



# HS2 NORTH WEST VOICES

October 2019



HIGH SPEED RAIL  
INDUSTRY LEADERS

## About High Speed Rail Industry Leaders

HSRIL (High Speed Rail Industry Leaders) 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, ranging from creating entirely new high speed networks through to maintaining and improving the UK's existing rail network. This gives us a unique insight into both the shortcomings in the current network, and the transformative capacity and connectivity benefits that high speed rail can bring. HSRIL supports investment in high speed rail including expansion of the high speed network through HS2. It also supports high speed rail's integration with the existing rail network, and the investment needed to spread the wider economic benefits of HS2, and supports related rail investments such as Northern Powerhouse Rail and Midlands Connect.

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*“Improving the productivity of UK city regions, including in the North West, is critical to driving the UK economy and spreading prosperity.”*

## Executive Summary

HS2 is a vital project for the UK, with a wide range of supporters that cut across politics and geography. They recognise and champion the transformational nature of the programme and the wide range of benefits that it will bring across the country. Some of those key supporters, from business, politics and the public sector, have come together in this collection of 'HS2 Voices'.

The collection focuses on the North West, and future editions will come from other parts of the country. Each contributor outlines their compelling reasons as to why HS2 is so important to the North West as well as to the country; and why it is crucial that the scheme be delivered in full. A number of key benefits are pointed to throughout. These include:

- Radically changing the transport offer for passengers with more capacity, connections, reliability and faster services
- Increasing jobs and access to them, along with a significant boost for skills
- Business growth and increased export power including improving international, national and sub-regional connectivity
- Supporting the success of cities and towns, including through increased tourism
- Supporting new homes and investments in communities
- HS2 as an essential component in the delivery of Northern Powerhouse Rail
- Environmental benefits, including removing freight off roads

For too long, Britain has suffered from huge regional imbalances, with productivity in London some 40 per cent greater than in the North. Over the years, underinvestment in transport infrastructure, both within and between the regions, has acted as a constant constraint to growth and business productivity. Improving the productivity of UK city regions, including in the North West, is critical to driving the UK economy and spreading prosperity.

HS2 will provide a step-change in connectivity to the North, bringing people, their skills and businesses closer together to open up markets and create a more balanced economy. Business connectivity will be increased significantly through HS2. Critically, the business connectivity increase in the North West will be more than double that of London - a 19 per cent increase compared to 9 per cent improvement for London.



HS2 is also essential to tackling the capacity crunch on our North-South railways. Existing railway lines are either approaching or already at capacity, unable to accommodate more or longer trains. HS2 has consistently emerged as the best way of tackling the North-South capacity crunch and freeing up capacity on existing lines, enabling increasing numbers of commuters, improving connections to and between major cities and shifting





a much greater proportion of freight to rail, as well as improving service punctuality and alleviating crowding on trains. Closely connected to this, the North West will see a significant reduction in journey times as a result of HS2. For example, the time from Manchester to Birmingham drops from 88 minutes to 40 minutes. From Carlisle to London the journey will drop from 195 minutes to 154 minutes, from Wigan 115 minutes to 84 minutes and Crewe from 90 minutes to 55 minutes. Between London and Manchester, journey times will nearly halve from 127 minutes to 67 minutes once the HS2 network is in place.

## The importance of HS2 to North West regional economies

The Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham; and Mayor of the Liverpool City Region, Steve Rotherham; have jointly said in regard to HS2 and rail investment in the North West that “the time has come to turn the words into action. We can’t let parliamentary paralysis stall long promised progress for people in the North.”<sup>1</sup> Cities and regions across the North West are already developing their urban strategies and securing private investment on the assumption of HS2 being completed in full. Investment is building on what has been taking place further along the HS2 route, most noticeably in Birmingham.

In **Manchester**, HS2 is integral to local plans to drive growth. The Greater Manchester HS2 Growth Strategy has the potential to double the economic output of the region to £132 billion by 2050, delivering 96,000 jobs and 16,800 homes. The accompanying redevelopment of Manchester Piccadilly is expected to create 40,000 new jobs and 13,000 new homes. In addition, development plans around the HS2 station at Manchester Airport include creating a new neighbourhood with homes, offices and hotels. This will create the potential for 20,000 jobs.

Over in **Liverpool City Region**, the Linking Liverpool campaign has ambitions to create 20,000 new jobs, building 10,000 new homes and boosting the city region’s economy by £15 billion through HS2. The City Region would integrate the existing HS2 route and build on the Northern Powerhouse Rail proposals for high speed East-West links directly into Liverpool city centre. A commission has also been set up to deliver a new station for Liverpool City Centre.

The HS2 Growth Strategy published by the Constellation Partnership, which includes **Cheshire**, have set out their ambitions to deliver new jobs by 2040, spurred on by HS2

<sup>1</sup><https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/westminster-is-broken-but-it-is-high-time-the-north-was-fixed-qbczjkkt?ni-statuscode=acsaz-307>



connectivity. They predict that this growth will be worth £6.4 billion to the UK economy. At the same time, the **Crewe** Masterplan is set to create a new commercial hub around the station, which includes 37,000 new jobs and an additional 7,000 new homes by 2043. Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership have put into place the Cumbria Infrastructure Plan which recognises the benefits and opportunities provided by being HS2 ready. There are ambitions to enhance **Carlisle** station's role as an integrated transport hub, along with redevelopment of the local area. The Carlisle Station Gateway plan has the potential to add an additional £40 million a year to the regional economy.

The Lancashire Enterprise Partnership believes that productivity gains from the impact of HS2 services to the area could help provide an extra £600m for the region. The Partnership sees **Preston** as the engine to establish an 'arc of prosperity' running from Lancaster and through to Blackpool, Blackburn and Burnley. In Preston itself, HS2 could mean 75,000 extra visitors a year, adding £3.3m to the city's economy annually. In addition, many North West businesses are already working on the HS2 project in the supply chain.

## Our Voices

The contributions contained within this collection come from a range of Voices throughout the North West. Members of Parliament, Local Government, Business Membership Organisations, Local Enterprise Partnerships and regional and national Businesses are all represented. Of all the benefits our Voices believe HS2 will deliver, increased business connectivity is perhaps the most prominent. Delivering what Pat Bartoli describes as a "step change in connectivity to the cities outside of London," HS2 is seen as key to closing the North South divide. There is a widespread belief that Northern infrastructure investment has been, in the words of Lucy Powell MP "held back by decisions taken in Whitehall, which benefit London and the South East alone." Improving connectivity through HS2 will in turn turbo charge the wider Northern economy, opening up and increasing opportunities for the region's businesses and communities.

Growing export power created in the North West through HS2 is also key. As Tim Hawkins describes in 'Power up the North West,' Manchester Airports Group sees the ability for Northern businesses to be global as "critically dependent on their ability to access their closest UK airport quickly and efficiently" and if regional businesses are to thrive abroad, they must be provided with the best opportunity to do so.





Similarly, Councillor Liam Robinson discusses the impact HS2 will have on rail freight in Liverpool, releasing capacity on the West Coast Mainline to support the growth of the city's port, which is strategically located to support the growth in transatlantic trade. Development and regeneration opportunities throughout the North West arising from HS2 are highlighted as well. As Cheshire and Warrington LEP's Philip Cox says, "high speed rail projects around the world have shown that improved connectivity can change perceptions of areas, open up new markets, and act as a catalyst to economically reposition towns, cities and regions." Chris Fletcher points to the opportunities rail infrastructure projects such as Crossrail and the redevelopment of Kings Cross have afforded to London and suggests the same can and will happen in Manchester. Likewise, Pat Bartoli sets out Manchester City Council's approach to regeneration and the changing face of the city that will result from HS2 investment. Moving further North, Carlisle MP John Stevenson discusses the impact HS2 will have on attracting more people to Cumbria's regional capital and its hinterlands.

Improving skills provision across the region is also key. It is made clear that throughout the North West, long-term employment opportunities will come from increased development and investment resulting from HS2. Chris Cooney's description of the Bombardier Crewe site is a case in point. He describes Bombardier's eagerness to build links with local schools, colleges and community groups to ensure Crewe benefits from the company's work. Will Roberts looks at the role some of the North West's graduates are playing in Alstom's key regional facilities, securing the future of high tech railway skills, and preparing for HS2. Similarly, Pat Bartoli describes how Manchester City Council have produced an Employment and Skills Strategy as part of the Greater Manchester HS2 and NPR Growth Strategy. Given the geographic focus of this collection, a recurring theme which presents itself again and again is the need to complete HS2 in full in order to ensure the future success of Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR). There is an unequivocal rejection from our Voices of the false choice pitting HS2 against NPR. As Liverpool Downtown CEO Frank McKenna comments in 'Because we're worth it', "Don't fall for the Westminster Mandarin's line about choosing which is most important, HS2 or Northern Powerhouse Rail. We need and deserve both."

HS2 is now integral to local plans to drive business growth, create careers, and secure investment years before HS2 arrives in the North West. Let us be clear: HS2 is not an end in itself, but an enhanced Northern transport network will make an enormous difference. It will undoubtedly bring with it improved rail services, an upskilled workforce, and a thriving Northern economy. In order for this to happen, HS2 must go all the way, and be completed in full.



**Tim Hawkins,  
Chief Strategy Officer, Manchester  
Airports Group**

Tim leads Manchester Airports Group (MAG) strategy, public affairs, external communications, and corporate social responsibility teams. He has been with MAG since 2013.

Prior to that, Tim was part of London Stansted's senior leadership team, with responsibility for economic regulation and long-term planning. Tim led the airport's engagement with the Civil Aviation Authority during the review which led to Stansted being de-regulated. Before joining Stansted in 2011, Tim held a number of positions with BAA, working on a range of regulatory, competition and policy issues.

*“Increasing the opportunities for Northern businesses internationally, facilitated by the HS2 line inclusive of an airport station, will be a vital milestone on the journey to rebalancing the UK economy.”*

### **Power up the North West: what will HS2 do for the regional business environment**

HS2 has been described as a ‘once in a generation’ opportunity for UK infrastructure investment, and its impact on the regional business environment in the North could – and should - last for generations to come.

Since the launch of the Northern Powerhouse five years ago by the then-Chancellor, George Osborne, much of the political rhetoric around public spending, investment and of course transport has been focused around the need to pay more attention to the towns, cities and regions outside of London and the South East.

The North’s ability to attract investment, jobs and new opportunities has, in these last five years been proven. Organisations as diverse as Channel 4, Siemens and The Hut Group have invested huge amounts in establishing new bases in cities like Leeds, Hull and Manchester. However, the missing piece of the puzzle continues to be the substantial investment that is needed in transport infrastructure to, from and around this growing region. These companies are the trailblazers and I am confident that many more would follow if greater priority was given to transport investment in the North. A recent study by Transport for the North showed that a transformed Northern economy would contribute to a 15 per cent uplift in UK GVA.

Manchester Airport is the third largest in the UK, and the largest outside of London, serving 29 million passengers a year. With around 220 global connections, the airport is playing a fundamental role in ensuring Northern businesses can reach

their target markets across the world. Whether we are talking about a tech business in Leeds wanting to start conversations with a partner business in San Francisco, or a business in Liverpool wanting to export to China for the first time, the ability for Northern businesses to be ‘global’ is critically dependent on their ability to access their closest UK airport quickly and efficiently - so if we want our regional businesses to thrive abroad, we need to provide them with the best infrastructure to do so.

An HS2 station at Manchester Airport would be an important step towards reducing journey times, opening up the airport’s existing network of long-haul connections to more businesses right across the North who would benefit from fast rail journey times direct to the airport. The station would also help the airport to create a chain reaction of brand new global connections, as airlines are more likely to open routes from airports which are easy to reach from a wider catchment area. So the station would not only support Manchester’s existing connections to destinations such as New York, Dubai and Beijing, it would also open up opportunities for businesses who want to enter new markets outside of the current network, but without having to endure travelling via Heathrow to reach these places.

Increasing the opportunities for Northern businesses internationally, facilitated by the HS2 line inclusive of an airport station, will be a vital milestone on the journey to rebalancing the UK economy. But, it would also be a crucial milestone towards improving transport infrastructure in the North. In July, the Prime Minister announced his commitment to a high-speed link between Manchester and Leeds – which would be the first step in creating Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR), eventually connecting the entire region from East to West.



*“Given the urgency that must now be attached to rebalancing the UK economy, we cannot wait until 2040 for HS2 to start driving economic growth across the North.”*

The benefits of this link can only be fully maximised if HS2 to Manchester - with a station at Manchester Airport - is delivered at the same time. The combination of the two schemes working together, North to South and East to West, with Manchester Airport - the gateway to global business markets - as the interchange, would allow businesses across the North to reach their full potential and start fundamentally rebalancing the UK economy. The combined links would empower local businesses, big and small, from towns and cities across the region to explore the idea of trading abroad, with the knowledge that access to the UK's third largest airport was fast and efficient.

Policy makers must consider the merit of the HS2 line to Manchester, and far-reaching benefits which it would deliver in its own right, and also the way it will support the delivery of the Northern Powerhouse Rail project. They must recognise the need for these benefits to be felt as soon as possible.

Given the urgency that must now be attached to rebalancing the UK economy, we cannot wait until 2040 for HS2 to start driving economic growth across the North. We need to find a solution that can be delivered earlier so that people and business in the North feel the benefits much sooner. This would send a practical and symbolic message, demonstrating the importance of businesses from across the North having the best opportunities to succeed to their fullest in both domestic and international markets. ■





**Lucy Powell**, Member of Parliament

Lucy is the Labour and Co-operative MP for Manchester Central. She was elected in a by-election in 2012, becoming the first female Labour MP to represent a Manchester constituency. Lucy was born and brought up in Manchester before going on to study Chemistry at Oxford University and King's College London.

Lucy has previously served in the Shadow Cabinet, as Shadow Minister for the Cabinet Office and Shadow Education Secretary. She now sits on the Education Select Committee and chairs a number of All Party Parliamentary Groups, including the Greater Manchester APPG.



*“HS2 is critical to NPR....it should not be an either or...Not only will it [HS2] provide quicker journey times between North and South, it will also free up capacity to improve existing services.”*

## Transforming the political power of the North West

What is your view of HS2 and its importance to Manchester?

HS2 is a critical component of the Northern Powerhouse. Not only will it provide quicker journey times between North and South, it will also free up capacity to improve existing services. Most importantly, the most expensive bits of Northern Powerhouse Rail are delivered by HS2, meaning that project is better value, and can commence more quickly. That's why it's so concerning that the Government are now reviewing the scheme. It would be a catastrophic mistake for the northern economy, connectivity and our potential, if Ministers in Westminster were to cancel the scheme.

With Manchester growing in status, economic strength and political voice, how will improved rail services through HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) further support this going forward?

The North deserves its fair share of transport infrastructure investment. We have long been held back by decisions taken in Whitehall, which benefit London and the South East alone. Improved connectivity through HS2 and NPR will put rocket boosters behind the economy of the North, and open up more opportunities for northern young people, businesses and communities. HS2 and NPR are a story for the whole North, not just our conurbation in Manchester, that's why it's so important that the Government don't turn their back on us now, and fulfil their promises to the region.

We know that HS2 must be completed in full to bring the full benefits to Manchester and beyond. How do we build the biggest coalition to see HS2 completed in full and all the way? How important is it to get across that it is not a choice between HS2 and NPR, both are needed?

It's vital. And I think we see that already, in the coalition that the Northern Powerhouse Partnership are bringing together around their campaigning on this issue. They'd brought together a fantastic array of politicians across parties, business leaders and civic society representatives, all shouting about the importance of HS2 and NPR. We've seen regional newspapers across the North come together in the 'Power Up the North' campaign as well. This energy and dynamism is coming from the grass roots up, across our region. It's our time to shine, but we have to have the powers and funding devolved and delivered by Government to give us the best chance to succeed.

Do you think Manchester and Northern voices are heard enough in Westminster and is there sufficient understanding of the importance of HS2 to the North West economy?

The North has a strong, and increasingly more united voice in Parliament, and the country, particularly when it comes to transport infrastructure, but I do worry that decisions affecting the North are still being made in Whitehall not regional town halls coming together. This latest review of HS2, and the PM's announcement about NPR in his first big speech, welcome though that focus was on the North, show that the commitment and understanding may only go skin deep. HS2 is critical to NPR, as I've said, it should not be an either or. If the wrong decision is made in this review, then northern voices will get louder, and the Government will get a kick in the ballots at the next election.




You represent the centre of Manchester which has seen a huge amount of change, investment and transformation over the last decade. What has this meant for Manchester and what does the future hold with improved rail connections?

When most people think about my constituency, they think of the booming city centre and high rise flats, but Manchester Central also has some of the highest rates of child poverty and deprivation in the country. It's the country in microcosm: affluent centre, and poorer but just as vibrant communities in town-like areas around this centre. We've seen a lot of change and improvements across the city, but austerity has hit hard too. Improved rail connections are important to boost connectivity across the North, and links to the airport and South, but better bus travel is also vital, and just as, if not more important to, the communities I represent. This is the big challenge we are grappling with. We have to use the powers we have – say on bus franchising – whilst also ensuring that we have the funding and powers to transform our transport infrastructure so that no communities are left behind.

HS2 offers opportunities for local businesses to become part of the supply chain to build HS2, not just when works commence locally but on the works already happening along the route. Similarly there are opportunities for local people to become apprentices. As a local MP how do you think these opportunities can be best communicated to ensure the widest range of people and business can benefit? How do we ensure all parts of Manchester are involved in shaping and securing the full benefits of HS2?

This is really important and I think more needs to be done: by HS2 Ltd themselves partnering with local colleges and also working with local councils, Chambers of Commerce and other business groups to ensure people are aware of these opportunities and accessing them. HS2 is often seen as something for other people, but if we're to really build support for it across the region, we need to ensure that people have a real stake in it. Better advertising and making accessible these opportunities is one way of doing that.





Manchester now has the second highest retention rate of students after London. Will HS2 help support this and attract talent to Manchester?

Manchester has an energy, confidence and a pull for graduates that few can challenge. We've got a great cultural scene, fantastic sporting facilities and lots of excellent opportunities for graduates as well as people who want something new. We have all the benefits of London, without the disbenefits! Transport connectivity is a key metric for quality of life, and HS2 will give people across the region better rail connections, and boost capacity. Anyone who travels regularly on the train will know that the West Coast mainline is a victim of its own success, with overcrowded trains. HS2 will help us to improve capacity as well as journey times and alongside NPR it will mean transport improvements East West across the Pennines and wider North as well as to the South.

You have talked about the importance of life chances and social mobility. What role does improved transport play? Is it important that when a child born in Manchester today enters the labour market, they will have hugely improved transport opportunities?

There are many other factors that will come into play before transport when it comes to ensuring our kids get the best start in life: home environment, the quality of our education system and public services, the job opportunities and labour market where they grow up. But transport is really important too. Kids in London can – income permitting – access an integrated transport network that is the envy of the rest of the country, with all the opportunities that brings. Getting better and cheaper transport is an important part of opening up opportunities to young people across GM, and the North and that's why it is so vital to our collective as well as each individual's future success. ■





**Philip Cox**, Chief Executive,  
Cheshire and Warrington Local  
Enterprise Partnership

Philip joined Cheshire and Warrington Enterprise Partnership in July 2014. Working closely with the Board, his role is to lead the LEP's Executive Team to deliver the LEP's mission to raise productivity in Cheshire and Warrington and make it a £50 billion pa economy by 2040.

Prior to joining the LEP, Philip was a civil servant where his career included serving as the Principal Private Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and working on issues such as the delivery of the High Speed 1 rail line to the Channel Tunnel, the sale of the Millennium Dome to create the O2 Arena, the creation of Local Enterprise Partnerships, the establishment of Enterprise Zones and overall responsibility for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in England.

*“Investment in the proposed HS2 hub station in Crewe, and in transport more generally, is crucial if Cheshire and Warrington is to continue to be one of the best performing economies in the country.”*

### **Creating a new generation of entrepreneurs and business growth through increased connectivity**

Transport is an essential component in any efficient and productive economy. It brings together the inputs (both raw materials and people) used in the production of goods and services and gets the outputs from the production process to customers. Investment in transport networks is therefore a vital component in creating strong and effective labour markets that enable firms to access a wide pool of people with the skills that businesses need if they are to be successful, and is essential in sustaining high levels of business productivity by making it quick, easy and cost effective for businesses to operate. Transport investment also has a major impact on the environment, quality of life and the overall attractiveness of towns and cities as places to live, work and invest.

Strong and effective transport networks mean that businesses can more easily access:

- Potential suppliers, enabling them to access higher-quality and/or lower-cost inputs;
- Potential customers, enabling them to supply markets further afield; and
- A wider labour market, allowing skills to be better matched to employment opportunities.

Similarly, such networks also allow individuals to more easily access:

- A wider range of jobs, increasing the chances that they can find a position that provides a better match for their skills; and
- Leisure and retail opportunities, allowing them to access a wider range of products or reach similar products at cheaper prices, helping to increase the competitiveness of local businesses.

Investment in the proposed HS2 hub station in Crewe, and in transport more generally, is crucial if Cheshire and Warrington is to continue to be one of the best performing economies in the country. One of the key challenges the sub-region faces in realising this ambition is ensuring entrepreneurs and businesses can access people with the talent and skills that they need. Some of this, of course, can be addressed by providing the right training, something which the Cheshire and Warrington LEP is working on with training providers. But physical access is also important, especially by public transport, to the neighbouring conurbations of Manchester and Liverpool and their pool of skilled labour – an increasingly important issue given Cheshire and Warrington’s ageing labour force and lack of skilled 18-35 year olds.

Across the country, business needs have also been evolving, with a distinct change in the appetite for office infrastructure and a rising demand for space that suits the mobility of modern businesses – hot-desks, co-working and networking space, meeting rooms. SMEs and start-ups often look to online infrastructure – specialist cloud-based services and platforms that are often too high-end for smaller companies operating on their own, but can be accessed via a cooperative, or membership model. These requirements drive the need for good quality digital infrastructure plus good transport accessibility in order to support the mobility modern companies need.

HS2 offers the potential of significant uplift in productivity through enhanced labour market and business-to-business connectivity; increased network capacity; and improved international connections through the HS2 station at Manchester Airport. High speed rail projects around the world have shown that improved connectivity can change perceptions of areas, open up new markets, and act as a catalyst to economically reposition towns, cities and regions.





Crewe forms a core hub on the West Coast Mainline, providing a central interchange point for local journeys to and from East and West Cheshire, North Staffordshire, Shropshire, Greater Manchester, North and Mid Wales, and Merseyside. It also provides connectivity to longer-distance services including London, Birmingham and Scotland. Its central location within the region, and its second-to-none rail connectivity has led to it being referred to as the 'Gateway to the North West'.

As part of HS2, Crewe will have the unique potential of providing rapid connectivity on dedicated lines to Manchester, Birmingham and London, and via HS2 "classic compatible" services on the West Coast Main Line to Liverpool and Scotland. This level of high-speed connectivity to key cities plus affordable land values means it would be attractive to a range of businesses locating for the first time in the area and further building demand for other businesses such as supply chains, accountancy and business support.

If the benefits of HS2 are to be maximised for Crewe and for the North West and North Wales, up to seven high speed trains per hour need to stop at Crewe together with more frequent regional train services,

offering up to four trains per hour to destinations on the rail lines that radiate out from Crewe. Research by the Cheshire and Warrington LEP indicates that with this pattern of services, 1.5 million people across an area that stretches from Stoke-on-Trent to Holyhead will be brought over an hour closer to London, 1.3 million people over half an hour closer to Birmingham and 400,000 people over half an hour closer to Manchester. Realising these benefits, however, requires a design for the Crewe Hub that provides effective and seamless interchange between HS2 and the enhanced regional services that are necessary to strengthen the region as a great place to live, do business and visit.

HS2 has the potential to act as a catalyst to unlock significant economic growth in an area of 2.1 million people that contains industries with a world class manufacturing and engineering supply base, home to best in class companies and leaders in high value/lean manufacturing such as Airbus, Toyota, JCB, Siemens and Qipotic. Get it wrong and it can result not just in missed opportunities, but 2.1 million people and key businesses in the Northern Powerhouse losing direct connection to the UK's core network and becoming peripheral and marginalised. ■





GATE BEGUN A.D. MDCCCLXVIII JOHN KELSALL ESQ. MAYOR

FINISHED A.D. 1897



**Will Roberts**, Communications Director,  
Alstom UK & Ireland

Will has been a Director of HSRIL since 2017 and is also the Communications Director for Alstom UK and Ireland. Born in Manchester, the best part of his job is the amount of time it allows him to spend in the North West, working with Alstom's teams in the region. Before Alstom, Will spent time working in communications consultancy and ran communications teams at trade associations such as Energy UK and the British Retail Consortium. His railway experience also includes five years at Network Rail as Head of Communications for Emerging Projects.

*“With the importance of the railway to the North West continuing to grow, and HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail on the horizon, Alstom has been investing in new technology and skills, training a new generation of North West talent, ready to deliver these investments.”*

## Using the Railway to Return High Tech Skills to the North West

Alstom has been at the heart of the UK's rail industry for over 100 years and today employs 2,000 people across the country working on new trains and trams, infrastructure and signalling systems, as well as maintaining and modernising equipment for British and export customers.

The North West has always been Alstom's home. With depots and industrial facilities in Liverpool, Widnes, Manchester and Chester, Alstom is one of the largest employers in the region's railway. With the importance of the railway to the North West continuing to grow, and HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail on the horizon, Alstom has been investing in new technology and skills, training a new generation of North West talent, ready to deliver these investments.

## The hottest new technology comes from the oldest depot

Over the last 175 years, Manchester Longsight depot has been a vital part of the local community, and generations of engineers have been trained and employed there. It is the oldest working depot in the world and has always been at the forefront of UK rail engineering.

The team of over 200 is dedicated to maintaining a range of train fleets for customers, including the Alstom built Pendolino fleet of 56 Class 390 tilting trains used on the West Coast Main Line.

Here amongst the Victorian railway sheds, you might be surprised to find some of the brightest new graduates in the North West have been creating brand new technology, working with European colleagues in Barcelona and Madrid. TrainScanner is an advanced predictive maintenance solution, built to use lasers and high speed cameras to scan trains as they enter the depot, establishing their condition.

As the train enters the scanner, an RFID chip identifies it automatically and a computerised system safely opens the shutters over the lasers and cameras to begin the scan. The system takes measurements of wheel profiles and dimensions, the thickness of the carbon strip on the pantograph and can even identify the wear on the brake pads throughout the train.

Using all the 'big data' that pours out of the scanner to start to predict the future wear on the train is the real trick and it's why companies like Alstom are now some of the keenest recruiters of North West graduates with skills in data science. Using predictive maintenance tools like TrainScanner to improve maintenance will be vital to delivering efficient operations for the current railway, as well for HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail.

## Investing in Apprentices at Widnes

Not far down the line from Longsight is Alstom's new Technology Centre at Widnes. The UK's first purpose-built intercity modernisation facility, and the largest, Widnes opened in June 2017. It is also home to many of Alstom's apprentices.





The facility operates a unique partnership with the National College for Advanced Transport & Infrastructure (NCATI) to deliver training. The agreement sees the NCATI lead on the provision of learner education and technical training at the facility, while Alstom continues to own and manage the site, providing a current and future supply of apprentices for training through the new partnership. The partnership delivers training for new apprentices, as well as upskilling of the existing team.

The first major contract to be based in Widnes is the repaint of the UK's fleet of Pendolino trains. Not surprisingly, it is on painting these trains that many apprentices often start out.

Another major area of work at Widnes is on parts and overhaul. With a particular expertise in traction and motors, the team supports train fleets not just in Britain, but all around the world. It may surprise some to find out that Widnes is exporting its expertise to South Africa, Australia and beyond. The skilled team are just as likely to be found working on electronics for trains in the Southern Hemisphere as they are for London's tube, generating useful export revenue.

## Low carbon, high skills

Most excitingly of all, Widnes is also Alstom's home for UK hydrogen train plans. With the world's first hydrogen trains already running in Germany, in the UK Alstom is working with Eversholt Rail to take the German train's systems and use them to convert Class 321 electric trains to hydrogen power. By fitting tanks and fuel cells, the partnership plans to reengineer trains that are some of the best proven on the network into some of Britain's most advanced rolling stock.

Hydrogen train technology is an exciting innovation which has the potential to transform our railway, making journeys cleaner and greener by cutting CO2 emissions even further. Working closely with industry stakeholders, Alstom and Eversholt plan to develop the business cases and evaluate detailed introduction plans for fleets of these trains and the associated fuelling infrastructure before starting on the engineering work at Widnes.

With the site at Widnes designed and ready for expansion in the future if needed, and capable of supporting a wide range of manufacturing and industrial activity on-site, the future of high tech railway skills in the North West seems secure. With HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail on the way, apprentices and graduates in the region have a bright future to look forward to. ■







**Chris Cooney**, General Manager,  
Bombardier Crewe

Chris has been Site General Manager at Bombardier Crewe since 2016, responsible for all activity at one of Bombardier's major UK facilities. He joined Bombardier in 2008 having previously held senior positions at Johnson Control Automotive. Based in Liverpool he holds an Honours degree in Engineering with Business Studies from Sheffield Hallam University.



*“The HS2 supply chain is overwhelmingly made up of British companies, ensuring that the line is built, maintained and operated to the benefit of both the local and national economy.”*

## Joining up Britain through HS2

HS2 promises to be the biggest shake up of British transportation in a generation. From London to Birmingham, and onto Manchester, Crewe and Leeds, 330 miles of new track will connect eight of Britain's largest cities and nearly 30 million people like never before. It will add capacity, cut journey times by up to a half, people will have greater choice in choosing where to live and work, and travel will be faster, easier and more reliable. HS2 is also set to plug directly into Northern Powerhouse Rail, providing greater connectivity across the North of England. All of this means it will never have been easier to travel around the Midlands and North of England.

These transport links will drive economic growth, creating 30,000 jobs in the construction and operation of the line, and thousands more indirectly and through the regeneration the project will drive. The HS2 supply chain is overwhelmingly made up of British companies - ensuring that the line is built, maintained and operated will be to the benefit of both the local and national economy. Ministers have always made clear that the new state-of-the-art trains will need to be built and maintained in the UK. This economic growth will fuel 500,000 new jobs and 100,000 new homes, providing further economic benefits to the region.

Here in Crewe, we stand to gain significantly from the HS2 project and there is a real buzz in the town. As part of the Crewe Masterplan, 37,000 jobs are expected in a new commercial hub around the station, as well as 7,000 new homes by 2043, and journey times to London will be cut nearly in half, falling from 90 to 55 minutes. Crewe will also benefit from a new line to Manchester and Manchester Airport, and perhaps Liverpool too in the future, putting Crewe right at the heart of the North West.

Our local council, Cheshire East is rightly supportive of the project, as it will reinforce Cheshire East as the best place to live and do business in the North West providing that the right level of connectivity is provided through the planned Crewe Hub Station. The council believes that HS2 will consolidate Cheshire East as one of the most connected areas in the UK and will support existing businesses, inward investment and job creation in and around Crewe. The latest HS2 announcements place Crewe at the centre of plans. The route will pass through various parts of Cheshire East, with a Hub Station at Crewe and rolling stock depot north of Crewe.

Bombardier and Hitachi have submitted our bid to design, build and maintain the trains for Phase 1 of the project. We can't reveal the details of our bid, but we expect Bombardier's Crewe site to benefit significantly if it is successful.

As a company we are very proud of the history and heritage of our Crewe site, and are very aware of the important role it has played in the town, and continues to play now, 175 years after the first train was built in the golden age of steam. Indeed there are few places in the world which can boast such an illustrious railway heritage. Founded by the Grand Junction Railway in the 1840s, at its height a new train rolled off the production line every week, with more than 20,000 people involved at its employment height.

The modern-day Crewe Works employs around 320 people, working as a servicing site for wheels and gearboxes, traction motors, and bogies from existing rolling stock on the UK rail network – focusing on extending the life of the components in a viable and cost-effective way. It's really heartening for us to know that we are living up to the legacy that we inherited at the Crewe Works when we took over the site in 2001. We've had some big wins on long-term contracts up against some of our biggest competitors. This gives us a high level of

*“With the vast majority of our workforce coming from the town itself, we want to build even stronger links with the community so that we can continue to develop together.”*

confidence in our performance. Everyone at the company is working hard to deliver on our vision, and it's heartening to know that this effort is paying off. We're proud to contribute to the history of Crewe and look forward to doing so for years to come.

We are investing in the future of the site, taking on new apprentices and graduates to ensure that we've got the skills and knowhow to keep operating at full speed in the years ahead. We're eager to build links with schools, colleges and community groups too, to ensure that the local community benefits from our work. With the vast majority of our workforce coming from the town itself, we want to build even stronger links with the community so that we can continue to develop together.

With output from the Crewe Works growing at between 5-10 per cent a year over the past three-four years, it is an exciting time to be involved with our Crewe activities.

HS2 is about investing in the North of the country and bringing rail services into the 21st Century – and with the chance for Crewe to play a vital role in this, we will be continuing the proud heritage of one of the most historic facilities in the country. HS2 represents a fantastic chance for Northern communities and businesses to develop and grow.

In Crewe we are ready to play our part in joining up Britain. ■







**Pat Bartoli**, Head of City Centre  
Regeneration, Manchester City Council

Patricia joined the Race Unit at Manchester City Council in 1989, working on intercommunity tolerance initiatives. She held senior posts within the Policy Unit including Head of Strategic Developments, leading on the establishment of the City Centre Management Company and Education Action Zones, and the delivery of regeneration strategies. In 2007, Patricia became head of the City Centre Growth and Regeneration Team, working to secure investment, drive regeneration and deliver growth objectives.

The team is responsible for schemes including Factory: Manchester, St John's, HOME, Spinningfields, First Street, NOMA, St Michael's, Corridor: Manchester, the Civic Quarter and Mediaeval Quarter, Mayfield, Piccadilly, HS2/NPR and other major transport initiatives.

*“A culturally rich, enjoyable and highly functional city centre is key to attracting and retaining businesses, workers, residents and visitors.”*

## **Manchester City Council's approach to regeneration, and the impact that HS2 will have on the city and its communities**

The story of Manchester's transformation since the 1980's has been remarkable. Self-belief, confidence and attitude has been rebuilt, and this has fuelled significant growth in so many spheres. Major development schemes such as New Cathedral Street, Spinningfields and First Street have changed the face of the city, and others, Ancoats, NOMA, ID Manchester, St John's and Mayfield are emerging and evolving all with their own unique set of assets and attributes.

The future of Manchester is as a diverse and inclusive international city, continuing to successfully partner with developers and investors on our key regeneration projects, driving opportunities and jobs in our key growth sectors.

We know what we have to do to regenerate and grow the city:

- Strengthen our international, national and sub-regional connectivity, including investment in our airport infrastructure; supporting the case for HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) investment; improvements to regional rail; a huge expansion of our light rail system (Metrolink); and new investment in digital infrastructure.
- Raise skills levels throughout the population. Promoting actions to develop the skills the city needs to meet the demands of our existing and future economy, sustaining our growth trajectory, while ensuring all our residents gain maximum benefit from our success.
- Exploiting our knowledge assets, especially our universities, establishing an international track record for knowledge transfer and innovation,

and developing a strategic approach to the development of facilities that encourage additional technology and skills transfer.

- Focusing on Manchester's economic growth sectors, for example advanced materials, health innovation, digital and creative industries, research and development and financial and professional services, and encouraging the development and growth of businesses within the city's competitive economic sectors.
- Becoming an even better place to live, building popular neighbourhoods and providing residents with a choice of tenures and affordable accommodation options, along with amenities and a quality of life offer that enhances the liveability of both the neighbourhood and the city.

## **City Centre Development**

Manchester city centre plays an important role in driving the economy and the regeneration of the city. The city centre contains 40 per cent of all jobs in Manchester and 20 per cent of jobs in Greater Manchester, and a growing population of around 60,000 people. A culturally rich, enjoyable and highly functional city centre is key to attracting and retaining businesses, workers, residents and visitors, through:

- Good quality design, which provides innovative new buildings whilst making the most of heritage assets;
- High quality public realm and open spaces;
- Good connectivity;
- A wide range of arts and leisure facilities, events and festivals; and
- A commitment to clean air and zero carbon.

Manchester's strategic approach to regeneration has been at the heart of the city's success, where long-term investment and regeneration plans have ensured development has come forward in a measured and coordinated way.



*“We will only get the maximum benefit from HS2 and NPR by having both working together as part of the same system.”*

Strategic Regeneration Frameworks covering each area within the city centre have ensured that development opportunities are maximised and respond appropriately to each of the area's distinctive identities and character.

Underpinning the strategic approach to regeneration are strong public and private sector partnerships that have brought together resources, expertise and energy. There are a range of well-established partnerships in the city, which drive forward sustainable growth in key locations. For example, the Oxford Road Corridor Partnership brings together the City Council, Manchester's two universities, the leading teaching hospital, Manchester Science Partnerships, and the private sector, to support the development of this world-class knowledge district.

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority, preceded by the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities, have together provided long-standing joint working that has benefited the whole city region. The city's key assets, including our world-class higher education institutions, our diverse and growing population, our strong talent pipeline, our sporting excellence and our renowned cultural facilities, are all essential factors in our success.

## Benefits of HS2 & Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR)

Manchester, campaigning with other Northern areas, understands the enormous benefits to be gained from HS2 and NPR. The underlying case for HS2 is that it will both drive UK growth and rebalance the economy, by providing a step-change in connectivity to the cities outside of London.

Wider benefits of the schemes include new homes, jobs and skills; the transformation of transport facilities, the regeneration of areas around stations, more capacity and improved connectivity between cities.

HS2 will drive economic growth across the North, improving business to business access; labour market access; and customer leisure markets access. As part of an integrated rail network, HS2 and NPR will bring new skills opportunities and a range of jobs to the North in a variety of sectors. Securing the best possible integration of HS2, NPR and existing rail will attract international investors to the UK. This is particularly important post Brexit. The enhanced connectivity will help share the benefits of foreign direct investment across the Northern regions by improving the access of businesses to a wider and deeper pool of labour and valuable national and international markets.

Transformed rail links across the North will better connect economic centres and businesses, improving journey experience for passengers.

Together, HS2 and NPR investment will help secure sustainable growth and help unlock potential for regeneration benefits in Northern cities. HS2 and NPR need to be thought of as part of a railway network sharing some of the same key infrastructure, not just individual lines. We will only get the maximum benefit from HS2 and NPR by having both working together as part of the same system. The HS2 and NPR Growth Strategy for Greater Manchester sets out the long-term strategic plans to deliver a fully integrated transport system, with world class facilities, new jobs, new homes and new opportunities across the region and beyond.





## Manchester Piccadilly

Turning to Manchester Piccadilly, covering 140 acres, 14 per cent of the whole city centre, this represents one of the biggest development opportunities in the UK. The introduction of HS2 and NPR services, combined with the right kind of investment, will make Manchester Piccadilly one of the best connected and productive locations in the North of England, with an impact not just on the local economy but the UK as a whole. This is a once-in-a century opportunity which we will maximise to the fullest extent.

The proposals in the Strategic Regeneration Frameworks would transform the eastern side of the city centre by defining a unique sense of place for new districts, and by providing key linkages between surrounding communities and the city centre. Central to the Strategic Regeneration Frameworks is a fully integrated, world class transport hub, which would provide a true sense of arrival, properly connected into the wider city centre.

It is estimated that the new investment proposed will bring 40,000 new jobs, 13,000 new homes and 820,000 square metres of new commercial development in the area surrounding Piccadilly. The area is expected to be attractive to a range of key growth industries, such as financial and professional services, digital and creative industries, and education, research and health innovation businesses.

## Manchester Airport

A few miles further south lies Manchester Airport, our international gateway to the North. With its £1bn Transformation Programme, it will increase capacity from 23 million to 45 million passengers a year. HS2 coupled with NPR will greatly improve the connectivity to the Airport from other cities across the North. The importance of providing additional rail freight paths, which directly enable businesses to get their goods to market less expensively than by road is also key.

## Employment and Skills

HS2 will provide huge job opportunities, both during construction and operational phases. Additional long-term employment opportunities will come from the increased development and investment brought to the city. An Employment and Skills Strategy has been produced as part of the Greater Manchester HS2 and NPR Growth Strategy, in order to align the skills of our residents to the jobs created. This has been followed up with a Greater Manchester STEM Framework, which aims to create capacity to support the next 20 years of infrastructure growth in Manchester, including HS2 and NPR.

There is a well reported shortage of STEM skills locally and nationally, including skills within the rail industry, and future job opportunities will demand more of these skills. It is, therefore, essential that we start early in boosting skill levels if we are to meet the challenges ahead. Developing STEM capital is also crucial in building capacity to support the wider growth sectors locating in the development areas around the HS2 and NPR stations, including advanced manufacturing, digital and creative, business, financial and professional services, health innovation and “green” industries and services. Ultimately, the ambition to accelerate growth in the North, to bridge the productivity gap with London and the South East, can only be achieved by investing in HS2, NPR, the improvements needed to deliver the existing Northern rail franchises, and in local transport plans. ■



**Chris Fletcher,** Marketing & Campaigns  
Director, Greater Manchester Chamber of  
Commerce

Chris is responsible for all the Chamber's marketing and communications activity as well as its award-winning campaigning work. This includes interaction and connection with the Chamber's members, networks and the wider business community in Greater Manchester and beyond as well as key influencers, local authorities, politicians and other organizations.

Chris joined the UK's largest Chamber in 2003 as a Local Policy Manager direct from education charity Young Enterprise and after having spent 16 years working for NatWest primarily focused on the start-up and SME market

In December 2014 he was named in the Fresh Business Thinking Power 100 of key UK business influencers.

*“The potential from a scheme such as HS2 is genuinely once in a lifetime and the benefits it will bring are huge.”*

## **HS2: bringing connectivity, investment and development to Greater Manchester**

Ask anyone in the North of England for an example of the “North South divide” and many people would immediately identify the disparity in spending per head on transport that usually manifests itself around the shortcomings of the rail network.

For many in the North the daily reality of short-form trains, delays, cancellations, the dreaded Pacers and an overall poor experience using the rail network, helps act to reinforce the idea and perceived thinking that something isn’t right with our rail network and something needs doing.

Well, despite appearances something is being done. New rolling stock is now hitting the rails on a daily basis not just in the North but across other regions of the UK. Committed and spent budgets for rail investment are at an all time high, and there’s no sign of that stopping. The damaging stand-still franchises of the 1990’s have been consigned to the dustbin of history, with expansion and growth now the name of the game.

So, more passengers and more trains all sounds positive, apart from the fact that those new trains should have been in service twelve months ago and parts of the infrastructure are still creaking at the seams – both track, signals and stations. This is coupled with the fact that many parts of the network are already at full capacity, something radical is needed, and quick.

Freight services, commuter trains and intercity services all share the same space at different speeds. With more services promised, this situation will only become increasingly acute over the next few decades. How can we solve this?

Perhaps by laying more tracks, building new lines, that could take some of the longer destination trains that stop less off the network, releasing more space for local stopping trains and freight to take polluting vehicles off the over-burdened road network? But you couldn’t do this just for parts, you would have to do this on a large scale and at the same time make sure that the aforementioned investment made by local train companies continues unabated to take advantage of that extra track space.

Sounds familiar? It should do because that is the case for HS2 in a nutshell.

Build it and you will unblock the rail network in the UK, energise local development in key cities on the route in the way only major infrastructure projects can do, bringing labour markets closer together than ever before and freeing up freight traffic off the roads. Here at Greater Manchester Chamber, we have been supporters of HS2 for as long as it’s been around. We recognised early on why the scheme was needed and what benefits it would bring – even to the local commuter stuck on some of the most congested track in the UK around Manchester Piccadilly. We are a hugely successful city region economy worth over £60bn per year, but the increasing chokehold placed by creaking infrastructure is beginning to bite.

We have already benefitted from the investment made in the West Coast Mainline over the years. The increase in services from Manchester Piccadilly to London to three per hour, the faster journeys, the longer trains. But still it isn’t enough. We still have a service to Birmingham that is only just quicker than driving there. East - West routes are overcrowded, slow and prone to significant delays, when minor incidents can bring the whole network to a standstill. Local commuter services run on the same lines as freight traffic and some inter city services.





This is why we need HS2, we need Northern Powerhouse Rail too and we need the investment already being delivered to continue to upgrade and make fit our local services for the 21st century. But, what could this deliver that we are currently missing?

Firstly, it would increase connectivity and access to labour markets. A more efficient rail network, of which major parts are high speed rail, will allow currently unthinkable and unattractive commutes to become a reality. When coupled with a more efficient local transport network, previously unreachable areas can be accessed by employers looking for staff and vice versa. At present, labour markets are boxed in physically unable to go much beyond acceptable boundaries. To free up space and cut times with a mass market transport network is a game changer. Unburdening the local business community of travel constraints will allow their recruitment ambitions to be realised.

Secondly, businesses need to explore new markets and attract customers outbound and inbound, more so in any potential post-Brexit scenario. Putting Manchester Airport on the HS2 network opens up a huge range of possibilities – both drawing new visitors and businesses in, and getting them away quickly and efficiently. But it also puts domestic businesses on the doorstep of overseas markets with easier access not just to the 'local' airport, but access to other international access points throughout the UK.

Businesses need to move goods around too and the potential freeing up of freight routes by shifting traffic off the overcrowded existing network will open up new freight routes within the UK and offer a greater, cleaner and cheaper option.

Local businesses and commuters will be able to access more reliable local services for those shorter journeys on the existing network. Capacity will be increased, more stops allowed and coupled with new rolling stock it will offer an altogether different experience.

Thirdly, big transport infrastructure projects bring big investment and development opportunities. There are dozens of examples – Crossrail, Canary Wharf and Kings Cross are some. Local businesses in Greater Manchester understand how this model works, the benefits it can bring and the spark it can ignite in local economies. The potential of a scheme such as HS2 is genuinely once in a lifetime and the benefits it will bring are huge. This is not just for local developers, but across a whole range of sectors as procurement opportunities present themselves. Manchester is a city built on Victorian grand schemes. Nothing since has had the potential that HS2 delivers.

In a city that is synonymous with innovation and revolution, HS2 ticks both of these boxes. But it isn't a standalone benefit. It will unblock the transport arteries locally, regionally and nationally that the city's businesses rely on and which are frequently raised as causing serious concern, including through hold-ups and lost production.

For too long HS2 has been pitched as an 'optional extra' to the UK transport network – it isn't. It is an integral part of what is needed for an efficient and effective 21st century transport network. The benefits cannot be delivered any other way without similar costs and years of disruption to existing lines. We are convinced more than ever that HS2 is the only option. Be bold, capture the spirit of big thinking and big action and Greater Manchester businesses will respond. It's in their interests and those of anyone else who wants to see the UK grow stronger. ■







**Frank McKenna**, Chief Executive and Group Chairman, Downtown in Business

Frank is the founder and chief executive of Downtown in Business. Before establishing the Downtown brand, Frank was a full time politician, serving as the leader of the North West Regional Assembly, deputy leader of Lancashire County Council and a Parliamentary Assistant. He was also the chairman of economic development company Lancashire Enterprises, and at the time Insider magazine described him as 'the most powerful politician in the North West.'

Since entering the world of business, Frank has served on the Merseyside Entrepreneurship Commission; Liverpool Vision's Strategic Planning board; and advisory boards on both the Lancashire and Liverpool Local Enterprise Partnerships.

*“It is the most ambitious infrastructure scheme that transport chiefs have devised and actually connects the core cities of the entire country.”*

### **‘Because we’re worth it’**

The financial figure attached to the HS2 project is a big one. Of course, if the much needed infrastructure project had been built when it should have been, forty years ago according to its chief architect Lord Andrew Adonis, that price tag would have been significantly lower. If HS2 is further delayed following the review recently announced by Government, then the likelihood is it will never be developed. Imagine what the cost will be in 2029?

So, do we need what critics describe as a vanity project, and advocates say will drag transport connectivity and the Northern Powerhouse into the twenty-first century?

In my opinion the answer is an unequivocal yes. Currently, much of the region’s rail network is stuck in the nineteenth century! This project, along with the planned improvements to the East-West line that will better connect northern towns and cities, are essential if the stated ambition to rebalance the UK economy is to be anything more than a politician’s soundbite.

Lest we forget, this project is not just about the North. It is the most ambitious infrastructure scheme that transport chiefs have devised, connecting the core cities of the entire country. It has already had a hugely positive impact on the renaissance and regeneration of Birmingham, a city that was in the doldrums for too many years, but has used the promise of the new HS2 line as a catalyst for much of the improvement and investment that can be evidenced in the Midlands capital today.

The project name, I confess, doesn’t help. HS2 has nothing to do with speed. Getting to and from London half an hour quicker from Manchester is hardly a game-changer for a northern business leader. However, helping the North retain talent, providing people with greater job opportunities and

providing businesses with access to new customers and clients in UK cities and regions are all evidenced based advantages that the scheme will deliver.

In the short-term too, we know that HS2 will help to create jobs, stimulate economic activity and provide an almost instant return on investment.

That investment will be spread out over twenty years or more, so it is hardly a figure that is prohibitive for a country that talks about £8 billion for Brexit preparations as if it were spare change.

In terms of environmental impact, independent studies suggest that HS2 will have a positive effect on our carbon footprint, taking cars and lorries off the road, relieving our city centres of the nightmare gridlock scenarios we see during rush hour on a daily basis – and offering a genuine alternative to the transportation of freight. There will also be a reduction in demand for short haul air travel.

That is a prize worth having. Don’t fall for the Westminster Mandarin’s line about choosing which is most important, HS2 or Northern Powerhouse Rail. We need and deserve both. This is an investment for the next one hundred plus years. £2 billion a year to create a state of the art rail project is chicken feed. Remember too, Londoners receive £2,555 more than northerners on transport spend. HS2 won’t equalize that, but it will be a decent start.

It is not often Britain attempts an ambitious investment project. The political system makes expensive, forward thinking investment projects unlikely to return much political capital. Elections aren’t won by promising improved transport links for the next decade. However, it is to be hoped that, given the general cross-party support that this project has enjoyed over a period of many years, the review of HS2 will prioritise the clear long-term gain of this exciting initiative over any short-term political considerations. ■



**Cllr Liam Robinson**, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, Chair of the Transport Committee and Portfolio Holder for Transport and Air Quality

Liam is a Liverpool City Labour Councillor, who has represented the Kensington and Fairfield Ward since 2008. He was elected Chair of Merseytravel in June 2012 and has subsequently been appointed Portfolio Holder for Transport for the Liverpool City Region by Mayor Steve Rotheram and the Combined Authority. Liam has key roles in strategic transport groups, including having been a founder Board Member of Transport for the North, Rail North and having chaired the City Regions Transport Special Interest Group.

Liam has spent his entire career working in public transport, including having managed three of Britain's largest railway stations: Liverpool Lime Street, London Liverpool Street and Sheffield.



*“This is essential to support the growth of the Port of Liverpool following the recent £400m private sector investment in the Liverpool2 container terminal.”*

## Why HS2 is essential to our freight future

The HS2 narrative is dominated by what it would mean for passengers' journeys – with more, and faster, services being seen as part of the solution to much publicised overcrowded, unreliable services on a Victorian network that's creaking under the strain. Disgruntled commuters not able to get a seat despite paying thousands of pounds a year for the privilege, is a media favourite, and while it's not all down to infrastructure, it does play a significant part.

We agree with the passenger benefits HS2 will bring, with a significant disclaimer for the Liverpool City Region (LCR) being that when we talk about 'high speed rail' benefits we are talking about significantly improved rail services – capacity and speed – via an integrated HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) network.

A new line between Liverpool and Manchester linking into the HS2 network in Cheshire, would bring us journey times of one hour and 25 minutes to London and four trains an hour to Manchester, with journeys taking just 28 minutes even when calling en route at Warrington and Manchester Airport.

But, it's also what those improved journeys are worth to the Liverpool City Region more broadly – a £15bn GVA uplift to the LCR economy, 24,000 new jobs through more businesses wanting to locate in our city region, more people willing to travel further to take up job opportunities here and 11,000 new homes to accommodate people in those additional jobs. It includes those who want to stay in our vibrant city region who may have had to once relocate for work and those who want to move here from elsewhere, who recognise the great quality of life that can be had and are reassured that the infrastructure is there for them to seek a job either here or further afield.

It will also mean 3.6m additional visitors – business and leisure – every year. Liverpool is already firmly in the top 10 for most visited cities in the UK and was voted third in this year's Trip Advisor Travellers' Choice Awards.

Of course, we're focussed on city region benefits, but an uplift for us is an uplift for the whole of the north and the UK. Transport for the North (TfN) analysis suggests that HS2 and NPR taken together will bring millions more people, and thousands of businesses, within reach of each of the key economic centres of the North. By 2050, nearly 10 million people in the North will be within 90 minutes reach of multiple economic centres in the North. This is still only part of the story. Our city region has a rich maritime history, but our maritime ambitions are not confined to the history books. Improved rail connectivity has a vital part to play in it reaching its full potential once again.

## HS2 and our freight future

A new rail line into Liverpool through touchpoints on the HS2 network, and NPR, will enable rail freight services to make use of released capacity on the West Coast mainline, Chat Moss line and the Trans Pennine line. This is essential to support the growth of the Port of Liverpool following the recent £400m private sector investment in the Liverpool2 container terminal. This can now accommodate the largest container ships in the world and has a potential capacity of three million containers a year by 2030.

The Port of Liverpool is currently the fourth largest UK port and traffic is already increasing in response to this investment. Change trade routes in line with the UK's emerging position internationally, and Liverpool's influence will grow; it's strategically located to support the growth in transatlantic trade.



*“Increased rail freight capacity within the Liverpool City Region and nationally through HS2 and other capacity and capability enhancements on the existing rail network could support a national step change in rail freight movement.”*

This growth in freight cannot be accommodated by road and it shouldn't be. The movement of goods by rail instead will support a reduction in carbon emissions and congestion, contributing to the City Region's and the UK's sustainability and environment policy objectives.

With the Port of Liverpool's growing influence the sustainability goal makes even more sense as 90 per cent of deep sea cargo currently enters the UK via the south, when 50 per cent of the UK container market is actually closer to Liverpool. Increased rail freight capacity within the Liverpool City Region and nationally through HS2 and other capacity and capability enhancements on the existing rail network could support a national step change in rail freight movement, removing 150 million HGV road kilometres a year.

Analysis suggests that moving freight movements from lorry to rail, with an additional daily rail freight service from the Liverpool City Region to the South East via the West Coast Main Line could secure up to £158m benefit a year to the national economy, to Scotland via the West Coast Main Line up to £110m a year; and via the trans-Pennine routes up to £81m a year.

Up to 20,000 new jobs could be created throughout the Liverpool City Region from our freight and logistics hub aspirations.

HS2 and NPR are about comfortable, reliable and quick rail journeys, but anybody who focuses on those factors alone is missing the bigger picture. This is about access to jobs and other opportunities, rebalancing a southern-centric economy, providing the infrastructure for the north to act as one 'powerhouse', releasing capacity on our existing network to support the growth of ports and other logistics hubs and accelerating the shift to more environmentally sustainable travel modes for both people and freight. ■





**John Stevenson, Member of Parliament**

John has been the Member of Parliament for Carlisle since 2010.

Aside from his duties as a constituency MP, John is the Chairman of the APPG for Food and Drink Manufacturing, Chair of the West Coast Mainline APPG, Chair of the APPG on Family Businesses and a member of the APPG on the Nuclear Industry. He has also been appointed as “Champion” for the Borderlands Growth Deal.

John was previously a member of the Communities and Local Government Select Committee during the last Parliament, and currently serves on the Committee on Standards.

John was educated at Aberdeen Grammar School and Dundee University, going onto Chester College of Law where he studied English Law and subsequently qualified as a solicitor. He went on to become a partner in Bendles Solicitors, Carlisle, where he still practices.



*“HS2 is a critical component of the Northern Powerhouse. Not only will it provide quicker journey times between North and South, it will also free up capacity to improve existing services.”*

### **The great connectivity challenge: Carlisle as a regional capital**

Why do you support HS2 and what is its importance to Carlisle and the surrounding areas?

The primary reason that I've been a consistent supporter of HS2 is as much to do with capacity on the railway as anything. The West Coast Main Line is quite clearly from my experience, and particularly those who travel from Manchester and Birmingham, reaching capacity on the existing infrastructure. Therefore, if we are to see continued expansion of rail use, we need to improve capacity.

Why is this significant to Carlisle? It is the main route into London, creating problems for us if there's not the capacity for people in the South to come to the North, or for us heading into London. It's clear we need more capacity to benefit not just the route into Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds, but also Preston and beyond.

The Cumbria Infrastructure Plan recognises the benefits and opportunities that HS2 will provide to the regional economy, how important is it that these benefits are realised with the completion of HS2 in full?

In a perfect world, in this part of the country, we would like to see HS2 going all the way to Glasgow, with a Carlisle station, which is in many respects Cumbria's regional capital. And therefore, our support is very much about HS2 being completed in full. The real prize is all the way to Glasgow. Then you come to economic benefits and the capacity issue, commuting between Glasgow and London, the Lake District and London, Hadrian's Wall and South West Scotland, all becomes much easier.

Carlisle is the gateway to many of Cumbria's beautiful tourist attractions including Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site and the western access point for the Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail - how would improved rail links shape local tourism?

We have two world heritage sites in Cumbria. Improving rail links, both in terms of speed and capacity, would be helpful. If the rail network is reliable and punctual, you will see more people from the South of England coming up to the region, not just the Lake District, but also to explore Hadrian's Wall, South West Scotland and the northern parts of Cumbria. Improved rail services would also reduce the number of cars visiting the Lake District, which is becoming increasingly problematic locally.

There are ambitions for Carlisle to become an integrated transport hub with the arrival of HS2. Could you outline the impact you believe that this will have on opportunities in your constituency?

It really is significant. If we have HS2 all the way to Glasgow, it is quite clear that the logical place for a stop is Carlisle. That would reemphasise the importance of Carlisle as a regional capital. HS2 would make Carlisle a highly significant transport hub for the economy of the whole region.







There are plans underway for the construction of St Cuthbert's Garden Village in Carlisle, the largest of the Government's 14 garden village projects with up to 10,000 homes – how will HS2 impact the development?

If HS2 does go ahead, there are likely to be increased benefits felt. It will put Carlisle on people's radar, and opportunities to attract both business and people would be greater. For example, if somebody wants to move to the North of England for a job and their family remains in Birmingham, Manchester or London, they want to be able to get to and fro relatively easily. Anything that helps that connectivity and families is important.

Carlisle is a gem. People do not realise it is a great place to work, lovely environment, and that business opportunities are enormous. House prices in Carlisle are, broadly speaking, manageable, in a way that other areas of the country are not. If we have something that gives people an incentive to come up here such as HS2, then why can't Carlisle succeed?

As a local MP how do you think the opportunities of HS2 can be best communicated to ensure the widest range of people and business can benefit? How do we ensure all parts of the Cumbria economy are involved in shaping and securing the full benefits of HS2?

Benefits such as bringing in more tourists, emphasising the importance of Carlisle as a regional capital, and its role as an integrated transport hub, are all key. This is already being recognised because of the Borderland's Growth Initiative, people are starting to see Carlisle as the centre of the borderlands and as a place for both business and leisure.

There will also be commercial freight train benefits. By increasing capacity on the West Coast Main Line with HS2, you then increase the opportunities for freight. In Carlisle we have the headquarters for DRS, a freight train company which could significantly benefit from HS2. .

What would you say to those who argue for HS2 to be curtailed or scrapped and what would be lost?

I completely understand that you've got to get value for money, and I completely understand that the Government wants to review the cost element. But you've also got to think beyond the next five, ten years, to the next fifteen years. What are the alternatives? How are we going to deal with lack of capacity? How are we going to deal with balancing the economy and improving our journey times? The conclusion will be there are none. Therefore, HS2 is the right thing to do. ■





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