

## Network North – a summary for Community Rail Network members

The Department for Transport (DfT) has published '[Network North: Transforming British Transport](#)', a new plan designed to improve the UK's transport networks. This document offers a summary of the plan for Community Rail Network members, primarily focused on its rail-related aspects.

We will engage with DfT to feed in any relevant insights from community rail into the Network North plan(s) as appropriate. We would encourage you to read the plan in full to consider how any of the proposed projects might affect the lines/areas you cover.

### HS2

The plan confirms that Phase 2a and 2b of HS2, or HS2 East – the proposed branches of the line north of Birmingham – will now not go ahead.

Phase 1 of HS2 – the route between London and the West Midlands – will be delivered as planned, with a rescope of Euston station. There will be two branches: one to central Birmingham; and one to Handsacre, near Lichfield. The plan states that HS2 trains will continue through to Manchester, Liverpool, and Scotland, using the existing West Coast Main Line.

### Funding

The new plan commits **£36bn** “to improve the everyday local transport people want and use the most.”

The funding, described as “HS2 savings”, is broken down to: **£19.8bn** for the North; **£9.6bn** for the Midlands; and **£6.5bn** spread nationally across other regions. It also sits alongside an ongoing commitment to invest **£12bn** to support connectivity between Liverpool and Manchester, including Northern Powerhouse Rail.

While the majority of funding has been attributed to rail and other public transport schemes, more than **£11bn** has been earmarked for 70 road projects, including **£8.3bn** to fix potholes on roads across the UK.

The plan states the funding will be used to develop transport infrastructure in line with three main priorities:

- To drive better connectivity *within* our towns, suburbs, and cities;
- To drive better connectivity *between* our towns and cities;
- To improve everyday local journeys for people.

The plan states that **£8.6bn** will constitute additional investment for transport for city regions in the North and new long-term funding deals for places outside city regions in the North and Midlands, from which certain transport schemes could be funded, subject to local decision-making.

### Network North – proposed rail projects

The following is a summary of rail-based projects outlined in the plan, all designed to increase capacity and cut journey times. Some directly affect current community rail lines, or areas/regions with a community rail presence.

#### The North

- Bringing Hull into Northern Powerhouse Rail, electrifying and improving the line speed between Hull to Leeds and Hull to Sheffield;

- Upgrading and electrifying the line between Sheffield and Leeds;
- Electrifying the Hope Valley line between Sheffield to Manchester;
- Bringing Bradford into Northern Powerhouse Rail via the building of a new station in the city;
- Upgrading the Cumbrian Coast Line between Carlisle, Workington, and Barrow;
- Reopening closed Beeching Lines, including restoring the Don Valley Line between Sheffield and Stocksbridge, and building new stations at Haxby on the York to Scarborough line; Waverley on the Sheffield to Gainsborough line; and Ferryhill in County Durham;
- Progressing a mass-transit metro system for West Yorkshire.

### **The Midlands**

- Delivering the Midlands Rail Hub in full, benefitting more than 50 stations including Nottingham, Leicester, Nuneaton, Tamworth, Worcester, Malvern, Hereford, Gloucester, and Cheltenham;
- Upgrading rail links between Newark and Nottingham;
- Reopening closed Beeching Lines, including restoring the Ivanhoe Line between Leicester and Burton, the Oswestry-Gobowen line, the Barrow Hill line, the Stoke to Leek line, and potentially the Maid Marian Line;
- Building new stations at Park Hall near Oswestry and at Meir on the Crewe to Derby Line, and refurbishing Longport and Kidsgrove stations.

### **Other regions**

- Improving accessibility at up to 100 stations, via measures such as refitted lifts, tactile surfaces, ramps and footbridges, new ticket gates and accessible waiting rooms and toilets;
- Delivering rail improvements in the South West, including reintroducing rail passenger services to Wellington and Cullompton in Devon, and building a new station at Tavistock;
- Making the line between Exeter and Plymouth through Dawlish more weather-resilient;
- Upgrading Ely Junction in Cambridgeshire;
- Electrifying the North Wales Line between Crewe, Warrington, Chester, Llandudno, and Holyhead.

### **Other public transport projects/initiatives**

- Keeping the £2 bus fare. This fare price was due to expire at the end of October 2023 but will now be continued until the end of 2024, supporting sustainable end-to-end journeys and rail-bus links;
- Sharing an additional £100 million between the North and Midlands to support the development and rollout of London-style contactless and smart ticketing, supporting seamless travel by enabling contactless or smartcard payment.

### **Next steps**

The DfT states it will now proceed with the steps necessary to take the decisions outlined in the plan forward. This will include reflecting on the existing package of legislation before parliament, and the necessary consultative steps and business case development, in line with all relevant legal and fiscal duties.

It adds that it will listen to local government and transport bodies about what the plan means for them, including further guidance and indicative allocations for local authorities and city regions.