

Dear Prime Minister

## High Speed Rail 2

We are writing to express deep concern over the rumours of the cancellation of HS2 north of Birmingham and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) given that the two lines share the part of the route to Manchester Airport and onwards to Manchester. We share the concerns and support the letter submitted by the Northern Powerhouse Partnership and the effects that these rumours are having on business confidence.

HS2 and NPR are game changers for Cheshire and Warrington and the wider North West, with the potential to unlock significant housing, employment and productivity gains. The benefits from HS2/NPR would be spread across the entire sub-region and into neighbouring areas. In Cheshire and Warrington alone HS2 will:

- add £2 billion per annum to GVA,
- create 27,000 new jobs and
- deliver 6 million sq ft of new commercial floor space and 25,000 new homes.

Cheshire East Council has been working with Ministers from both DLUCH and DfT on the future infrastructure requirements and regenerative impacts that HS2 will bring to Crewe via the HS2 Taskforce and the cross department Deep Dive. These activities build upon initiatives such as the Future High Streets Fund and the Crewe Town Deal programme. HS2 presents a once in a generation opportunity to level up the town, delivering nearly 5000 new jobs, 4,500 new homes and adding £750 million to the town's GVA. Crewe would be particularly badly affected by cancellation or significant delay to HS2; it will have a substantially disproportional impact on the local population of the Crewe, where half of the council wards are in the top 10% most deprived in the country.

Just to the North of Crewe the planned HS2 depot at Winsford (the Crewe North Rolling Stock Depot) will be an operational and maintenance hub, featuring 27 sidings 400 metres in length, accommodating up to 54 high speed trains. When operational, the works undertaken at this depot will be more extensive than elsewhere on the Western Leg, ranging from light cleaning to heavy duty maintenance. This depot is where most train drivers will be based and will start and end their shifts, generating new jobs and innumerable supply chain opportunities mid-Cheshire.

In Chester, as a direct consequence of the improved connectivity offered by HS2, Cheshire West and Chester Council has been working with Government owned London & Continental Railways (LCR) on a vision and development framework that will deliver significant regeneration and development around Chester Station, whilst Warrington Borough Council is identifying the opportunities and benefits arising from NPR and the Integrated Rail Plan. The area around Bank Quay station is the 2nd largest project on HS2/NPR line outside of London at 112 Hectares and will deliver one third of the housing the Borough needs in the next 30 years on a Brownfield town centre site. The site will deliver in excess of £2bn GVA of direct economic benefits and enable high-speed rail links between Liverpool and Manchester utilising existing latent infrastructure. Once land and property benefits are accounted for, we anticipate the Liverpool to Manchester link and potential connections of the

airports to be one of the highest performing Benefit Cost Ratios of HS2 / IPR network, in part due to existing latent infrastructure between Liverpool and Warrington.

HS2 also offers significant benefits to key towns in mid-Cheshire including Knutsford and Northwich with the re-opening of the Mid-Cheshire Railway Line (for which there is a strong business case) offering direct links to high-speed services to Birmingham and London at Crewe for residents of these and other towns such as Middlewich.

Cancellation of HS2 would have a significant impact on private sector confidence in Cheshire and Warrington and throw away the opportunities the line offers to grow the economy and level up under-performing parts of the North. As the Northern Powerhouse Partnership has observed, history has shown time and again that committing to investment in major infrastructure pays dividends. Whilst large-scale projects will always be challenging to deliver, they bring significant long-term economic benefits. It is essential, therefore, that HS2 and NPR are delivered in full as quickly as possible.

Given the importance of HS2 and NPR to the sub-region, Louise Gittins Chair of the Cheshire and Warrington Leaders' Board and Sam Corcoran, the Leader of Cheshire East Council, which covers Crewe, would be happy to meet you to discuss how we can ensure they are successfully delivered.

Yours sincerely

**Councillor Russ Bowden**  
**Leader – Warrington Borough Council**

**Councillor Louise Gittins**  
**Leader - Cheshire West and Chester Council**

**Councillor Sam Corcoran**  
**Leader – Cheshire East Council**

**Clare Hayward MBE DL**  
**Chair, Cheshire and Warrington Local**  
**Enterprise Partnership**