

Friday 25th June 2021

Dear Ms Brabin,

In June 2019, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority joined the hundreds of councils and organisations across the world by declaring a climate emergency.

This was a welcome move and the first step in positioning our region as a leader in climate action.

To meet the target WYCA set – and to comply with the Paris Agreement – emissions across West Yorkshire must be reduced by 14.5% year-on-year with output levels being halved every five years.

However, since then, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority has failed to follow through this declaration with action.

Of the £875 million allocated by WYCA as part of the West Yorkshire-plus Transport Fund, £660 million is allocated to road building or road widening projects. This compares to just under £20 million to building new railway stations – just a single new station across the entire county in Elland.

The emissions target WYCA has set itself just can not be met whilst road building is still being funded. There is no getting around that fact.

No doubt you will have seen that on Wednesday, the Labour-led Welsh government announced that it was freezing new road-building projects as part of its plans to tackle the climate emergency – and will appoint an external panel to review the environmental credentials of the proposed schemes.

We are asking that you follow this lead by committing to halt the funding for road building schemes until they can be thoroughly reviewed on their environmental credentials to help our region reach net zero by 2038 – or ideally much sooner.

We know road building and transport are contentious issues but we don't have the luxury of time when it comes to our environment. After all this is a climate emergency.

We look forward to your response.

Councillor Karen Alison [Kirklees MDC – Newsome Ward]

Councillor Ann Blackburn [Leeds City Council – Farnley & Wortley Ward]

Councillor David Blackburn [Leeds City Council – Farnley & Wortley Ward]

Councillor Andrew Cooper [Kirklees MDC – Newsome Ward]

Councillor Matt Edwards [Bradford MDC – Tong Ward]

Councillor Ann Forsaith [Leeds City Council – Farnley & Wortley Ward]

Councillor Sue Lee-Richards [Kirklees MDC – Newsome Ward]

Councillor Martin Love [Bradford MDC – Shipley Ward]

Councillor Kevin Warnes [Bradford MDC – Shipley Ward]