



Our ref: **Contact:** Tom Carbery, Rail Development Advisor
Your ref: **Tel:** 0151 330 1246 // 07803 576 996
Date: Friday 6th September 2019

To whomever it may concern,

High Speed 2 Phase 2B Route Refinements Consultation: Liverpool City Region Combined Authority - Written Response

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA)

The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority was originally established in April 2014 and granted widened powers in May 2017, following the election of Steve Rotheram as the LCR's first directly elected Metro Mayor. The Combined Authority draws on new powers and funds that were made available through the Liverpool City Region's 2015 Devolution Deal and follow-on deal in 2016. These powers include: strategic transport planning across the city region, economic development and regeneration, housing and spatial planning, employment and skills. It now exercises powers over a devolved and consolidated multi-year funding package. The Combined Authority has been working closely with Transport for the North on the development of Northern Powerhouse Rail and its potential integration with HS2 for over five years now.

High Speed 2 Phase 2B Route Refinement Consultation

The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Government's consultation exercise regarding High Speed 2 Phase 2B Route Refinements. This consultation exercise represents a significant milestone towards achieving the objectives of Liverpool City Region in securing significantly improved rail services via High Speed 2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail.

Significantly, the prospect of having new junctions, in combination with a fully new-build high speed line specifically serving Liverpool, will help to further improve proposed High Speed 2 journey times to London. The potential exists to deliver journey time improvements that are commensurate with those proposed for cities already planned to be served by HS2, such as Manchester and Leeds, ensuring that

Liverpool remains competitive as a location for inward investment. The provision of a fully-new line to the city also helps to deliver much needed released capacity on the conventional network.

Integration of Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) with High Speed 2 is crucial to realising the many potential benefits that will be greater than the sum of the standalone benefits of each scheme. For the City Region, the combined benefits of the step change in connectivity that NPR and HS2 can provide could be:

- £15 billion GVA uplift - a real boost to the economy of Liverpool City Region and the UK.
- 24,000 new jobs – enabled through larger workforce catchments and more businesses wanting to locate in the City Region.
- 11,000 new homes – demand generated from additional jobs and the attractiveness of living in Liverpool City Region and using enhanced transport links to work elsewhere.
- 3.6 million additional visitors annually – enhanced connectivity via NPR and HS2 reducing the travel barriers for visitors to the City Region for both business and leisure¹.

Proposed Design Refinement 11 is the first step towards unlocking the potential of NPR, and more widely, the economy of the Liverpool City Region. This vote of confidence from government to the City Region is very welcome and will help to enable the City Region to reach its full potential.

The focus of this submission relates to Section 2.3 of the consultation document, which covers the proposed new scope for Passive Provision for two junctions at High Legh. The rest of the document has been reviewed and the Combined Authority has no comments on any of the proposed New Infrastructure or Relocations and Realignments.

Passive Provision for two junctions at High Legh, Cheshire

Question: What are your views on the proposals to include passive provision for Manchester to Liverpool and London to Liverpool junctions near High Legh?

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) fully supports the inclusion of passive provision for both Manchester to Liverpool and London to Liverpool junctions near High Legh.

¹ Economics Study: HS2, Northern Powerhouse Rail and the Liverpool City Region. Steer. September 2018

The City Region is confident that the passive provision for these junctions will prove to be a valuable and correct decision by the Secretary of State for inclusion in the High Speed 2 Phase 2B Hybrid Bill. Liverpool City Region needs improved rail connectivity to contribute towards the achievement of many of its strategic goals, particularly in relation to economic growth, productivity, reduction of carbon emissions and the development of a modern, effective transport system.

LCRCA does, however, have some concerns about the design parameters used to inform the passive provision, particularly in relation to:

- Train frequency – whilst current plans suggest that two trains per hour in each direction could utilise the passive provision should a NPR route be built to Liverpool, LCRCA has concerns that this assumption could limit the ability to run additional services in future. The Combined Authority therefore requests that all development, design and environmental considerations do not preclude future service increases. It is acknowledged that any future service increases would be dependent on sufficient capacity being available on the HS2 network south of the junctions.
- Train length – whilst current plans suggest all trains serving Liverpool will be 200m in length, LCRCA has concerns that this assumption could limit the ability to run longer services in future over the HS2 and NPR networks. The Combined Authority therefore requests that all development, design and environmental considerations do not preclude future train lengthening. It is acknowledged that any future train lengthening would be dependent on service configurations in the Crewe area and platform lengths at other HS2 stations.

At a strategic level, whilst we are extremely pleased to see progress in providing improved connectivity for Liverpool, the City Region also includes Runcorn in Halton, whose station is on the West Coast Main Line and is well used. Direct services from Liverpool to London currently stop here, but this could obviously suffer a loss or reduction in connectivity as a result of any future NPR network that could permit the diversion of Liverpool – London services via Warrington, at the expense of Runcorn, which includes important technology clusters such as Daresbury.

The Combined Authority will endeavour to determine suitable options for service provision for Runcorn based on research into travel markets now and in the future. Once this work is complete, we will seek to meet with Government to discuss the potential for additional/replacement service provision at Runcorn, including the potential preservation of direct services to London.

The Combined Authority would welcome the opportunity to discuss our long term ambitions with Government and HS2 Ltd. in relation to train services and the Station Commission announced in March 2019.

Alongside improved passenger connectivity, Liverpool City Region needs to have capacity on the conventional rail network to support the growth of the Port of Liverpool, particularly through enhanced rail freight capacity, following the recent £400million private sector investment in the Liverpool 2 container terminal. Liverpool is currently the 4th largest port in the UK, and traffic is already increasing in response to this investment.

In the coming years, trade routes will change in line with the UK's emerging position internationally, with Liverpool strategically located to support significant growth in trans-Atlantic trade. However, to unlock this growth, the City Region needs to be able to guarantee swift and efficient passage of goods through the City Region's transport network and onwards to major distribution centres across the UK.

Therefore, the best value needs to be achieved through the provision of the touchpoints on HS2 by delivering a completely new rail line to Liverpool, which will enable rail freight services from the Port to make use of released capacity on the residual rail network. Additionally, the movement of goods by rail instead of road will contribute to reductions of carbon emissions and congestion, contributing to the City Region's and the UK's sustainability and environment policy objectives.

LCRCA is supportive of HS2, Northern Powerhouse Rail and the proposed passive provisions for junctions that could serve Liverpool in the future, but wants to ensure that the outcome can contribute towards the achievement of its strategic goals, which in turn will enhance the City Region's ability to play its part in growing the UK economy.

Yours sincerely,