

Written evidence submitted by Mr Graham Dellow (IRP0077)

The IRP will do nothing for the north west of England, particularly in the short to medium term and particularly in the Cheshire/Manchester area. As far as railways are concerned, people that live in Cheshire have three main priorities:

(1) Local travel, particularly to Manchester and Liverpool, for both work and leisure.

(2) Travelling to and between, Manchester and Liverpool and further afield to Leeds and less so, Hull, Newcastle and Sheffield, for both work and leisure.

(3) Travelling to Birmingham and London, mainly for work.

The IRP seems to be putting the priority emphasis in completely the reverse order to the above, with the major part of the budget being spent on HS2. HS2 is in my opinion is a duplication of what we have already got in the WCML which provides an excellent service to London in as little as one hour 36 minutes from Crewe.

Arguably there is a case for HS2 between London and Crewe, north of Crewe the design of HS2 is such that high speed is not possible and for that matter is not needed given the relatively short distance between Crewe and Manchester. There is definitely no capacity issue between Crewe and Manchester and even if there was, why would you spend £22bn on a brand new railway to solve a problem that is so easily rectified and at much lower cost.

Assuming that HS2 (Crewe to Manchester) is cancelled, this would free up at least £22bn to address the very real local capacity issues that exist between Cheshire and Manchester and to a lesser degree Liverpool, it will also allow

Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) to be done more like properly, properly meaning at the very least, linking Liverpool, Manchester and Leeds (and possibly Bradford as well) immediately and then extensions to Hull, Newcastle and Sheffield in a timely fashion.

The original concept for NPR was that it should be mainly an upgrading of existing infrastructure and this is exactly what should happen now to ensure that construction is as rapid as possible and so that costs are kept to a minimum and most importantly under control.

If Crewe were to become the north western terminus for HS2, with probably Totton becoming the north eastern terminus, it would be very simple for NPR to be extended on upgraded existing infrastructure to Crewe from Manchester (via Manchester Airport) and to Totton from Leeds.

Returning to the number one priority and now assuming for a minute that HS2 is not cancelled, it will be quicker to travel to London from Manchester on HS2, than it will be to travel from Northwich to Manchester, this single fact proves that the local issues must be addressed first. There have been assurances made, that HS2 will address the local issues, however the local rail travel problems in Cheshire are acute now and cannot wait until 2041 for a solution.

Has any thought been put to extending the Manchester Metro from Manchester Airport into Cheshire? It could even be extended to Crewe if capacity does become an issue in the future. A Metro extension to Crewe could offer rapid mass transit, non-stop journeys between Crewe and Manchester or via Manchester Airport. More locally, Metro stations at Knutsford and Northwich would transform journeys to 'our capital'.

Thinking a bit more about Manchester Airport. Knutsford station has one of the highest footfalls of all regional stations in the UK. It is 12 miles from Knutsford to Manchester Airport by road and yet there is no direct train service between the two. At the moment, if you want to arrive at Manchester

Airport by train, negating the need to park a vehicle at the airport, you have to travel by road (taxi)? To the nearest station on the Crewe/Manchester line which is Alderley Edge and then travel on to Manchester Airport OR you need to go from Knutsford to Manchester Piccadilly and then back to Manchester Airport, which incidentally is a 31 mile journey.

The HS2 trains that are currently on order are not the HS2 trains that were originally discussed, they are what have been described as 'Classic Compatible' meaning that they can venture seamlessly across the whole network, facilitating non-stop travel between London and Manchester as was originally envisaged on HS2. What I have proposed above would mean that you would travel non-stop between London and Crewe on HS2 metals and between Crewe and Manchester on NPR metals.

A much better name for NPR would be High Speed North (HSN).

I do not think that the Integrated Rail Plan, as stands at the moment, will contribute in any way to the Governments levelling up strategy, nor do I don't think the Integrated Rail Plan is value for money, in fact unless radical changes are made to it, my feeling is that the people of the north west and particularly Cheshire, are going to be very short changed.

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