

MOTION ON NOTICE - HIGH SPEED 2 (HS2) AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE LANCASTER DISTRICT

To consider the following motion submitted by Councillors Eileen Blamire and Peter Williamson.

“This Council notes:

- That in principle it welcomes the opportunity for improving rail links to the North West, particularly the potential for High Speed 2 (HS2) to add further capacity to the existing West Coast Main Line rail network.
- That the final HS2 timetable is subject to future revision and consultation, but it wishes to ensure that our citizens benefit from the social and economic advantages that connection of the West Coast Main Line to the wider HS2 network may bring.

This Council believes:

- That the City of Lancaster’s mainline station should serve as a primary stopping station served by HS2 trains, which in turn will provide improved access for businesses, organisations, and residents within (and visitors to) the Lancaster District.
- That the inclusion of Lancaster as a primary stopping station served by HS2 trains has the potential to improve the future transport connections to Morecambe, including to Eden North (Eden Project), which is an emerging and potentially nationally-significant proposal.
- That the Council should continue to consult with other prominent politicians, business leaders and organisations within the district to establish high-level support for the inclusion of Lancaster as a primary stopping station served by HS2 trains.

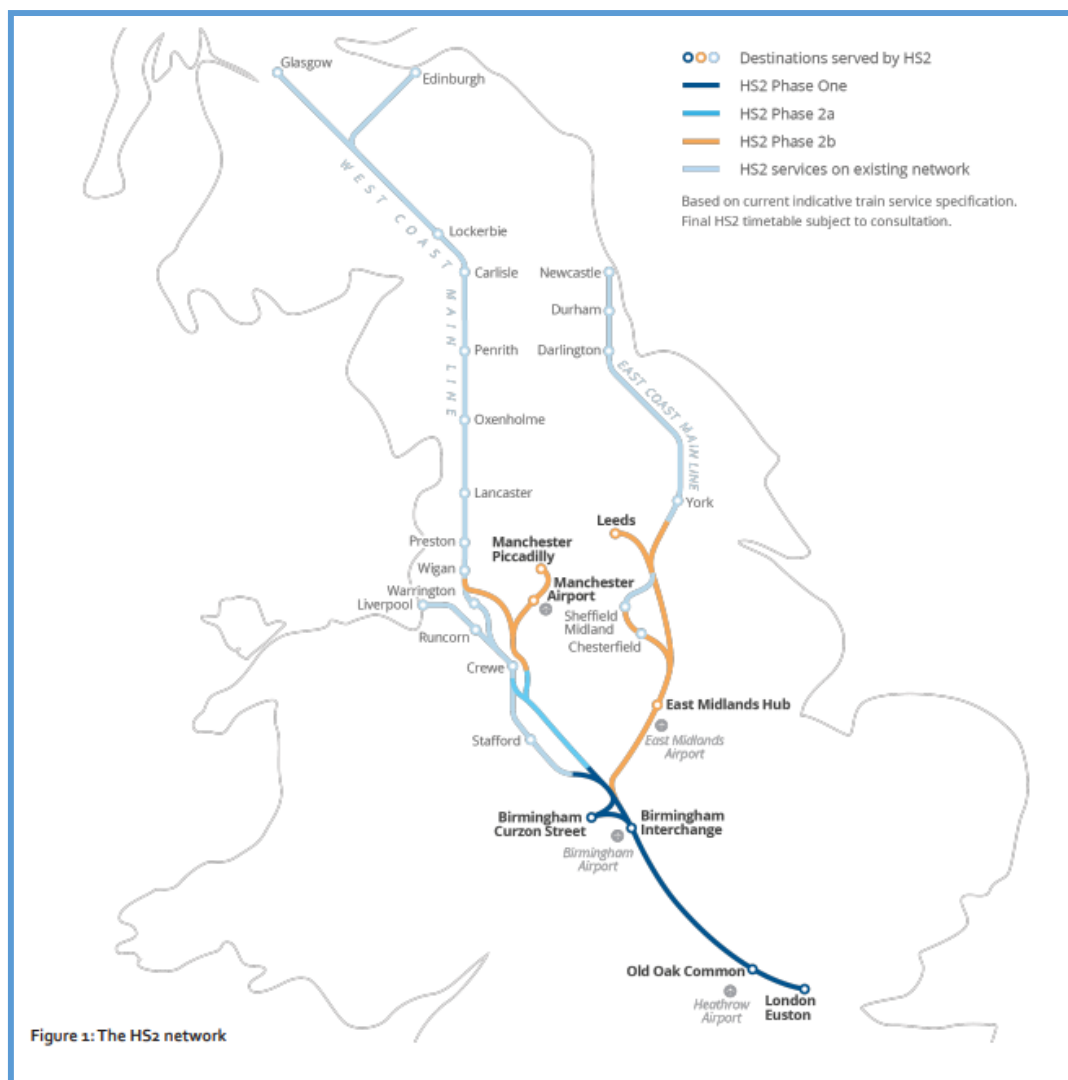
This Council resolves:

- That the Chief Executive and Officers are empowered to promote Lancaster as a primary stopping station served by HS2 trains, on behalf of the City Council and its’ citizens, for the reasons set out above.
- That Officers are empowered to respond positively, on behalf of the City Council and its’ citizens, to any future, relevant, national consultations regarding HS2 to promote Lancaster as a primary stopping station served by HS2 trains.
- That as a first step, Officers arrange to work alongside prominent politicians, business leaders and organisations within the Lancaster District to collectively agree the detail regarding district-wide support for the inclusion of Lancaster as a primary stopping station served by HS2 trains.
- That in promoting Lancaster as a primary stopping station served by HS2 trains, that residential amenity environmental standards will continue to be protected.”

OFFICER BRIEFING NOTE

1.0 What is HS2?

- 1.1 HS2 is a proposed infrastructure project to build a high-speed rail line from London to Manchester and Leeds, via Birmingham, to begin operation along its' first phase in 2026 and be completed in 2033.
- 1.2 HS2 is planned to be delivered in three phases:
- **Phase 1** from London Euston to the West Midlands, which includes Birmingham Curzon Street and Lichfield with intermediate stations in West London (at Old Oak Common) and at Birmingham Airport;
 - **Phase 2a** from the West Midlands to Crewe; and,
 - **Phase 2b** comprising an eastern leg from the West Midlands to Leeds New Lane with intermediate stations in the East Midlands and South Yorkshire; and a western leg from Crewe to Manchester with an intermediate station at Manchester Airport. The western leg would also have a connection to the West Coast Mainline at Bamfurlong, which is immediately south at Wigan.
- 1.3 Parliament granted powers in 2017 for the construction of Phase 1. Each of the three phases interact to create a route that is known as the **Y Network** (see map, below).
- 1.4 This network will serve 29 railway stations and aims to connect 8 of Britain's 10 largest cities.



2.0 What does HS2 hope to achieve, and how will it do so?

- 2.1 HS2 is premised upon two main benefits; that it will increase capacity upon Britain's crowded railway network; and that it will improve journey times between major cities.
- 2.2 The new purpose-built rail lines for HS2 will only accommodate new high-speed trains, which will all be capable of running at the same speed, thus not having to slow down for slower passenger or freight trains. These trains could be 400 metres in length, and be capable of accommodating over 1000 passengers per train.
- 2.3 Longer trains require longer platforms. This is not a problem along the new purpose-built route, where all infrastructure can be designed to fit the new rolling stock. However it could be problematic for existing stations.
- 2.4 The theory is that HS2 will release capacity on the existing network, including the West Coast Main Line which serves Lancaster, and that this would allow additional local and regional services and freight trains to run on those lines.
- 2.5 There will clearly be reductions in journey time for many passengers using the new route. For example, it is estimated that journey times from Manchester Piccadilly to London will almost halve, and that journeys from London to Scotland will be 40 minutes shorter.
- 2.6 Whilst the new route is controversial, not least because of the impact upon some local communities caused by the construction of the new line, preliminary work for Phase 1 has already commenced. Recently the national press has been vocal in terms of casting doubt regarding the deliverability of the entire project. The Chair of HS2 Ltd, Sir Terry Morgan, recently left his post. Meanwhile some commentators are estimating that the costs of the project are likely to double, although Ministers are adamant that the project would be delivered within budget.
- 2.7 In September 2018 it was announced that the HS2 Phase 2b Bill would be delayed by 12 months. The reason given for this was to ensure that the benefits of Northern Powerhouse Rail (a separate project aimed at improving rail connectivity over the Pennines by connecting major cities in the north) could play a role in the final Bill.

3.0 What are the potential impacts for the Lancaster District?

- 3.1 Whilst the new HS2 lines would terminate south of Lancaster, HS2 trains would continue by joining the existing West Coast Main Line.
- 3.2 Lancaster is indicated as one of 29 stations that would be served by HS2 trains, although HS2 Ltd state that this is based on current, indicative train service specification, and that the final HS2 timetable will be subject to revision and consultation. Therefore, no final decisions have been taken yet in terms of the precise volume of HS2 services, or indeed how many of those services would stop at Lancaster.
- 3.3 There are other factors that will affect this decision. One of those is the current tender exercise for the West Coast Partnership Franchise. This tender opened in March 2018 and it will conclude with the award of the contract for operating InterCity West Coast Services from 15 September 2019 until 2031. The successful operator for the West Coast Partnership will be required to work with HS2 Ltd to design, launch and operate the initial HS2 services, as well as re-design train services on the West Coast Main Line (to take advantage of the extra capacity that HS2 is anticipated to provide). The successful operator is expected to *"consult extensively on proposed service patterns, enabling Government to make decisions on the final HS2 and West Coast Main Line services in the early 2020s"*. The preferred bidder for the

InterCity West Coast Services is currently expected to be announced by the Department for Transport in April 2019.

- 3.4 Train specification will also affect decisions. HS2 trains will be markedly different from existing West Coast Main Line rolling stock. For example it is (currently) a pre-requisite that all HS2 trains will offer step-free access from the platform to the train. That means changes to existing platform heights.
- 3.5 The 400 metre-long HS2 services could also 'split' at Crewe. For example, Government have previously modelled running a combined London-to-Preston and London-to-Liverpool service that splits at Crewe, allowing the two trains caused by the 'split' to then depart to Preston (and potentially beyond) and Liverpool separately.
- 3.6 Lancashire County Council has representation on a number of Transport for the North's technical working groups. They have confirmed that they are aware of the inclusion of Lancaster, along with Preston, on the list of stations potentially requiring modification to accommodate HS2 services. The County Council has provided assurance that they will continue to make the case for HS2 services to call at Lancaster, and they will look to commission further economic evidence if that is necessary.

4.0 What happens next?

- 4.1 There is a current consultation regarding Phase 2b. However this is a consultation into the working draft Environmental Statement (which describes the likely environmental impacts around areas affected by the route) and the working draft Equality Impact Assessment Report (which looks at the potential effects of building and operating the railway on those people who are affected by the Equality Act 2010). Both consultations close on 21 December 2018.
- 4.2 Meanwhile it is anticipated that the main civil work on the HS2 Route (phase 1) will gather pace during 2019. Currently the schedule estimates that the first trains will be tested on the new infrastructure in 2024, with first passenger services along Phase 1 by late-2026.
- 4.3 Separate proposals to award the West Coast Partnership Franchise are currently scheduled to be announced in April 2019, with the operator commencing services in September 2019. This operator will have to integrate with proposed HS2 services at some point during their franchise.
- 4.4 With regard to Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR), clear costed proposals for the whole of the network (linking Newcastle, Sheffield, Hull, Leeds, Manchester and Liverpool) are currently being finalised and NPR have indicated that they intend to present their Strategic Outline Business Case to the Secretary of State by December 2018.
- 4.5 In terms of the proposed Motion before Council, it is timely to reiterate the Council's support for promoting the value of Lancaster Main Line station as a primary stopping station served by HS2 trains. The economic and social advantages created by stopping HS2 trains will be of paramount importance as the district looks to take forward its ambitious proposals for the district.

MONITORING OFFICER COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

DEPUTY SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTS

The Deputy Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.