



Department for Transport

Iain Stewart MP
Chair, Transport Select Committee
House of Commons
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From the Minister of State
Huw Merriman MP

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30 December 2022

Dear Iain,

Congratulations on your appointment as Chair of the Transport Select Committee. As a former committee Chair, I know how important your work is and I look forward to working with you as Rail Minister to make sure we have a thriving and successful railway

As committed by the Secretary of State in his session with you on 7th December, I am writing to update you on the Department's work on the Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands (IRP) following your Committee's report on the plan, published in July.

I am fully aware of the importance of the recommendations made in the report. Progress on the work streams stemming from the IRP has inevitably been affected by the changes in administration of the Department since July this year.

The Autumn Statement recommitted to the Government's transformative growth plans for our railways. These include East West Rail, core Northern Powerhouse Rail (in line with the IRP), and High Speed 2 to Manchester. The Secretary of State and I have made very clear that we are committed to the programme set out in the IRP and the new ministerial team has sought to move this work forward since coming into office on 25 October. This has included:

- Ministerial meetings with Northern Leaders including the Northern Metro Mayors.
- Senior official level meetings with Leeds, West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Bradford MBC.

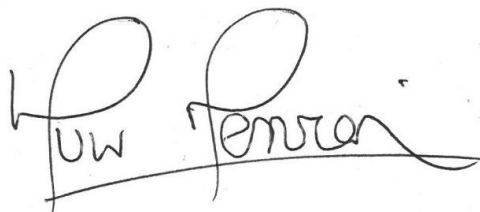
- Receipt (on 5th December 2022) and current consideration of the Midlands Rail Hub Outline Business Case.
- Continued work on the Strategic Outline Business Case for Northern Powerhouse Rail.

In terms of the committee's recommendations:

- On HS2 economic benefits, the Government will continue to provide updated economic assessments of HS2 at key decision points for the programme, as it has done to date. The timing will be determined by the analysis being undertaken for specific phases of the programme. We intend to provide an update on the benefit cost ratio for the HS2 project in 2023, though cannot, at this stage, commit to a specific timetable.
- On NPR economic benefits, updated analysis has been commissioned to inform the Strategic Outline Business Case now being prepared. In line with Green Book requirements, that includes analysis of alternatives and will extend to Benefit Cost Ratios (BCR).
- I can confirm that the Government recognises the importance of there being sufficient capacity at Leeds station, and is considering the case for its redevelopment; that we are keen to look at the case for better connections to Bradford; that petitions on the High Speed Rail (Crewe-Manchester) Bill, including those advocating an underground station at Manchester Piccadilly, will be considered by the hybrid Bill Select Committee in due course; and the Government has now received, and is considering, the Outline Business Case for Midlands Rail Hub. As set out in the IRP, we will take an adaptive approach to investment when considering any future projects – looking at how well current projects are going, and at how demand and economic growth recover.

I will write to you later in the New Year with a full response to the Committee's report including the recommendations on benefit realisation.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Huw Merriman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

HUW MERRIMAN MP

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT