



HS2 Yorkshire and North East Voices

August 2021

About High Speed Rail Group

High Speed Rail Group (HSRG) is committed to supporting the successful delivery of a world-class high speed rail network in Britain. Our members have helped deliver major infrastructure projects in the UK and around the world, including creating entirely new high speed networks and improving the UK's existing rail network. This gives us a unique insight into both the shortcomings of the current network and the transformative capacity, connectivity and carbon benefits that high speed rail brings. We support a national high speed rail network which includes the delivery of HS2, high speed rail's integration with the existing network and investment to maximise the released capacity benefits HS2 brings on and off route, along with other rail investments such as Northern Powerhouse Rail and Midlands Engine Rail.

CONTENTS

Executive Summary	1
Contributions	12
Angela Barnicle - Chief Officer, Asset Management & Regeneration, Leeds City Council: Securing the transformational value of integrated rail investment	12
Simon Middleton - Regional Director for Rail in Eastern Region and Project Director for the Northumberland Line project, AECOM: Collaboration is the key to delivering the transport offering Yorkshire and the North East deserves	16
Helen Golightly, CEO, North East Local Enterprise Partnership: East Coast upgrade key to unlocking HS2 economic growth	20
Interview with Paul Howell, Member of Parliament for Sedgefield	24
Paul Hirst, Head of the Transport Sector Group at Addleshaw Goddard and chair of the Northern Powerhouse Partnership Transport Committee: Why Yorkshire and the North East need a high speed rail revolution	28
Justin Moss and Mike Hulme, Co-Chairs of the Northern Rail Industry Leaders (NRIL): Providing a voice for northern rail businesses	32
Interview with Cllr James Lewis, Leader of Leeds City Council	36



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Executive Summary

As we emerge from COVID-19, the nation must build back better and greener. HS2, the country's largest infrastructure project, is leading the way. Helping to reshape economic geographies, the project will deliver new jobs and opportunities for small and medium sized businesses across the country through the supply chain. It will create a transformative, decarbonised transport network which enables modal shift away from domestic aviation and road, towards rail. It will also free up capacity on the existing rail network. HS2 will lead the way towards a net zero economy and society.

The scheme is a cornerstone of the Government's commitment to 'level up' Britain, whilst meeting the ambitions of towns, cities and regions across the country. HS2 can transform regional economies across the Midlands and the north of England, rebalancing the national economy in turn. The prospect of HS2's arrival has already stimulated development and supported business location decisions, including in Yorkshire and the North East.

This report, the latest in High Speed Rail Group's (HSRG) *Voices* series, illustrates the benefits, opportunities and economic impact of HS2 upon two areas of England: Yorkshire and the North East. With contributions drawn from business, politics and local government, our writers speak to the significant impact that HS2 will have, and is already having, on their areas, going on to describe the steps needed to realise HS2's benefits in full.

HS2 is now under construction and benefits are starting to flow

The past 12 months have seen two key areas of progress on HS2: the commencement of main construction works, and the granting of Royal Assent for Phase 2a from the West Midlands to Crewe.




However, a finalised programme for Phase 2b is yet to be agreed and a shadow has been cast over the Eastern Leg of HS2 (the section of the 'Y' that runs from the West Midlands to Leeds – see map), which is currently being considered as part of an Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the North (IRP). The plan is intended to show how Phase 2b of HS2 is best scoped and integrated with Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR), Midlands Engine Rail and other rail investments. Whilst the Prime Minister has repeatedly given his assurances about this section of the HS2 route, there has been speculation that it could be curtailed, delayed or even scrapped.

This risks not only losing the benefits of HS2 in Yorkshire and the North East, but also the unravelling of Northern Powerhouse Rail and the Integrated Rail Plan.

Our previous *Voices* report, focused on the Midlands, made clear the significant benefits felt across the region through HS2, including the Eastern Leg, and the strong support from politicians of all parties, businesses and institutions for the project. Similarly, this collection highlights perspectives from Yorkshire and the North East in relation to the Eastern Leg, and the harm that could be caused if it does not proceed or is curtailed.

There is a lazy critique of HS2 that it is London scheme, intended to only benefit the capital. This is not true, as outlined in the testimonies contained within this publication.

The Eastern Leg of HS2 brings the many benefits of the project to the eastern side of the country. Besides improving existing fast links north to south by releasing capacity on the East Coast Main Line (ECML), the project brings new and enhanced cross country



connections too. For example, journey times between Birmingham and Leeds will be halved. The programme provides the impetus to help achieve modal shift and transport decarbonisation in the east of the country through reduced use of cars and HGVs and the superb environmental credentials of electrified rail that HS2 offers.

In addition, HS2 is a huge investment in skills and expertise which has been building throughout phases 1 and 2a. Taking forward the Eastern Leg provides an even greater pipeline for deploying and growing these skills, increasing investment in low-carbon construction techniques, and building on the UK's visibility as a centre of excellence – as well as a great place to invest in infrastructure and technology.

This is a test of whether the nation is prepared to stand strong and deliver

The benefits from HS2 should not be delayed into distant decades, particularly since the Government has set ambitious carbon reduction targets of 78% by 2035. Transport is Britain's major problem sector as far as carbon emissions are concerned, ahead of industry, of agriculture and housing. HS2 will bring a huge increase in the capacity and capability of our electrified national transport system.

It was not a choice between Crossrail and HS2 for the south, and so it cannot be a choice between HS2 and NPR for the north.

A long delay to realising the benefits of the Eastern Leg, or worse still, cancellation, would severely harm the levelling up agenda. As this publication demonstrates, towns and cities along the Eastern Leg are already preparing and delivering housing, transport and economic regeneration plans to harness incoming HS2 links which would be harmed should the scheme not proceed. Fudging this question will not be acceptable either.

As a recent HSRG and Railway Industry Association (RIA) survey showed, four-fifths of small and medium-sized enterprises in the HS2 supply chain anticipate a drop in revenue should the Eastern Leg not go ahead. Nearly half responded that they would need to

downsize. The firms said HS2 had an overwhelmingly positive impact on their business, with 61.5% taking on more staff, 69% investing more in skills and eight in ten saying their business would grow as a result. It is clear why curtailment of the Eastern Leg would be so damaging.

In Yorkshire and the North East, the success of HS2 is intrinsically linked to NPR and vice-versa. HS2 will free up much-needed capacity on existing routes for local stopping and direct services and freight movements, as well as reducing carbon emissions as an electrified railway. Through a mix of new and upgraded railway lines, NPR will bring fast and reliable cross-Pennine links and connect cities across the north including Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Newcastle and Hull. With delivery of NPR integrated with HS2, high speed services will share around 50 miles of track, and the fast, modern rail network that the people and businesses of the north deserve will be realised.

As the Eastern Leg is less advanced, there is an opportunity to harness the experience of HS2 delivery to date across contractors, HS2 Ltd and the Department for Transport, as well as other sub-national bodies and Network Rail to streamline delivery, cut embedded carbon and improve affordability. The UK has world class expertise in the supply chain and innovations coming on stream all the time which can be deployed to deliver an affordable scheme.

HSRG supports the full HS2 programme and a high speed network across the country. The Government must now publish a clear plan, including indicative phasing and delivery timing assumptions. A clear forward plan of upcoming work on HS2 will support long term private sector investment in regional economies and ensure that suppliers support higher productivity and the decarbonisation agenda, such as through greener construction equipment.

If Yorkshire and the North East is expected to wait until the 2040s or 2050s to experience benefits locally that will start accruing in the West Midlands and North West from the early 2030s, the message to business will be clear: it is better to invest and take your jobs elsewhere. The way to avoid this is to commit to accelerated delivery of those parts of the HS2/NPR project that can bring early gains to Yorkshire and the North East. As our contributors point out, there are some precursor investments such as improvements to the East Coast Main Line between York and Newcastle that are needed to support the roll-out of HS2 and NPR services, and they can start generating benefits well ahead of the delivery of HS2 Phase 2b.





There are also complementary measures elsewhere that would strengthen the case for HS2's Eastern Leg. Specifying that the Midlands Rail Hub should allow north-east to south-west cross-country services to use the HS2 Eastern Leg would increase its utilisation and extend its benefits substantially. We are told that no suitable scheme has yet been identified for the connections needed at Moor Street in Birmingham. There is a risk that this scheme will progress with only a local West Midlands focus, damaging the HS2 Eastern Leg prospects, with Yorkshire and the North East left behind in the national connectivity revolution.

HS2 for Yorkshire and the North East

The HS2 programme will create a major new station in Leeds and bring new high speed services to Sheffield, York, Darlington, Durham and Newcastle.

Leeds

The station at **Leeds**, the busiest in the north, will see HS2 integrated with NPR and local transport to relieve congestion, improve reliability and speed up journey times. It is anticipated that the capacity released by HS2 on the existing railway through Wakefield could more than double evening peak seats from Leeds to Doncaster.

HS2 has already attracted some £500m of investment into the city, but this is just the start. Leeds City Region predicts that their HS2 Growth Strategy will create around 40,000 additional jobs. This equates to a £54bn boost to the regional economy by 2050. The redevelopment of Leeds South Bank will see the city centre almost double in size. A new city centre park within a five minute walk of the HS2 station will be created, which will be the largest city centre green space in the UK.

Ninety Yorkshire businesses have already worked on HS2 to date, and Leeds City region estimates that at least 20% of the workforce on HS2 will be from the city region, with 5% of these workers having previously been unemployed.



Sheffield

Sheffield will be served by HS2 trains at Sheffield Midland. They will link Sheffield to Birmingham and London in super-quick time. The lines both northwards and southwards will be electrified to make this viable. The northward link will be shared with NPR trains, providing the quick connection that Sheffield and Leeds currently lacks: two rail superhubs, properly inter-connected.

York and Darlington

HS2 trains will serve the current railway station at York, which will become an integrated high speed station where passengers can catch HS2 trains and access the high speed network to the south. It is estimated that over 35,000 passengers a day will travel on the high speed network to and from the city. The York Central Project is being developed on the premise of the HS2-hub as an economic magnet and will see the regeneration of land next to the railway station. The Enterprise Zone around the station will help unlock around £155m of investment creating commercial space, up to 2,500 new homes and 6,500 jobs, and could create over £1.1bn value for the region's economy.

In Darlington a new HS2 hub will be created to connect the Tees Valley region including Middleborough, Hartlepool and Newton Aycliffe. The Darlington HS2 Growth Hub envisages around £100m of investment and work is already underway to develop a masterplan that includes new platforms and buildings, alongside the creation of new business space and 1,500 potential new homes.

Newcastle and Durham

HS2 trains will also use existing stations in Newcastle and Durham. With two HS2 trains every hour between Newcastle and London and one per hour to Birmingham, over 25,000 passengers are expected to travel on the high speed network to and from the North East. The North East Combined Authority (NECA) and the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) are working to ensure that these stations support the region's future. This includes facilitating growth in development sites such as Newcastle's East Pilgrim Street and Stephenson Quarter, as well as supporting Durham's ambition to double employment in its tourism sector.





Our Voices

The contributions contained within this collection come from a range of voices throughout Yorkshire and the North East. Members of Parliament, local government, LEPs and businesses are all represented. Our 'voices' coalesce around a number of key themes:

- HS2 is essential to regional and local economic growth with developments and regeneration already underway, spurred by high speed rail and with further significant transformations ahead
- The pressing need to modernise the north's railway infrastructure
- The false choice between HS2 and NPR. Both are needed, and the Eastern Leg will bring benefits calculated at £300bn, paying for the whole project multiple times over
- Corollary schemes such as the Northumberland Line and upgrade of the ECML will maximise the benefit of the network, boost investment and, critically increase capacity
- Collaboration across organisations is vital to making HS2 and associated schemes a success
- High speed rail unlocking transport decarbonisation and modal shift

The dividend for jobs, growth and business through HS2 is the focus of [Helen Golightly](#), CEO of the North East Local Enterprise Partnership, in her article *East Coast upgrade key to unlocking HS2 economic growth*. She writes that HS2's Eastern Leg can deliver 4,800 jobs and £6bn total GVA boost to the North East LEP area. Leader of Leeds Council [James Lewis](#) also reinforces the importance of the Eastern leg in his interview, arguing that 'HS2 East is about much more than high speed rail - it is a catalyst by which we can future-proof our region, deliver inclusive growth and create meaningful jobs.'

In *Leeds: securing the transformational value of integrated rail investment*, [Angela Barnicle](#), Chief Officer for Asset Management & Regeneration at Leeds City Council, highlights that a modern, integrated railway network brings 40,000 new jobs, 8,000 new homes, 273,000 sq. m of new office space and £40bn in GVA for Leeds. Similarly, Addleshaw Goddard and Northern Powerhouse Partnership's [Paul Hirst](#) in *Why Yorkshire and the North East need a high speed rail revolution* writes that 'HS2 is at the heart of the growth strategies of West Yorkshire and the Sheffield City Region, which aim to provide more than £70bn to those economies, with the potential for almost 10,000 new homes and more than £5bn of private sector investment.'

As Co-Chairs of the Northern Rail Industry Leaders, (NRIL) [Justin Moss](#) and [Mike Hulme](#) describe in *Providing a voice for Northern rail businesses* 'rail should be a prime candidate for investment as the Government looks to industries to spur an economic recovery and could help provide jobs in the north for decades to come.' They point to HS2 supporting 30,000 jobs at peak construction and Transport for the North's assessment that,

combined with HS2, NPR could lead to 74,000 jobs being created by 2060 spurred by the rail investment.

Our contributors help paint a picture of how Yorkshire and the North East will see many positive changes, with accelerated investment through HS2 and new regeneration programmes to benefit local communities. As Paul Hirst notes, ‘securing high speed rail is a huge vote of confidence for the region, acting as a spur for regeneration and growth at a moment when we are emerging from the biggest economic disruption in a generation.’

In her contribution, Barnicle discusses how HS2 will be leveraged to deliver the South Bank redevelopment in Leeds, made up of new homes on sustainable brownfield sites, a new city centre park, new office and workspace development, along with securing new inward investments including new cultural developments. Within five minutes of the station at Leeds, a new national headquarters for Channel 4, a new home for the UK Infrastructure Bank and a new base of Reed Smith have all been secured, with the backdrop of HS2 playing its part. The positive effect of forthcoming transport infrastructure being felt in the north mirrors the experience in London when the high speed line from St Pancras was created.

Barnicle also cites Leeds’ digital sector as growing faster than anywhere else in the UK and combined with a focus on digital skills, points out that future opportunities are ‘linked to the delivery of an integrated rail network and investments.’

Member of Parliament for Sedgefield **Paul Howell** highlights the benefits of attracting Hitachi to the area and its role as an ‘anchor tenant’ that attracts other businesses and encourages local growth, using its facility to build on the skills of the local community. He notes that better rail services at a local level could be ‘transformational and have a domino effect.’

The outcomes of the Integrated Rail Plan will be essential to building on these examples, with Moss and Hulme voicing that ‘the north’s rail supply chain needs the confidence from its political leaders to make investments in skills. It also needs our political leaders to promote the range of exciting career opportunities that the railway has to offer.’

Throughout this collection, achieving economic growth is tied to the pressing need to modernise the north’s creaking railway infrastructure - through new lines such as HS2, as well as upgrading existing ones. Our contributors highlight the need to upgrade the ECML for the full benefits of HS2 to be realised. As Golightly makes clear, ‘we want to see a single plan developed that will upgrade the East Coast Main Line corridor between York and Newcastle so that it is “HS2/NPR-ready” prior to the opening of HS2 Phase 2b and NPR infrastructure.’ She also says that the growth potential for the region can only be realised if the link from HS2 to the ECML is built and ‘only with both the Eastern Leg of HS2 and NPR working together in an integrated rail network will the city and the wider



region be able to achieve its full potential.’ She states that ‘both infrastructure projects are vital for continued growth across the region and will act as a catalyst for prosperity for communities, families, individuals and businesses.’

Howell emphasises that HS2 and associated schemes are about capacity and ‘wherever you look, there isn’t enough.’ Golightly echoes this, pointing to the capacity issues in the North East and insufficient train paths for the region’s needs. Barnicle highlights that Leeds station is at capacity with passenger numbers quadrupling in 20 years, and HS2 provides a path to transform this.

Moss and Hulme of NRIL confirm that ‘despite its long heritage, the north’s railway is facing growing constraints on ageing infrastructure, and there is still a need for further investment in connections between major cities.’

To make all of these benefits a reality, our contributors talk to the importance of collaboration in making HS2 and associated schemes successful. AECOM’s [Simon Middleton](#) writes in *Collaboration is the key to delivering the transport offering Yorkshire and the North East deserves* about the role of devolution, saying that ‘empowering devolved regions to work more closely with private industry will enable the development of new, innovative funding mechanisms that match private sector investment with public service need.’ He also cites Aecom’s work on the Northumberland Line as an example of what can be achieved through innovative funding models and close cooperation with local authorities, Network Rail and the Department for Transport. Barnicle from Leeds Council also points to the approach, saying that ‘through collaboration across all sectors, and an approach which puts people first, we have been able to deliver real and inclusive transformation.’

Decarbonising the economy and society is an imperative. Throughout the contributions the important role of railways in reducing carbon emissions features. For NRIL’s Moss and Hulme, it is one of their four manifesto planks for rail in the north, with HS2 playing an important role as an electrified, modern railway that achieves modal shift. As Barnicle outlines, HS2 is at the heart of a low carbon economy and associated investment programmes that the Council is leading, including low carbon developments on the back of low carbon transport. Howell succinctly says: ‘We have to create green travel opportunities. If there isn’t a green choice available, local people can’t take it.’

As our voices outline in this collection, HS2 is a scheme that delivers for Yorkshire and the North East and is now integral to local plans to drive business growth, improve productivity, secure investment and meet decarbonisation goals. The Government will take decisions on the Integrated Rail Plan shortly, and these decisions must secure the full benefits of HS2 and implement the modernised, integrated transport system which Yorkshire and the North East require.





**Angela Barnicle,
Chief Officer Asset Management &
Regeneration, Leeds City Council**

Angela has a passion for cities, economic development and with it delivering transformational change and inclusive growth. Having worked extensively across the UK advising on large scale city development and transport schemes, organisational design and place positioning, Angela now leads the Asset Management and Regeneration Service for Leeds City Council. Here Angela focuses on realising the development opportunities and optimum real estate solutions to support the growth of the city.

The Service is currently engaged in a number of Place Programmes across the Leeds City Region including the delivery of the East Leeds Orbital Extension, which will release land for an additional 5,000 homes for the city, the ongoing redevelopment of the South Bank which will knit together the network of neighbourhoods which make up the city centre and the Leeds Innovation District. In addition, Angela leads the programme team for the Leeds City Region High Speed Growth Strategy and Leeds City Railway station redevelopment.

“A modern integrated rail network is about much more than a faster connection to London and increased capacity for our region: for Leeds it represents 40,000 new jobs for individuals, 8,000 new homes for families, 273,000 sq. m of new office space for companies and £40bn in GVA for our communities”

Leeds: securing the transformational value of integrated rail investment

Leeds is the economic heart of our region, in the geographic heart of the UK, and post-Coronavirus, the city will return to growth. As we look forward, our ambition is not simply to return to where we were pre-Covid-19, but to create more equal opportunities, higher outcomes in education and skills, and deliver an economy that is inclusive. We aim to ‘recover’ to a different, better, more equitable, and low carbon economy. We are resilient both in our people and our place.

Critical to all of this is collaboration. Collaboration is hard-wired into the way we do business in Leeds. Through collaboration across all sectors, and an approach which puts people first, we have been able to deliver real and inclusive transformation. Indeed, through our collaboration with HS2, Network Rail and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) we have been able to integrate both NPR and HS2 into our plans for a new Leeds railway station, providing renewed confidence in our city’s growth.

The certainty created through the safeguarding of land for HS2’s Eastern Leg, the publishing of Leeds City Region HS2 Growth Strategy and the embedding of HS2 and NPR in planning policy has driven investments and led to the formation of plans that will help to drive our local, regional and national economic recovery.

Momentum

Thanks to this certainty and through our HS2 Growth Strategy, we set an ambition to leverage HS2 to deliver people-centric transformation across the South Bank – already a network of neighbourhoods and one of the largest city centre regeneration initiatives in Europe. As a city, we are committed to leverage the investment of HS2 to:

- **Deliver more new homes on sustainable brownfield sites** – Over a thousand new homes have been delivered since 2017 and a further five thousand homes have received planning permissions in close proximity to the railway station. This includes new sustainable family homes being developed by Citu at the non-carbon Climate Innovation District, a Homes England facilitated development at Tower Works and one of the largest affordable housing schemes being delivered in a UK city centre by the Guinness Partnership.
- **Deliver people-focused infrastructure to be HS2 ready** – We continue to create places for people to meet, innovate and come together. Construction work has now started on site for a new city centre park within a five minute walk of the HS2 station, which will be the largest city centre green space in the UK. This low carbon focus is complemented by over £200m of ‘Connecting Leeds’ investments underway to repurpose our infrastructure to be more people and public transport focused, better connecting people to jobs. We have also recently announced bold plans for a new gateway at City Square to provide a fitting statement and gateway arrival to the station.

- **Double the delivery of new office and workspace development per annum in Leeds City Centre** – Plans are in place to deliver over 2.5 million sq. ft of economic space across the South Bank area. Commercial Estates Group and Vastint are both progressing speculative new Grade A office developments, whilst there remains buoyant demand for new spaces in close proximity to the well-connected transport hubs.
- **Secure new inward investment including new cultural developments** – Within five minutes of the station, we have secured the new national headquarters for Channel 4, a new home for the UK Infrastructure Bank, a new base of Reed Smith, and we are supporting the Bank of England with their proposed move. Further to this, to the west of HS2, and within five minutes of the central HS2 concourse, the British Library propose to occupy the Grade 1 listed Temple Works and establish a northern base for what is one of the most significant cultural developments in the UK. Labcorp will also base their UK headquarters in a building adjacent to Temple Works.

Our commitment to the South Bank was a vote of confidence in the present and future of our city. Many businesses, investors, educational and other stakeholders in the public and private sectors across the city share in this, making decisions and committing to future plans based on the Government's commitment to deliver the Eastern Leg of HS2, NPR and the wider modernisation of our rail network as part of their proposed levelling up agenda.

Ambitious projects like this have been planned and are underpinned by not only the city's commitment to the regeneration of the South Bank, but also the Government's commitment to delivering a 21st century integrated rail network and its transformational impact on the city and wider region which currently still relies on our Victorian rail infrastructure.

Future opportunities

We are keen to continue this momentum, to develop not only further physical regeneration but also socio-economic opportunities for all of our communities. As we move forward, we do not wish for uncertainty to lead to these city centre regeneration plans stagnating, following years of collaboration which has provided the city with such momentum and confidence in future plans.

In addition, we are proud to be home to the Institute for High Speed Rail and Systems Integration, being developed by the University of Leeds, which will be the most advanced integrated rail test and development centre in the world. Due to be built on a site at our Enterprise Zone and next to the proposed HS2 rolling-stock depot, the Institute will help create a global hub for advanced rail technology and manufacturing, saving the rail sector significant cost, disruption and down time in the future and supporting the 2,500 SME rail business across the north.

We have also started developing ambitious plans for innovation-led development to the west of the station with work starting in earnest on a bold new spatial framework, exploring how we connect our three leading universities and teaching hospital to the station.

For the past two years the city has been engaged with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on their Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Program (MIT REAP) to learn more about our eco-systems and critically develop programmes to generate more businesses and jobs.

Our digital sector is growing faster than anywhere else in the UK, with HealthTech, FinTech and LegalTech companies starting up here every day, choosing Leeds as their home because they recognise our capacity to connect them with the pioneering expertise of our universities in data and artificial intelligence, and the transformational initiatives in vocational digital skills taking place across Leeds.



These future opportunities that are linked to the delivery of an integrated rail network and investments in connectivity at the station will drive productivity gains and create much needed new and skilled jobs across the city.

Threats to growth

Failing to deliver HS2 and NPR within the Leeds City Region and continued delay and uncertainty undermines such game-changing opportunities. Only with both the Eastern Leg of HS2 and NPR working together in an integrated rail network will the city and the wider region be able to achieve its full potential. Both infrastructure projects are vital for continued growth across the region and will act as a catalyst for prosperity for communities, families, individuals and businesses across our city region. We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to fully embrace the levelling up agenda and realign the economic geography of our country. A modern integrated rail network is about much more than a faster connection to London and increased capacity for our region: for Leeds it represents 40,000 new jobs for individuals, 8,000 new homes for families, 273,000 sq. m of new office space for companies and £40bn in GVA for our communities.

The continued uncertainty around the delivery is undermining the progress of these plans and confidence in our future potential, and already our local and regional rail network is creaking. Leeds Station is at capacity: in the last 20 years passenger numbers have increased from 9 million to 34 million, and the capacity created through redevelopment of the station 20 years ago has been met. Rail journeys between Leeds and Bradford take longer than they did 100 years ago, and journeys between Leeds and Sheffield run at an average speed of 30mph. 40% of these journeys run late.

Our outdated rail system acts as a constraint on our regional economy, and only by realising the capacity and reliability of the Eastern Leg of HS2 and NPR will we be able to truly deliver inclusive growth for current and future generations on sustainable travel options. This includes investing in the 'T' shaped station that would welcome HS2 and the NPR connection from Sheffield into Leeds.

All stakeholders know the benefits that the Eastern Leg of HS2 and the delivery of NPR will have on the region and our city and all stakeholders will benefit from its delivery in both the short and long term. The value of delivering the Eastern Leg of HS2 is calculated at £300bn, this alone would pay for the entire project multiple times over. The potential impact of a fully integrated rail network, fit for the 21st century, is clear and has been the basis for long term plans for development across our city region. The ongoing uncertainty around the decision impacts investor confidence and blights businesses, impacting our ability to level up and deliver inclusive growth for our communities.

Leeds has an excellent track record of delivering regeneration schemes in partnership with the private sector and work will continue across the city region to deliver inclusive growth. Yet growth will be much slower and less sustainable without the capacity and connectivity delivered through the new integrated rail network, and we need a commitment to the Eastern Leg of HS2 and NPR which are based on feasibility and provide for a once in-a-generation opportunity to create a catalyst for significant growth and prosperity across our city region and beyond.





**Simon Middleton,
Regional Director for Rail in Eastern Region
and Project Director for the Northumberland
Line, AECOM**

Simon has worked in the rail industry for over 20 years and most recently on a number of programmes for local authority clients to support in the development of their ambitions for rail schemes including new stations and line reopenings.

Through his work on Northumberland Line he became involved in Project SPEED in 2020 and shared lessons learnt from this work at industry briefing sessions including the Rail Industry Association (RIA) SPEED Conference in February 2021. He is a chartered engineer and a fellow of the Institution of Civil Engineers.

“Strong collaboration between public and private sectors, across technical, funding, staging and operations, shows how these schemes can succeed effectively and with pace”

Collaboration is the key to delivering the transport Yorkshire and the North East deserves

Levelling up the north of England through investment in infrastructure has been pushed up the Government's agenda in recent years. The critical role of infrastructure and rail in boosting economic growth is well recognised. Despite a strong potential pipeline of projects in the region, a lack of firm commitment to funding does create uncertainty about the potential benefits being realised. Too often in the UK, transport projects have taken years to implement and have been caught up in red tape and bureaucracy. De-politicising infrastructure decision making would undoubtedly help build certainty around project delivery. The industry needs clarity around how and when programmes will proceed to enable it to invest in the necessary skills and capabilities to deliver.

This remains a significant challenge in the north, with HS2 Phase 2b likely to be progressed alongside Northern Powerhouse Rail and other critical programmes that will place further demand on the industry's ability to deliver.

Fostering an environment that encourages alternative delivery models will help accelerate delivery, challenging conventional timescales and associated costs. Indeed, last year's introduction of Project SPEED – Swift, Pragmatic, Efficient Enhancements Delivery – has set the challenge to halve the time and slash the cost of infrastructure delivery.

Empowering devolved regions to work more closely with private industry will enable the development of new, innovative funding mechanisms that match private sector investment with public service need. The Northumberland Line is a great example of how

this can be achieved. Through innovative funding models and close co-operation with local authorities and Network Rail, this project will see passenger services reintroduced on an existing freight line, delivering economic benefits of up to £470m.

The new passenger railway will connect south east Northumberland with north Tyneside and Newcastle city centre. A journey that currently takes an hour on a bus will be cut to half an hour on a twice-hourly service. Six new stations will be created – Northumberland Park, Newsham, Bedlington, Ashington, Seaton Delaval and Blyth Bebside – improving the links from these places to key economic centres in Tyne and Wear.

As one of the first six pathfinder projects to be included in Project SPEED, Northumberland is unique in that it is a local authority led and promoted scheme. Working with AECOM (via the Perfect Circle joint venture) and SLC Rail, Northumberland County Council has created an ambitious new strategy for the Northumberland Line, making it the biggest third-party-funded rail upgrade project in the UK directly developed and promoted by a local authority.

Specialist multidisciplinary teams have helped the local authority navigate complex rules around rail safety and design development, while also developing the business case for the project that highlights the vital economic stimulus for the region. This included clearly setting out the costs and benefits of the project, demonstrating the return on investment while also showing how a credible plan for the project would be delivered going forward. This plan will deliver the line at least 18 months ahead of the original intended delivery date.

The Northumberland Line has been used as a project to demonstrate SPEED in practice, pointing the way to a new generation of infrastructure proposals. Central to its success has been collaboration. Relationships have been built across a broad spectrum of public and private organisations,



ensuring that local authorities, Network Rail and the Department for Transport all work together smoothly, with one shared goal in mind. This strong collaboration between public and private sectors, across technical, funding, staging and operations, shows how these schemes can succeed effectively and with pace.

A focus on cost and schedule could result in more complex governance that can stunt benefits realisation. In contrast, incentivising challenges to design standards and construction practices, baking in innovation and creating positive tension between suppliers to drive improvements can help realise wider legacy, social value, biodiversity and net zero carbon benefits.

This model of strong collaboration and forming long-term trust-based relationships is also needed across other programmes. With the expectation of a commitment to HS2 Phase 2b and Northern Powerhouse Rail in full, it is essential to phase and co-ordinate these programmes at an enterprise level. Given the complex landscape and broad range of stakeholders in the north, there is a real risk that projects could be hampered by competing short and medium-term objectives. Creating a shared vision is essential and the quicker we achieve strategic alignment amongst all parties, the better.

This need for cross-programme collaboration is one reason why an integrated rail plan for the north and Midlands is so important. Only once this eagerly-awaited plan is published can industry seize the opportunity to collaborate at scale and address competing priorities across the full portfolio of programmes and HS2 phases. To truly realise the lasting benefits of rail projects for local and regional economies, the business case for any single scheme must be considered as part of a wider integrated programme of works. Without this broader view, the justification for investment in projects risks being underrated.

Both long-term programmes such as HS2 and strategic regional rail projects have an integral role to play in helping the country level up, creating regional transit-oriented corridors that link smaller towns and communities into a city region network. For the north to truly benefit from this increased capacity and connectivity, industry requires much more certainty around how these major projects will integrate, as well as when and how they will be delivered.





**Helen Golightly OBE,
Chief Executive Officer, North East Local
Enterprise Partnership (LEP)**

Helen has been with the North East LEP since 2012, and its Chief Executive since 2015. As the senior executive at the LEP, Helen leads the delivery of the North East Strategic Economic Plan, working with partners to grow the local economy by securing investment in the region and improving skills and business support for residents and businesses.

Under Helen's leadership, partner engagement with the North East LEP and the region's Strategic Economic Plan has helped deliver over 71,000 jobs since 2014 and the employment gap between the North East and England (excluding London) has reduced by 26%.

Her previous experience includes over twenty years in a number of local government roles in planning, regeneration, economic development and corporate governance.

“HS2, coupled with upgrading the ECML between York and Newcastle, will deliver an additional GVA of £80m a year to the North East LEP area in wider economic benefits alone”

East Coast upgrade key to unlocking HS2 economic growth

Connecting the North East to the UK's high speed rail network has always been central to our long-term goal to provide more and better jobs for the North East, whilst helping us shape a new and more sustainable regional economy.

We highlight our position in our Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and Regional Transport Plan. Both HS2 Phase 2b and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) have our full commitment and are essential to collectively have the economic and social impact on the businesses and communities of the North East, that we critically need.

Research tells us that the Eastern Leg can deliver 4,800 jobs and £6bn total GVA boost to the North East LEP area, and in turn make a significant contribution to the UK's bottom line and the Government's levelling up agenda.

We can only realise this potential if the link from HS2 to the East Coast Main Line (ECML) is built, and the ECML between York and Newcastle receives a major upgrade between now and the launch of HS2 Phase 2b and NPR.

The case for infrastructure improvements

The ECML is the rail artery that links the North East of England with the rest of the country. The region relies solely on this line for all rail services to the rest of the UK. The route carries 15 million passengers from the region each year, with many more passing through, and this number is expected to grow over the next decade with the arrival of HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail services running on the line in the 2030s.

However, between Northallerton and Newcastle there is only one-track running north and one running south. This means that high speed inter-city and regional trains must compete with local services and slow-moving freight trains on this constrained section of the main line.

As of 2021, there are six passenger and two freight train paths per hour. Based on Network Rail's analysis, this is already at the limits of its capacity. From May 2022 there are too many train paths committed, and unpalatable trade-offs may be necessary until the infrastructure is upgraded. We want to see a single plan developed that will upgrade the ECML corridor between York and Newcastle so that it is 'HS2/NPR-ready' prior to the opening of HS2 Phase 2b and NPR infrastructure. To achieve this, funding needs to be committed over the period 2024-34 to expand capacity by providing at least four tracks along the full length of the corridor between York and Newcastle.

The economic case for this investment is strong. Research from the East Coast Mainline Authorities (ECMA) has projected that HS2, coupled with upgrading the ECML between York and Newcastle, will deliver an additional GVA of £80m a year to the North East LEP area in wider economic benefits alone.

Leveraging the Leamside Line

We would also like to see the reopening of the disused Leamside Line, which could trigger a wave of economic benefits across the North East. A fully reinstated Leamside Line, working in conjunction with an existing freight route through Teesside called the Stillington Line, would create a continuous four-track railway route between York and Newcastle.

This would allow slow-moving freight trains to be diverted away from the congested East Coast Main Line and would increase its capacity by 50%, as well as making journeys far more reliable and enabling HS2 and NPR trains to serve our region.

Reopening the Leamside Line would also allow for the introduction of local passenger rail services and extending the Tyne and Wear Metro services to Washington and other communities in Sunderland and County Durham.

The North East's Metro and local rail network contribute up to £224m of GVA to the North East economy each year. Every journey made on our Metro and local rail network is worth £8.50 to our region through the wider benefits it delivers. The case for improvement and expansion of Metro is simple: the more people who travel, the greater it benefits the region.

An international gateway

HS2 services will cement the status of Newcastle Central Station as an international gateway for North East England. It acts as a hub connecting Newcastle International Airport, Sunderland and South Tyneside, East Durham, Northumberland and Cumbria. We are working to ensure that these stations support the region's future, by facilitating growth in development sites such as Newcastle's East Pilgrim Street and the Stephenson Quarter.

There are also plans to build a HS2 train stabling facility at the existing Network Rail depot in Heaton, Newcastle. This will enable up to 11 HS2 trains to be stored overnight, safeguarding and creating new specialist jobs for the North East as well allowing HS2 services to start and terminate at Newcastle and serve the rest of the route.

Tackling economic inequality

Whilst we believe that HS2 and NPR will be key enablers to achieve the North East's long-term economic growth plans if configured correctly, the ECML constraints must be addressed as part of these schemes, in an integrated and coordinated way.

Unless this problem is tackled head-on, the region runs the risk of falling behind other areas of the country as economic inequalities continue to grow. Businesses may locate away from the North East in favour of places with better connections, and our communities will not only be unable to share in the economic benefits that HS2/NPR can bring, but the productivity gap could widen as the benefits felt elsewhere begin to take effect. Given that the line last saw major investment three decades ago, funding is now long overdue.

Ahead of the Government's upcoming Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) we continue to press for a commitment to upgrading the East Coast Main Line in the North East.

North East business and political leaders are fully united on this issue and HS2, NPR and the ECML upgrade are key elements of our long-term economic and transport strategies.

As a region we must be better connected so we can position ourselves as a major economic hub in the UK. With the right investment, we can improve our transport infrastructure, compete globally, grow our economy, make a significant contribution to the levelling up agenda and create more and better jobs for the people in our region, both now and in the future.





**Paul Howell,
Member of Parliament for Sedgefield**

Paul has been the Conservative Member of Parliament for Sedgefield since December 2019. He sits on the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee, and is outspoken in his belief that a revitalised transport system has the power to join communities together and create more opportunities in the north of England. Paul is a supporter of high speed rail and has been a persistent campaigner for improved infrastructure in the region. He chairs the All-Party Parliamentary Group for 'Left Behind' Neighbourhoods.

The important word in the 'levelling up' agenda is the word 'up'. We need everyone to be going 'up', but some might just need more help. We shouldn't disadvantage growth in the south to help the north. We have regional strength, most notably manufacturing, which should be supported ahead and could play a key role in projects including HS2.

Interview with Paul Howell, Member of Parliament for Sedgefield

What is your view on HS2 and its importance to the North East, and Sedgefield specifically?

Historically there has been too much media attention focused on saving 5-10 minutes on a route, but I see HS2 in the bigger context of capacity on our railways. This is important because wherever you look, there isn't enough capacity – for example the proposed LNER timetable changes will actually reduce services to Darlington.

Capacity is key because it's difficult to overtake on a railway. It doesn't matter if you're on a fast-moving passenger train if it gets stuck behind a slow-moving freight train. HS2 is necessary and will release capacity and needs to be coupled with regional rail links like Northern Powerhouse Rail, alongside upgrades to local services. For example, the re-opening of lines such as Leamside would create a second North East route that goes through smaller towns, releasing traffic and freight from the East Coast Main Line and encouraging more people to use public transport. We also need to reintroduce a station at Ferryhill. This should be approved soon and will connect communities from Sedgefield to Teesside, and as such, communities to jobs.

How will improved rail services through HS2, along with supplementary schemes including Northern Powerhouse Rail, support the North East to grow in status, economic strength and political voice?

To resonate with the electorate, rail services need to reach all communities. It's not just about Newcastle to London, it's about Middlesbrough, Stockton, and all those smaller places – they all need better connections. These are communities that have the lowest car ownership going, and poor public transport connections mean long journey times. The economic impact of better rail services at a local level could be transformational and have a domino effect. For example, if there is a small railway station somewhere, somebody will open a sandwich shop and then a newsagents will open and it can spiral from there. Railways can transform communities.

How important is it that cities and towns across the North East have better connections to strengthen growth opportunities and green ways to travel, such as those provided by HS2?

We have to create green travel opportunities. If there isn't a green choice available, local people can't take it. But we know it's not a five-minute job to put a railway line in. One of the strengths to me of the Government's Treasury North project in Darlington is that decision makers will see how non-urban transport works. The further you step away from the urban centre, the more transport needs to be planned. In London there is a flurry of public transport options. You don't go for the 2pm tube, you simply know there will be one every couple of minutes. But further north this simply isn't the case. People will change their habits, but they have to have the opportunity to do so.



How do we build the biggest regional coalition to see HS2 completed in full and all the way, including the Eastern Leg?

It has to come down to the capacity argument. I recently organised a letter that was sent to Ministers at the Department for Transport signed by almost every MP in the North East, representing all parties and leaders of councils. It's about getting that cross party, unified voice and utilising tools such as the Northern Research Group and make sure it isn't just about big regional cities such as Manchester.

Your constituency of Sedgefield is home to the Hitachi Rail rolling stock facility in Newton Aycliffe - can you describe the impact HS2 could have in supporting jobs and supply chains locally?

Hitachi [which builds trains including high speed ones] is what we call an 'anchor tenant'. An organisation like that is naturally going to bring other businesses with it and encourage local growth. For example, when Hitachi was building the Azuma trains [which run on the East Coast Main Line and Great Western Services], it originally imported frames for the carriages, but it's now changed this so that they come flat pack-esque and are assembled locally, using and building skills in the local area. Then there is that skills base that attracts other companies and businesses. There are around 10,000 jobs on the industrial estate where Hitachi is located and it's now one of the biggest industrial estates in Europe that doesn't have a port. In addition to other industrial companies, this opens it up for various other businesses to provide services to the facility such as tea and sandwiches, office supplies, and various other items.

How are local SMEs benefitting from the project?

These projects open up so many opportunities for other businesses within the local area and we need to promote and talk about them. It comes back to the role of the anchor tenants. If you are a company that puts yourself forward and gets involved, you might not get that job, but anchor tenants will be thinking about you later down the line of a major project.

Once you have the seed of entrepreneurship locally, the possibilities are endless. For example, there's also a smaller industrial estate in my constituency – the North East Technology Park (NETPark) – it is very science led with around 500-700 staff. There are a lot of new companies there and so much going on. We need to recognise these businesses, which add another string to the constituency's bow and make us a centre for new and emerging technologies.

How do we ensure that reform of the HMT Green Book unlocks future public investment for our regions, supporting the North East economy post-pandemic?

The investment that the Government make needs to be much more balanced on the individual needs of the area, rather than the country as a whole. The important word in the 'levelling up' agenda is the word 'up'. We need everyone to be going 'up', but some might need that bit more help than others. We shouldn't disadvantage growth in the south to help the north. We have regional strength, most notably manufacturing, which should be supported and could play a key role in projects including HS2.





**Paul Hirst,
Head of the Transport Sector Group at
Addleshaw Goddard and Chair of the
Transport and Connectivity Committee of the
Northern Powerhouse Partnership**

Paul is rated as one of the UK's top transport lawyers with an unrivalled breadth of experience in the sector including rail infrastructure schemes, development of business cases in accordance with DfT and Treasury guidance, light rail schemes, heavy rail franchising, rolling stock procurement and leasing and advising a range of public and private sector clients.

Paul's experience includes advising the Department for Transport on the West Coast Partnership franchise competition and on the HS2 and East West Rail Development Agreements between the Secretary of State and the East West Rail Company and HS2 Limited.

Paul is a member of Leeds City Council's Connecting Leeds Expert Advisory Council and on the Expert Advisory Panel to the Institute of Transport Studies, Leeds University.

“Securing high speed rail is a huge vote of confidence for the region, acting as a spur for regeneration and growth at a moment when we are emerging from the biggest economic disruption in a generation. HS2 is at the heart of the growth strategies of West Yorkshire and the Sheffield City Region, which aims to provide more than £70bn to those economies”.

Why Yorkshire and the North East need a high speed rail revolution

Any time now, the fate of high speed rail projects such as HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail will be decided in the Government’s much-anticipated Integrated Rail Plan (IRP).

It will be a vital moment for Yorkshire and the North East. Securing high speed rail is a huge vote of confidence for the region, acting as a spur for regeneration and growth at a moment when we are emerging from the biggest economic disruption in a generation.

The Government’s promise to deliver both schemes, back in February last year, has already triggered a wave of investment – pouring into the northern towns and cities along a high speed rail route.

Our office in Leeds city centre looks out over the refurbishment work at the station which will eventually serve HS2; a sustainable development that includes cycle lanes and a new pedestrianised area.

But this is just the beginning. Provided it follows through on the commitments made to northern businesses, the IRP should deliver the much-needed clarity that would unlock billions more in public and private investment in cities such as Sheffield, York, Bradford and Hull.

According to our 2019 survey of 5,000 northern businesses, 99% believed Northern Powerhouse Rail would raise productivity here in the north and 85% thought it would increase inward investment.

Certainty gives businesses the confidence to build a growth strategy, knowing what to expect from a city in the months and years to come.

In Leeds this has already translated into action. There have been announcements in recent weeks from the Bank of England, the BBC and a number

of Government departments that they will be moving parts of their operations here – following in the footsteps of Channel 4 and the British Library. Leeds is also the headquarters of the new UK Infrastructure Bank, based across the road from our Leeds office.

Unlocking economic potential is hugely dependent on transport infrastructure. When people can commute to a town or city more quickly or easily, it expands the local labour market. Instead of limiting their potential workforce to a narrow radius, businesses can recruit from neighbouring towns and cities, tapping into a bigger talent pool.

Back in March, business and civic leaders from across the region made the case for why Bradford needs to be linked into Northern Powerhouse Rail. A city centre station would bring its population – one of the youngest, most diverse in the country – just a short shuttle journey away from both Leeds and Manchester.

HS2 is at the heart of the growth strategies of West Yorkshire and the Sheffield City Region, which aims to provide more than £70bn to those economies, with the potential for almost 10,000 new homes and more than £5bn of private sector investment.

Over 150,000 additional jobs could be created in and around Leeds, Sheffield and the East Midlands through delivery of HS2’s Eastern Leg, providing well-paid, skilled employment at a time when we’ve never needed it more.



Commitment now would also allow us to get started on the enablers surrounding these large-scale projects, designing and building integrated bus, cycle and walking routes to maximise the impact on connectivity.

Perhaps most importantly, high speed rail and the extra capacity on the rail network that it enables, is the linchpin to a greener, more sustainable transport network here in the north.

The vast majority of northern commuters still drive to work, preferring even congested motorways to the glacially slow, unreliable rail services currently available.

Freight is transported hundreds of miles by articulated lorries, rather than placed at the mercy of countless delays on over-capacity rail lines.

According to Department of Transport data, every tonne carried by rail instead of road reduces carbon dioxide emissions by 76% - and it is road freight that is harder to decarbonise than passenger cars.

We can't afford to lose momentum now; there is just too much riding on it. Each year without a firm decision costs the north and Midlands an estimated £4.9bn. Now is time to be bold in our ambitions, recognising this as an opportunity to build a lasting Northern Powerhouse just as prosperous as the south.

The north needs the high speed rail revolution it was promised – a true economic recovery won't happen without it.







**Mike Hulme and Justin Moss,
Co-Chairs of the Northern Rail Industry Leaders
(NRIL)**

Mike Hulme is Projects Director for Alstom Transport UK Services. He is responsible for the strategic approach and delivery of key transport solutions including rolling stock supply and associated maintenance services. He also provides guidance to key stakeholders on employee skill development supporting both Liverpool City Region and the broader transport sector.

Justin Moss is Head of Sales Electrification at Siemens Mobility. He has over 27 years' experience specialising in rail, electrification, mechanical and electrical projects, of which over 15 years has been within the rail industry. He has worked closely with the Government, clients, main contractors and subcontractors at a strategic level having good communication, maintaining excellent relationships throughout the industry and providing excellent growth for business.

As Co-Chairs of Northern Rail Industry Leaders, Mike and Justin are focused on promoting the north's rail industry, development of its skills base and campaigning for an improved interconnected travel experience across the region.

“Rail should be a prime candidate for investment as the Government looks to industries to spur an economic recovery, and could help provide jobs in the north for decades to come. The three major projects planned for the north of England: HS2, Northern Powerhouse Rail and the Transpennine Route Upgrade, are all crucial in ‘levelling up’ the region, and each needs to be delivered in full, if we are to reap the full economic benefits”.

Providing a voice for northern rail businesses

The north is home to hundreds of rail supply chain businesses, who employ thousands of people. Despite its long heritage, the north’s railway is facing growing constraints on ageing infrastructure, and there is still a need for further investment in connections between major cities. HS2 has the potential to address this.

The Northern Rail Industry Leaders (NRIL) is a representative group for some 150 rail companies and is facilitated by the Railway Industry Association (RIA). From Manchester to Middlesbrough and Liverpool to Leeds, NRIL brings together businesses to help develop and support the rail industry in the region. Our aim is to help to provide a unified voice for what rail suppliers need from investment and to highlight the economic value they bring to the region and the nation as a whole.

In 2019, we published our flagship White Paper, ‘Building the north’s Railways’, which examines how we can deliver transformational improvements to the north’s rail network. Through its five workstreams – on decarbonisation, digitalisation, skills, innovation and value for money – NRIL continues to work collaboratively with industry partners, to turn this vision into a reality.

Ahead of the mayoral and local elections in May 2021, and as part of a national RIA initiative, we published a joint ‘Rail Manifesto for the North’. This followed a workshop with NRIL and RIA members, to hear their thoughts and concerns for the future of the industry.

Our key asks were:

1. Deliver major projects in the north, including HS2, with the Eastern Leg, Northern Powerhouse Rail and the Transpennine Route Upgrade.
2. To recognise the importance of rail for net zero and accelerate the decarbonisation of the north’s rail network.
3. Help boost investment in skills and capability, and promote the range of high skilled, green jobs and career opportunities in the rail industry to students and workers across the north.
4. Provide funding for and support Research and Development (R&D) across the north, ensuring that innovation is at the heart of the rail sector plans.

Looking ahead, through HS2 and other major projects, there is a bright future for the north’s railway supply chain.

Major projects

Rail should be a prime candidate for investment as the Government looks to industries to spur an economic recovery and could help provide jobs in the north for decades to come. The three major projects planned for the north of England: HS2, Northern Powerhouse Rail and the Transpennine Route Upgrade, are all crucial in ‘levelling up’ the region, and each needs to be delivered in full, if we are to reap the full economic benefits.

It is estimated that HS2 will support 30,000 jobs at the peak of construction and Transport for the North has estimated that – combined with HS2 – Northern Powerhouse Rail could lead to 74,000 jobs being created by 2060. HS2 Ltd say over 500,000 jobs could be supported through the project’s wider economic impact. Whether these projects are delivered in full will have a big impact on our members in the supply chain.



A recent survey by the Railway Industry Association (RIA) and HSRG asked over 100 SMEs right across the UK about the importance of HS2. It found that of those already working on HS2, 80.5% anticipated a drop in revenue should the Phase 2b Eastern Leg not go ahead, with nearly half responding that they would need to downsize staff levels. Almost a fifth said that they would even consider moving into other markets. Cutbacks to rail investment will directly impact the sector's ability to create jobs and economic growth.

Net zero

Rail is already a clean mode of transport for both passengers and freight – contributing just 2% of transport emissions and 0.6% of total UK emissions – and will be vital for the UK to reach net zero by 2050.

However, more needs to be done to continue to decarbonise the north's rail network and encourage people and freight to travel by rail. This includes restarting electrification schemes, ordering low carbon rolling stock and, crucially on the passenger side, providing incentives to take the train. HS2 will play its part, ensuring we have capacity and greater connectivity as passengers return to the current network, which could be used for more rail freight.

But, as highlighted in NRIL's Decarbonisation White Paper, for the UK to reach net zero by 2050, the industry will require an unequivocal commitment to decarbonise the UK's railways and encourage rail travel, to drive modal shift.

Skills

Right across the industry, there is much focus on skills. Major rail projects will require a wide range of skills, so will provide excellent opportunities to the younger generation.

Since construction began, HS2 has brought on over 500 apprentices, who will learn skills in critical areas for our economy including construction and digital technology. Many businesses are gearing up for the work HS2 will provide, recruiting into well-paid, highly skilled jobs that will provide young people with fantastic career prospects in future.

Yet it is also likely that many railway professionals will retire in the coming years, and there is a real risk of a skills gap emerging. This is more acute in areas such as digital technology and data – disciplines which will only be of increasing importance in the years to come.

As we emerge from the pandemic, during which many businesses have struggled, the north's rail supply chain needs the confidence from its political leaders to make investments in skills. It also needs our political leaders to promote the range of exciting career opportunities that the railway has to offer.



Innovation

The north is home to some of the UK's leading research universities and some its most innovative rail companies. Research and development has an undeniable role to play in delivering a world-class transport system in the region.

Indeed, in the recently announced Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail, the Government emphasises the role that both the private sector and academia have to play in bringing innovative solutions to challenges on the railways.

However, there is more work to do. That is why NRIL has worked closely with Transport for the North (TfN) to publish our recent Innovation Paper, which set out five pragmatic recommendations for stimulating innovation within the organisation, with aim of improving project delivery and enabling the integration of different regional schemes. These are: develop a plan for defining and communicating challenge statements; define an innovation funding strategy for TfN; make innovation a key pillar of TfN's people strategy; embed procurement and contracting process that encourage innovation; and develop a plan suitable to capability of northern SMEs, consultants and universities.

There is no doubt it will be a complex task to join up the planned rail links in the north, and TfN has a challenge on its hands. But through steps like these, innovation can and will help in finding better ways of working and cutting costs.

As the UK recovers from the Coronavirus pandemic, there will clearly be pressure on the Government's finances. But with the economic value, jobs

supported and connections to communities that rail investment brings, NRIL and our members remain ambitious about the future of the railways and its role in powering a green recovery.

Rail remains a clean, accessible and affordable means of transport for millions of people. Delivering HS2 and other major projects truly has the power to change lives for the better.



**Councillor James Lewis,
Leader of Leeds City Council and
Chair of HS2 East**

James has been Leader of Leeds City Council since February 2021, having previously been Deputy Leader of the Council since May 2015. In May 2021, the newly elected Mayor of West Yorkshire Tracy Brabin also appointed Cllr Lewis as the Deputy Mayor of West Yorkshire.

He has responsibility in Leeds for devolution and local freedoms as well as leading the Council's budget and strategic planning ensuring these are matched to the needs of the citizens and communities in its area and ensuring the delivery of strategic priorities.

James was first elected as a Labour Councillor to represent the Barwick and Kippax ward, now the Kippax and Methley ward, in 2003. He has held numerous positions during his time as a Councillor, including being the Chair of Metro (West Yorkshire's Integrated Transport Authority) between 2011 and 2015.

“The delivery of the Eastern Leg of HS2 is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to truly rebalance the United Kingdom’s economy, creating meaningful and inclusive growth across the Midlands, Yorkshire and the North East”.

Interview with Councillor James Lewis, Leader of Leeds City Council and Chair of HS2 East

As Chair of HS2 East, could you describe what the group does and what your view of HS2 is?

HS2 East is a group that represents cities across the Midlands and the North, campaigning to ensure the once-in-a-generation opportunity presented by HS2 East is realised. We believe that HS2 East offers a truly transformational opportunity for our region, towns, cities and communities. For our group, HS2 East is about much more than high speed rail - it is a catalyst by which we can future-proof our region, deliver inclusive growth and create meaningful jobs. I echo this view and firmly believe that if the government is serious about its levelling up agenda, they must commit to HS2 East, in full and on schedule. I will continue to work to ensure this is the case, campaigning alongside my fellow members to highlight the importance of HS2 East.

Can you outline the cross-party coalition behind HS2 in the HS2 East areas - why these voices are important, which areas they cover and what they seek ahead?

Our two chairs, Cllr Ben Bradley MP and I, stem from opposite sides of the political divide but are united in our joint belief in the transformational potential of HS2 East upon our regions. It is crucial that we continue to amplify voices from across the political spectrum that are in support of HS2 East, to highlight that the pending decision around HS2 is not a political one: rather a common sense one for our regions.

We will continue to work across party lines in support of our cities, towns, communities, and regions as we work to secure the delivery of HS2 East in full. I would urge anyone who is in support of HS2 East to speak up as we continue to make the case for its full delivery.

Describe the importance of HS2 Phase 2b to Eastern Leg communities, and Yorkshire in particular and how this new railway network will help ‘level up’?

The delivery of the Eastern Leg of HS2 is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to truly rebalance the United Kingdom’s economy, creating meaningful and inclusive growth across the Midlands, Yorkshire and the North East. For our regions it represents an estimated 300 billion in GVA, enough to pay for the entire project many times over. More specifically for Leeds it represents 40,000 new jobs for individuals, 8000 new homes for families, 273,000m² of new office space for companies and £40 billion in GVA for our communities. It is imperative for economic growth that we develop more capacity and move away from a rail network that was constructed to serve a Victorian economy.

How does HS2 help change economic geographies, link cities in the north and Midlands, support economic growth and underpin plans for the region?

HS2 offers an unprecedented opportunity to realign our economy, shifting the focus away from London and creating significant opportunities for growth and innovation in the north and the Midlands. Already Birmingham is seeing a significant increase in investment from developers and business. For Leeds, the promise of HS2 has been central in our bids to attract major organisations and investment away from London. Plans to develop a

new station and the increased interconnectivity of an integrated rail network are central to our efforts to regenerate the South Bank of our city, delivering inclusive development and growth for a significant swathe of our population. The continued uncertainty around HS2 is threatening to put the brakes on projects across Leeds and the wider region. We have committed to our side of the bargain, harnessing HS2 to deliver growth across our region: now all we ask is for the government to stay committed to their side and deliver HS2 East.

What is the interrelationship between HS2 and NPR, and how does HS2 help support NPR? What do both bring to the region?

Leeds' existing station is full. In 2019 there were 34 million passengers, and this is forecast to grow to 70 million by 2043. On average Leeds' existing station passenger numbers have risen by 1 million per year since 2000. By 2026 it is anticipated that passengers will need to be held back from the ticket gates until their train has arrived because of the safety concerns on capacity on the platforms and overbridges. The concourses similarly will not have the capacity to meet the growth. There is a Leeds Existing Station Programme to increase the capacity for passengers in the station which must be delivered in the next 5 years. In addition, 15 million Leeds Station passengers a year have their trains delayed or cancelled because of the capacity constraints in the station and on the approaches into the station. TRU and work on the approaches to the existing station are designed to resolve the existing capacity problems at the station but it does not have room to meet future growth. The safeguarded land to the south of the station enables the HS2 station and connection to Sheffield which is a combined HS2/ NPR investment, which in turn creates capacity within the existing station to meet the local increasing demand and create space for new local and NPR services.

As the Leader of Leeds City Council, Yorkshire's largest city, how important is it that Yorkshire has clean, green transport options through high speed rail?

HS2 East offers a clean alternative to our current infrastructure systems that rely too heavily on fossil fuels. Investing in our rail capacity and making rail travel more 'attractive' will help us to take more cars off the roads and offer everyone across our region access to fast and reliable transport.

Recently we have made our case to the government around the importance of HS2 East to the future of UK rail freight. The entire HS2 network will create space on the existing rail network for up to 144 extra freight trains every day, with each freight train taking up to 76 HGVs off the road – which is potentially up to 3.9 million journeys in total.

Rail freight also uses 76% less carbon compared with the equivalent road movement, which businesses are very aware of and are therefore keen to utilise as they aim to reach their own carbon reduction targets. Tackling current track congestion is restricting freight and passenger services, which is why we believe it must be an urgent priority for the government to give the green light to HS2 East if they intend to meet their carbon neutral targets by 2050.

What is your message to the Government on the Eastern Leg, with a decision on this expected in Autumn through the Integrated Rail Plan?

Across the Midlands and the North, we have lived up to our commitment to utilise the power of HS2 as a catalyst for growth. Long term plans for inclusive growth and regeneration have been put into motion across our region, which are now being threatened by the continued uncertainty around HS2 East. If the government is serious about their levelling up agenda, they must not put the brakes on such a crucial infrastructure project. Only with the full delivery of HS2 East, alongside a truly integrated rail network, will we be able to fix the significant geographical inequalities that impact not only our region, but also the country.



