

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY

To: The Chair and Members of the Transport Committee

Meeting: 18 July 2019

Authority/Authorities Affected: All

EXEMPT/CONFIDENTIAL ITEM: No

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF RAIL

HIGH SPEED 2: PHASE 2B ROUTE REFINEMENT CONSULTATION RESPONSE

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report is to seek endorsement from the Transport Committee to the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority response to HM Government's consultation on proposed route refinements, as part of the planned High Speed 2 network.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Transport Committee is recommended to endorse the content of the report and the consultation response, prior to approval by the Combined Authority.

3. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The purpose of the government's consultation on HS2 Phase 2B Route Refinements is to seek views on specific changes and additions proposed to the High Speed 2 Phase 2B scheme from interested parties.
- 3.2 The consultation seeks views on eleven proposed design refinements, including passive provision for new junctions in the High Legh area of Cheshire to enable future connections to Liverpool for High Speed 2 (HS2) and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR).
- 3.3 Combined Authority officers have reviewed the consultation materials and developed a response, which has a submission deadline to government of 6 September 2019.
- 3.4 The basic principles enshrined in the response are:
 - (a) Liverpool City Region Combined Authority fully supports the proposed passive provision for new junctions on the HS2 network in the High Legh area,

- (b) Liverpool City Region Combined Authority welcomes the support from government in the form of the passive provision for the junctions, as it represents a significant milestone towards achieving stated objectives of the City Region in relation to improved rail services,
- (c) The potential for a much better outcome for HS2 services between London and Liverpool is highlighted, which can only be secured with a new build high speed line between the proposed junctions and Liverpool City Centre, which is currently being developed through the NPR programme,
- (d) The potential benefits to the economy and to the City Region are re-iterated, which will only arise from both High Speed 2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail schemes being completed in full,
- (e) Concerns in relation to design assumptions are highlighted for the new infrastructure, with the Combined Authority requesting that the design of HS2 infrastructure should not preclude longer or more frequent services serving Liverpool via HS2 infrastructure in future,
- (f) Concerns are also highlighted around the long term future of direct services to London at Runcorn, with a request to Government to discuss the potential future service provision at Runcorn, including preservation of direct services to London, once evidence has been generated by the Combined Authority,
- (g) The need for additional rail freight capacity, particularly to support the movement of goods to/from the Port of Liverpool, is included. The Combined Authority response highlights the strength of the Port's location in respect of the UK's future international trading position, and suggests that more value can be attributed to the proposed HS2 junctions if released capacity on the conventional network is used to support growth of rail freight in the City Region. Additionally, modal shift for goods movements from road to rail can contribute to reduced carbon emissions and congestion relief across the City Region.

3.5 The Combined Authority reviewed the Long Term Rail Strategy (LTRS) in 2017, following the initial publication in 2014. Elements relating to High Speed 2 (HS2) and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) sit within Group 2, as forecast demand growth linked to the advent of HS2 and NPR will have an impact at Liverpool Central station.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial

There are no direct financial implications from the endorsement and submission of this consultation response.

4.2 Human Resources

There are no direct human resource implications from the endorsement and submission of this consultation response.

4.3 Physical Assets

There are no direct physical asset implications from the endorsement and submission of this consultation response.

5. RISKS AND MITIGATION

5.1 There are no specific risks associated with the endorsement of this consultation response.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct equality and diversity implications associated with the endorsement and submission of this consultation response.

7. COMMUNICATION ISSUES

7.1 These implications will be picked up as the consultation process progresses.

7.2 It is expected that positive, proactive dialogue will be held with High Speed 2 Ltd and Government officials following the submission of the consultation response to ensure the aims and objectives of the Combined Authority with regards to rail connectivity and High Speed rail are achieved.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 The LCRCA High Speed 2 Phase 2B Route Refinements consultation represents a significant milestone towards achievement of the LCR's objectives in respect of direct connectivity to the HS2 network and development towards a Northern Powerhouse Rail network that will help balance the economy of the United Kingdom bringing greater opportunity and prosperity for the North.

8.2 It should be noted that Combined Authority officers continue to make the case for improved High Speed links to the City Region through all available channels, including Transport for the North, franchise discussions and liaison with various

government departments. The High Speed 2 Phase 2B Route Refinements consultation response forms one component of that overall effort.

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Background Papers

None

Appendices

Appendix A: Liverpool City Region response to HM Government's HS2 Phase 2B Route Refinements consultation