



Mayor Tracy Brabin
West Yorkshire Combined Authority
40-50 Wellington Street
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Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP
Prime Minister

6th September 2022

Dear Prime Minister,

I congratulate you on your appointment as Prime Minister. I look forward to working with you closely to deliver on levelling up and enable West Yorkshire to reach its full potential.

From one female leader to another, I would be delighted to invite you to join me in my offices in Leeds, where we can discuss our shared vision for the region over a mug of Yorkshire tea.

My door is open. We must work together to unlock opportunity, tackle inequalities, and share prosperity across my region. A successful West Yorkshire is key to the future economic success of the UK.

My top three asks of you as Prime Minister to make this happen are:

1. The Government needs to take **immediate action to help people to tackle the crisis in the cost of living and doing business**. If the energy price cap rise goes ahead, 1 in 3 households in West Yorkshire will have no disposable income left after paying energy bills. Within that, the energy bills of 1 in 5 households would become unaffordable. The cost-of-living crisis will be felt more in West Yorkshire than in other areas due to the level of deprivation in parts of our region, and the number of people already facing fuel poverty. We require a direct and swift response to help people and businesses.
2. **Keep Levelling Up at the heart of government plans**. The Levelling Up Bill indicates commitment from Government to support communities in all corners of the country to thrive. However, the previous Prime Minister failed to turn that ambition into reality. This is an extraordinary opportunity and we are committed to working collaboratively with your government to make this happen in West Yorkshire and look forward to establishing a partnership with you which enables it.
3. I want to see the Government deliver on their party's pledge to "level up" the North with long-promised investment, especially on transport. This includes **delivering Northern Powerhouse Rail in full, with a new line from Manchester to Leeds and a vital new station in Bradford**. During the Leeds leadership hustings, you committed to proceed with NPR stating it would make a "massive difference" to Bradford. I absolutely agree and have repeatedly asked the government to deliver on previous promises to ensure Bradford can reach its potential.

We also ask your Government to:



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- **Keep the Department for Levelling Up with a Cabinet level Secretary of State.** This has to be someone who has knowledge of the regions of the country that need to benefit from levelling up, preferably from or representing Northern communities.
- **Commit to engage with me and my fellow mayors on a regular basis** and in advance of any Spending Reviews and Budgets. Between us we represent 20m people.
Ensure devolution is at the heart of plans for future growth and prosperity. Mayoral Combined Authorities provide a vehicle for investing in skills, infrastructure and business support. Empower me and other local leaders to make decisions that will enable the region to make a greater contribution to the UK economy, for the benefit of all our people, and enable our communities to take back control.
- **Provide greater certainty of secure, stable, and fair local government funding**, so that a strong foundation of local public services can be provided. The functions and funding we have in the region as part of our devolution deal are now starting to make a real difference to the lives of residents, but levelling up is a long-term project and we need longer term commitments to make it a reality, including secure funding for local councils.
- **Provide assurance of the Government's continued commitment to mass transit in West Yorkshire.** Leeds remains the largest city in Europe without a mass transit system, and while our initial allocation of £830m from this year's City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement has allowed us to begin the work, our ambitious vision will require continued support over several parliamentary terms.
- **Provide proper funding to support our local police**, in order to help address the likely increase in demand caused by the cost-of-living crisis, and the impact of inflation and energy prices on our police budgets.
- **Work with us to turn 'net zero' into 'net gain'**. We are making major investments that will accelerate the UK's progress towards zero carbon, from energy generation through offshore wind and hydrogen, to smart manufacturing and the export of electric vehicles, to community-led retrofit and measures to decarbonize public transport and industrial emissions. These are all industries that will create jobs, grow the skills base, and improve community wellbeing. With co-investment from Government, we can position the UK as a global leader with huge economic and environmental benefits.

I look forward to welcoming you to West Yorkshire to meet me and discuss how we can work collaboratively to deliver our shared objectives.

Yours sincerely,

Tracy Brabin
Mayor of West Yorkshire