



Transport Committee

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

Tel 020 7219 2226/8776 Email: transcom@parliament.uk

11 October 2022

Kevin Foster MP
Minister of State for Rail
Department for Transport

By email

Dear Kevin

Integrated Rail Plan: Government response to Transport Committee report

Congratulations on your appointment as Rail Minister. We look forward to working with you constructively in your new role.

Thank you for your letter of 28 September, letting us know that it will not be possible for you to respond meaningfully to the Committee's report on the Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) within the usual timescale.

By way of background, our report and recommendations were published on 27 July. In the report, we proposed a reassessment of the Government's IRP position regarding Northern Powerhouse Rail. We also called for alternative options, which could transform stations and city centres, to be properly tested.

We heartily welcome the comments from the Prime Minister, first made by her in Leeds on 28 July, which commit the Government to rethink its position on Northern Powerhouse Rail. Our report and recommendations were made after considering lengthy evidence, and visits to Leeds, Bradford and Manchester (we had previously visited Birmingham to see their rail projects and discuss their IRP submission).

We are working on the basis that the request to delay responding to our recommendations will result in a more positive response than we might otherwise have expected, given the evidence previously submitted to us by the Department for Transport.

Our preference would be to receive as full a response as is possible by the end of December, albeit we note that some information may have to wait until March.

In the meantime, we would welcome clarity on the following:

1. When looking at a revised plan, and in order to respond to our recommendations, can you ensure that you will consider the ambitious proposals which the regions have



Transport Committee

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

Tel 020 7219 2226/8776 Email: transcom@parliament.uk

themselves produced? We were impressed by the ideas coming out of Leeds, Bradford, Manchester and Birmingham. It appears there had been some difficulty getting the Department to consider these local business cases and ideas against the Government's preferred options. This extended time gives an opportunity to engage and consider the ideas and proposals emanating from across the Midlands and the North. Please can you confirm you will use this time to engage with the local communities and consider their proposals?

2. We welcome the Prime Minister's confirmation that there will be a new line from Liverpool to Hull, and that Northern Powerhouse Rail services will now be designed to stop at a new station in Bradford. Certainty and clarity about these commitments is needed for all stakeholders and communities. Bradford has put forward ambitious proposals for a new city centre Northern Powerhouse Rail station at St James' Market which civic and business leaders, who we met in Bradford, believe would unlock large-scale regeneration for the city. Could you confirm if this is the new station which the Prime Minister has announced?
3. It is vital that important benefits to Birmingham are not delayed by changes being made to plans further North. This is an issue which was raised to me when I met with the rail industry and local government representatives from the West Midlands last week. Could you confirm if progress can be made for the West Midlands whilst matters are rethought further North?

I would also like to draw your attention particularly to our recommendations that a timetable for the work on how best to take HS2 to Leeds be published by September 2022, and that plans for an alternative to the withdrawn Golborne Link be set out by March 2023.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Huw Merriman
Chair of the Transport Committee