

Manchester Town Hall,  
Manchester  
M60 2LA

**14 June 2019**

Dear Candidate,

### **HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail in the north of England**

As a coalition of Leaders representing 15.4 million people living and working in cities, towns, neighbourhoods and villages across the Northern Powerhouse Corridor, we have been following closely the range of views expressed about Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) and HS2 by candidates during the Conservative Party leadership campaign so far.

As a result, we are writing to all candidates to ask them to stress the importance of a coherent rail investment programme, encompassing immediate commuter capacity, HS2 *and* NPR, for both the future prosperity of the North, and to demonstrate that the next Prime Minister will be a strong advocate for, and a true partner with, the North of England.

It is a positive sign that candidates are engaging with the question of how transport infrastructure can support connectivity, regional growth and deliver longstanding objectives to create a more sustainable, balanced national economy.

Recent Conservative governments have been clear that HS2 and NPR need to happen. Yet, while work is already underway to construct Phase 1 of HS2 and to develop the case for NPR, there remain damaging levels of uncertainty over both the appetite of any future government to approve the necessary funding to see NPR progress to its next phase and to secure the future of HS2 Phase 2b by delivering the Hybrid Bill in timely fashion.

For the North, the question is not one of 'either, or'. HS2 and NPR serve different but equally important and complementary markets. This isn't primarily about costs, but about the strategic economic criticality of the capacity of our rail infrastructure to adequately serve local, regional and national requirements. Even so, without HS2, NPR's costs will rise and its impact will fall. Without NPR, HS2 will fail to achieve its full potential. The economic case for HS2 relies upon Phase 2b being delivered to the cities of the North, and it is only through the full delivery of both HS2 and NPR that the North can see truly transformative benefits, north to south and east to west.

Moreover, the next government cannot postpone decisions on operating capacity for today's railway while it solves the HS2 and NPR questions of tomorrow. The solutions to the current rail congestion in the North have been clearly defined by Network Rail through the Northern Hub programme and we must not delay any further in

commissioning the work needed to unlock the next phase of Northern growth and regeneration. There is no realistic alternative to the delivery of both HS2 and NPR.

The benefits to the North, and to the entire UK, of a clear long-term rail investment programme are huge. The failed delivery of last May's timetable changes demonstrates that demand already exceeds capacity on the North's rail infrastructure. We need rapid investment, for example the completion of the Northern Hub, reinstated Transpennine upgrades, and investment in capacity in and around Leeds, to see us through until that time when connectivity between cities will be transformed by HS2 and NPR, easing road congestion, promoting environmental sustainability and creating jobs as businesses access new skills and trading markets.

However, if we fail to invest in our railways now and give certainty on the transformation to follow, not only will the national economy be hindered, but a clear and powerful signal will be sent that, once again, the North has been overlooked by Westminster.

As Leaders representing the North of England, we look forward to your support in ensuring that rail investment is prioritised to drive economic rebalancing and a transformed North. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our programme for economic renaissance in the North in more detail with you and how we can work together with you as the next Prime Minister if you are successful in your bid.

Yours faithfully,



Sir Richard Leese  
Leader, Manchester City Council



Andy Burnham  
Mayor, Greater Manchester Combined Authority



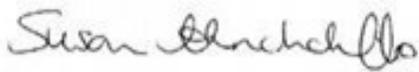
Eamonn Boylan  
Chief Executive, Greater Manchester Combined Authority



Judith Blake  
Leader, Leeds City Council



Russ Bowden  
Leader, Warrington Borough Council



Susan Hinchcliffe  
Leader, Bradford Council  
Chair, West Yorkshire Combined Authority



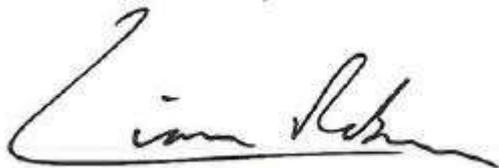
Sam Corcoran  
Leader, Cheshire East Council



Steve Rotherham  
Mayor, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority



Frank Rogers  
Chief Executive, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority



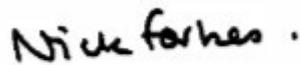
Liam Robinson  
Transport Portfolio Holder, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority



David Molyneux  
Leader, Wigan Council



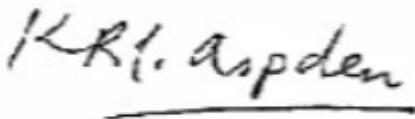
Julian Jackson  
Assistant Director (Planning, Transportation and Highways),  
City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council



Nick Forbes  
Leader, Newcastle City Council



Richard Foster  
Leader, Craven District Council



Keith Aspen  
Leader, City of York Council



Tim Swift MBE  
Leader, Calderdale Council

Cllr Phil G Ireland  
Cabinet Member Sustainable Transport  
Harrogate Borough Council