 1,500 car parking spaces at its Wellington Place development, currently the largest under way in Leeds city centre, but this would only equate to around one for every ten of the approximately 16,000 employees, who will be working at the site when it is complete, he said.



And more good quality inner city housing is required in Leeds to maintain the momentum of the city's development, Pavia said: "Things need to come forward because the city is at a tipping point. We need more people living in the city so they can walk or bike to work. If we don't get that momentum going in the next 12 months, we may miss this cycle and have to wait another three to four years."

In addition, Leeds must become better at attracting would be investors, he said: "Leeds needs to identify more people with patient capital. There's enormous amount of potential to provide long term returns for investors. Manchester unfortunately has been massively successful at that because they understand how our world works."

MEPC is "very keen" to open a dialogue with Leeds City Council about becoming a customer for its district heating service, Pavia added.

Susan Hinchcliffe, Chair of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, said that delivering projects like Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) will require a long-term transport funding deal with the Government.



"We can't do transformational transport change in four years. We need the Government to make patient capital available," she said, adding that with the "right level" of skills and capital investment from government, the region could spend "ten times" the £1bn allocated in its current growth deal.

Besides an interim growth deal for the region, Hinchcliffe said a decision is needed within the next 24 months on the final route for the NPR, which the Bradford Council Leader added must come through her city.

Responding to a question about climate change, she said that concerns about the issue have increased: "It's always been a theme in the background, but it's really come to the fore in the last 12 months."

"The green economy is growing, and we need to get on the programme as soon as possible," she said, giving as an example the jobs that could be created by replacing the high emission boilers in west Yorkshire.

Nevil Muncaster, Director of Asset Management at Yorkshire Water, welcomed moves by the Government and west Yorkshire's local authorities to declare a climate emergency, adding that rather than building treatment works the company is increasingly focusing on improving water quality through natural measures like peatland restoration.

Peter Dodd, Commercial Director of Welcome to Yorkshire tourism agency, told delegates that the £9bn visitor economy has become the second largest contributor to the county's GDP.



Other spin off benefits include the 62 cycle libraries established across the county in the wake of Yorkshire's successful staging of the Tour de France, giving nearly 80,000 children access to a bike that they didn't have before.

But Yorkshire's booming hospitality sector faced labour shortages as a result of Brexit, he warned:

**LOTS OF OUR EASTERN EUROPEAN FRIENDS ARE GOING HOME AND THERE WILL BE SHORTAGE OF BRITISH PEOPLE WANTING TO DO THOSE JOBS.**

Nicola Turner, Head of Sector Practice at the Office for Students, said that a diminishing proportion of students are moving away from home to take courses, particularly in the north of England.

She said 45% of 316,000 graduates in 2017 never moved, opting to study at a local college or university and then starting work in their local region.

Turner added that Leeds University has introduced continuous development courses, which will provide opportunities for retraining or upskilling in areas like artificial intelligence, helping to meet demand for digital skills.

# Infrastructure: Its role in driving economic growth

## Panel Members:



**Chair:**  
**Harriet Chapman**

Director of Transport, PBA, now part of Stantec  
@PeterBrettLLP



**Owen Wilson**

Major Roads & Strategy Manager, Transport for the North  
@Transport4North



**Antony Firth**

Head of Planning and Development, Operations for Yorkshire and the North East, Highways England  
@HighwaysEngland



**Paul McKeown**

Director of Route Sponsorship, Network Rail  
@networkrail



**Rosslyn Colderly**

Director for the North, Sustrans  
@sustrans



**Nina Smith**

Chair of Railfuture Yorkshire



**Nevil Muncaster**

Director of Asset Management – Yorkshire Water  
@YorkshireWater

## NORTHERN TRANSPORT BLUEPRINT QUERIED BY RAIL CAMPAIGNER

Infrastructure and connectivity across Yorkshire have been at the forefront of economic conversation over the past few years and it is set to be crucial in unlocking major opportunities for growth across the region.

Owen Wilson, Major Roads & Strategy Manager at Transport for the North (TfN), was one of those speaking about connectivity and infrastructure at the West Yorkshire Development Conference and he outlined his body's programme of £70bn worth of investments by 2050 during the West Yorkshire Development Conference.

Rail improvements in TfN's Strategic Transport Plan include phase 2B of HS2, upgraded trans-Pennine links, Northern Powerhouse Rail, new stations at Leeds Bradford Airport and East Leeds as well as a new line between Skipton in West Yorkshire and Colne in east Lancashire.

Road projects include M6 to A1(M) Central Pennines improvements, a new south east Bradford access route and the A65 Leeds Bradford Airportlink road



Wilson said that TfN would be working up a sequential programme of investment, covering the next two decades, over the next 18 months. But Nina Smith,

Chair of Railfuture Yorkshire, criticised the plan, highlighting concerns over a proposed motorway through the Lake District National Park and the absence of a new dedicated east-west rail freight line, which would use the abandoned Woodhead Tunnels to cut through the Pennines. She said:



**LIVERPOOL PORT IS EXPANDING MASSIVELY BUT IT'S MOSTLY SERVED BY ROAD BECAUSE THERE IS NO RAIL CAPACITY.**

And NPR must be delivered before the current planned date of 2035, Smith said, expressing "surprise" that there are no plans to join the line up with the "busy but separate" Airedale, Wharfedale and Calder Valley rail lines to the north of Bradford.

As a "bare minimum", she said all inter-city and commuter lines must be electrified, because these trains emit less carbon, break down less often and attract more passengers.

She welcomed moves by West Yorkshire Combined Authority to examine a tram system, noting that Leeds



Bradford is the biggest conurbation in western Europe that lacks a mass transit transport system, but said it must become easier to switch between different modes of public transport.

Smith's concerns were backed up by Rosslyn Colderly, Director for the North at Sustrans:

**INVESTMENT IN TRAINS IS AN ABSOLUTE PRIORITY. SADLY, MORE INVESTMENT IN ROADS CREATES MORE DEMAND BECAUSE THEY JUST FILL UP. WE NEED TO INVEST IN GETTING PEOPLE OFF THE ROADS.**

And there is a need to "really focus" on multi modal transport solutions, like laying on extra buses to train stations or making it easier to cycle and walk, she said: "Huge numbers of people are driving two to four kms, which are the distances people are doing in Park Runs on Saturdays. We should be encouraging people to cycle those distances."

Colderly also said the region's trains must offer a more "pleasant" experience.

TfN's Wilson defended the pan-northern transport body's plans, arguing that people and business must have a choice of transport modes:

**AT THE MOMENT, ROADS TAKE 80% OF LONG DISTANCE COMMUTING JOURNEYS AND 87% OF FREIGHT, TfN IS VERY CLEAR THAT IT WANTS MORE FREIGHT ON RAIL BUT WE WON'T GET THAT 87%, IT WON'T COPE.**

But Wilson said TfN is looking with Highways England and the Department for Transport on how behavioural changes might impact on demand for the strategic road network.

And he said intra-urban connections must be improved, adding there is "no point" improving rail links to Manchester and Leeds if the centres of these cities are cut off from residents in the surrounding area.

Paul McKeown, Investment Director of Network Rail, told delegates that upgrades to the TransPennine line aims to eventually increase the number of hourly passenger seats on the line from 800 to more than 3,000.

But he said there are challenges with carrying out the work to upgrade the two-track line while avoiding disruption to services as well as constraints resulting from the Grade I listing of Huddersfield railway line which it runs through.



# Housing; Accelerating new housing across West Yorkshire

## Panel Members:



**Chair: Chris Calvert**

Executive Director,  
Pegasus Group

@pegasusgroup



**Naz Parker**

Director of Housing,  
Kirklees Council

@KirkleesCouncil



**Helen Lennon**

Chief Executive,  
Connect Housing

@ConnectHousing



**Richard Conroy**

Chief Executive Officer,  
Conroy Brook

@conroybrook



**Tom Stannard**

Corporate Director -  
Regeneration & Economic  
Growth, Wakefield Council

@MyWakefield

## DON'T BACK ON COUNCIL'S TO RESTORE HOUSEBUILDING – DIRECTOR

Local authorities will be unable to restore completions of new homes to record post-war levels, a west Yorkshire local authorities Director for Regeneration has warned.

Richard Conroy, Chief Executive Officer at Yorkshire-based SME housebuilder Conroy Brook, told delegates at the West Yorkshire Development Conference that councils had played a major role in achieving the record post-war completion levels seen in the 1960s:

**WE CAN'T RELY ON SECTION 106, WE NEED LARGE SCALE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL HOUSING. WE NEED COUNCILS TO START DELIVERING MORE COUNCIL HOUSES.**

Tom Stannard, Corporate Director for Regeneration & Economic Growth at Wakefield Council, said the Leeds city-region has some of the highest level of planning permissions in England. But many sites cannot be delivered because they are not viable, due to issues like decontamination.



Pointing to 10 to 15 sites numbering 500 to 1,000 units that require a high level of intervention to come forward in the city, Stannard said: "Make no mistake, there is a



capital intervention required at scale to bring those schemes forward. We can't say on local authorities' behalf that our capital programmes alone can bear the strain of that level of intervention. They cannot."

Helen Lennon, Chief Executive of Connect Housing, said the west Yorkshire association

had trebled its output of new homes last year to 100, but agreeing with Stannard, she said: "We all have the will and are answering the call but are constrained."

Lennon said that while Connect Housing is exploring the use of off-site construction, its relatively small size as an organisation means it cannot achieve the volumes required to cost effectively exploit these techniques.

Off-site manufacture of housing remains uneconomic for SME housebuilders like his own firm, said Conroy:

**THE PROBLEM IS THAT MODULAR IS STILL MORE EXPENSIVE, EVEN FACTORING IN QUICKER CONSTRUCTION, UNLESS YOU GET ECONOMIES OF SCALE, WHICH IS FRUSTRATING.**

The time is clearly coming but for us it's just too expensive and too early," he said, adding that offsite methods also



make it harder to adapt homes the way his mainly higher end clients often want. But Conroy said he is "very interested" in using modern methods of construction (MMC), which it is exploring in a collaboration with Manchester housing

association Great Places on a Homes England funded project where the partnership is exploring the use of prefabricated insulated panels.

The offsite market does not necessarily require public sector support, said Wakefield's Stannard: "For some of the players we want to nurture and develop, MMC is not currently an affordable option. Public agencies have a role to play in encouraging that market but don't necessarily assume it's the role of local authorities to suddenly step in and develop it. A lot of builders we talk with have modular and MMC players in their supply pipelines over the next two to three years. Even without direct intervention by local authorities, we are seeing it coming into the pipeline."

Naz Parker, Director of Housing at Kirklees Council, said the authority is currently working with Homes England on two sites to deliver 500 homes using MMC, and he challenged off-site manufacturers to collaborate with smaller developers to help the latter to adopt the technology.

"The key barrier to offsite becoming mainstream is scale: I don't understand why smaller players don't collaborate more with the likes of Ilke" Parker said, referring to the recently established north of England MMC supplier.

He also revealed that Kirklees will launch a new masterplan for Huddersfield town centre "later this month". The proposals in the document won't be retail led, but will instead focus on creating a more pleasant environment that will encourage people to "dwell" in the west Yorkshire town, he said:

**THERE IS REAL HERITAGE AND ARCHITECTURAL VALUE IN HUDDERSFIELD, WE WANT TO EXPLOIT THAT.**

Parker said Kirklees would not seek to provide social housing in the town centre, capitalising instead on Huddersfield's location between Leeds and Manchester when considering the type of new homes that should be developed there.

And he said Kirklees is keen to promote a better quality private rented offer in the borough, which he said contains around 6,000 poor quality homes in the tenure.

Parker said promoting a more diverse tenure is a "really good mechanism to accelerate housing supply" in places like Dewsbury Riverside, where a large part of the proposed 10,000 homes urban district will be Build to Rent.

Stannard said the answer for the regeneration of Wakefield's city centre is "clearly not retail" and that there is potential for business space, adding that the authority is keen to retain the public services employment that is a "good driver" of footfall.

But he said the council is being "more cautious" on employment allocations in its local plan, promoting city centre fringe rather than out of town locations.



# Placemaking; Developers & major development plans

## Panel Members:



**Chair: Helen Lennon**

Chief Executive,  
Connect Housing

[@ConnectHousing](#)



**Sean Fallon**

Director,  
Fallons

[@spfallons](#)



**Clive Wilding**

Property Director,  
Artisan Real Estate



**Angela Barnicle**

Chief Officer  
Asset Management &  
Regeneration,  
Leeds City Council

[@LeedsCC\\_News](#)



**Andrew Wallhead**

Investment Director,  
WDH

[@WDHupdate](#)

## CONCERN EXPRESSED OVER LACK OF ESTATE REGENERATION FUNDING

Lack of financial support is stymying much needed estate regeneration; our West Yorkshire Development Conference has heard.

Andrew Wallhead, Director of Investment at Wakefield District Housing (WDH), said that some of the West Yorkshire association's older estates are "far too large and need wholesale regeneration".

But while money is increasingly going into new build, there is "not much support" for "pure regeneration", he said: "They need rethinking but there is very little funding out there for that. They won't be tackled until some serious money starts going in."

**THERE'S VERY LITTLE FUNDING OUT THERE TO SUPPORT US DOING THAT KIND OF WORK. IT'S DIFFICULT BECAUSE WE ARE CASH FLOW BUSINESS AND YOU CAN'T JUST TAKE 300 PROPERTIES OUT. THAT'S A LOT OF MONEY TO TAKE OUT OF A BUSINESS AND WE SURVIVE OFF THE INCOME WE GENERATE.**

And it is a struggle to generate demand for housing in some areas, like former pit communities, which have had problems since the 1980s, Wallhead said: "Now the mines are gone, they are in a beautiful rural setting and are great places to live but have a terrible image."



And noting that 29,000 of the association's 32,000 properties are located in Wakefield, he said that introducing non-social housing tenures may help to sustain communities' long-term viability. He said:

**SOMETIMES MORE SOCIAL HOUSING IN PARTICULAR LOCATIONS MIGHT NOT BE THE RIGHT ANSWER. WE HAVE A LONG TERM VESTED INTEREST IN THE SUCCESS OF THAT LOCATION AND IF WAKEFIELD GOES DOWN THE PAN OUR BUSINESS GOES DOWN THE PAN.**

Helen Lennon, Chief Executive of Connect Housing, said the north had suffered a loss of funding, highlighting the National Housing Federation's push for a 10-year regeneration programme.

Angela Barnicle, Chief Officer for Economic Development at Leeds City Council, defended local government

investment in commercial property: "There is a lot of criticism that local government shouldn't be investing in property. But we are actively investing in the region that we are securing. Why should public sector not share in risk and rewards?"

And despite suffering a 62% cut to its budget over the past decade, she said Leeds had maintained its support for children's centres, which had been identified as a factor in the city's recently recognised success in tackling childhood obesity.

Barnicle said this decision was an example of the "brave" decisions that the council had taken, which also included pressing ahead with its own City of Culture in 2023 even though Coventry has been selected by the Government to become the host city for the next national year-long celebration.

**PROPERTY IS PRETTY SIMPLE. GOOD PLACE MAKING IS ABOUT CREATING PLACES WHERE PEOPLE WANT TO BE. AS A CITY, WE NEED TO CREATE A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE WANT TO BE, WHICH IS WHY WE ARE PURSUING CITY OF CULTURE.**



Sean Fallon, Co-Founder & Managing Director at Fallons, identified the Tees Valley Combined Authority's acquisition of its local airport as another example of courageous civic leadership. He said: "I really admire what they are doing, and it makes you want to invest there."



But authorities should be prepared to lift car parking charges to encourage members of the public to use their town centre, Fallon said: "Parking is deterring people from parking in town centres because they realise they only have a limited amount of time."

He also showcased a number of projects that his company is working on. These include the Tyrone Lakes luxury lakeside villages near Doncaster, and Mont Leven, which will create the-largest retirement community in the UK.

He also revealed Fallon's desire to build an Agri-leisure park in north Yorkshire, whilst sharing a vision for a velodrome in Yorkshire.

# Conference Photos





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Save the date



Tuesday, 2nd June 2020

New Dock, Leeds  
08:00 – 17:00

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# BE West Yorkshire Development Conference

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