

KEVIN HOLLINRAKE MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

27th January 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

I welcome your clear commitment to 'level up' the country, not least by addressing the historic underinvestment in the North and the Midlands. I understand that the draft Oakervee Report into HS2 concludes that Europe's biggest infrastructure project should proceed, however, I am very concerned that it also recommends that work on Phase 2 of the project, from Birmingham to Manchester and Leeds, be paused for six months to consider whether these new sections of line might instead be delivered via a mix of conventional and high-speed track.

As the HS2 North Report, published by the Northern Powerhouse Partnership in October 2019 articulates, HS2 is not simply a means of getting to London more quickly. It is vitally important to increase capacity on lines in and out of the capital, but also between Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Liverpool, Newcastle, York and wider Northern towns and cities as well as other major regional economic centres such as Birmingham, Derby, Nottingham, Edinburgh and Glasgow. For instance, from Birmingham it currently takes just under two hours to get to Leeds and almost an hour and a half to Manchester. This would be reduced to 49 minutes and 40 minutes respectively. A super-connected North or Midlands is not as powerful unless it is super-connected to the rest of UK.

Nowhere is the need to level up my constituency and the surrounding region felt more acutely, day-in-day-out, than on our train network. The North and Midlands has not seen any major investment in new, purpose-built infrastructure to connect our towns and cities since the Victorian era. My constituents now have to endure heavily-congested trains which are far too often cancelled or significantly delayed. This is a major barrier to business growth and restricts the opportunities available to our businesses after leaving the European Union.

The UK must demonstrate its ability to 'Get Projects Done'. Many of our national counterparts, Germany, Japan and France, are continuing to invest in low-carbon, high-connectivity modern rail schemes to tackle climate change and to meet increasing demand. We must do the same.

In the coming days, the independent Oakervee review will formally propose a way forward for HS2. I welcome the commitment you made in the first few days of your premiership to the first part of Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR), linking Leeds and Manchester. I call on you to announce the full delivery of NPR from East Coast to West Coast and to the second phases of HS2. These projects are vital to the future prosperity of the Northern Powerhouse and have the

potential to transform this country, as does the Midlands Rail Hub as supported by West Midlands Mayor, Andy Street.

It has been suggested that we should choose between these projects but businesses large and small right across the North and Midlands would see this as betrayal. After decades of under-investment, trading off the interests of Crewe and Carlisle to benefit Warrington and Bradford would be a strategic mistake. We need an integrated network that will benefit the people of the North and the Midlands, from Birmingham to Manchester to Leeds to the Borderlands and into Scotland.

An integrated NPR and HS2 would deliver a major economic boost to the UK. Economic growth scenarios point to a potential aggregate gross value-added prize for the North of £1,008bn between 2035 and 2050. If transport investment unlocks just ten per cent of this prize it would deliver an additional £100bn. 20 per cent of the benefits of NPR are delivered from the long-distance journeys on the HS2 network. In addition, across the HS2 route locally-led growth plans will add almost 500,000 jobs and nearly 90,000 new homes from the improved connectivity HS2 services will provide.

We have once-in-a-generation opportunity to 'level up' the places midlands and northern MPs, such as me, represent, so future generations of young Brummies and Bradfordians, those from Darlo to Derbyshire, not least those in Thirsk and Malton, grow up with no ceiling to their prosperity and opportunity.

Yours ever,



Kevin Hollinrake MP