

Lord Patrick McLoughlin,
Chair, Transport for the North

High Speed UK
Connecting the Nation

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cc Martin Tugwell, CEO

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20th November 2024

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Dear Lord McLoughlin,

On 20th May of this year, we wrote to the recently elected Northern Metro Mayors to detail our profound concerns at the latest (2024) iteration of the Strategic Transport Plan published by Transport for the North. This letter, and also subsequent letters (dated 18/06/24, 05/09/24 and 09/10/24) detailing the massively superior performance of our alternative Network North scheme, are set out in our document library <http://highspeeduk.co.uk/newletters.html> as Letters L11, L12, L14 and L18.

The 2024 Strategic Transport Plan (STP) should have signposted the way towards the transformation of the Northern Powerhouse's railway network, necessary to bring about both Levelling-up and Net Zero in the North. Yet the STP offers no such vision; instead, it puts forward a disjointed raft of ill-considered schemes which (when assessed holistically as a Northern network) will collectively:

- fail to meet most of TfN's own journey time targets, established back in 2016;
- fail to deliver the 'London-style connectivity' promised in the 2022 Levelling-up White Paper;
- fail to provide the transformation in Transpennine and cross-Manchester capacity, for both passengers and freight, that is necessary to achieve Levelling-up and Net Zero in the Northern Powerhouse.

We would observe that these deficiencies can be attributed to one primary reason: the false priority that your officials placed upon conforming with HS2, rather than complying with TfN's own journey time targets.

Although it is regrettable that we did not copy you in earlier on our correspondence with the Northern Mayors, we must also draw to your attention to our earlier abortive engagement with TfN, as set out in our 14/10/22 letter to TfN CEO Martin Tugwell, and the Darren Oldham 28/03/23 response (both attached).

Our offer was to cooperate with Transport for the North in "achieving the optimal design for Northern Powerhouse Rail"; regrettably your CEO Martin Tugwell chose not to address the critical concerns that we raised, and instead delegated the matter to a junior official, whose response made multiple unevicenced and false assertions as to NPR's optimal performance, and, to put it bluntly, gave us the brush-off.

Please be assured that Northern Powerhouse Rail is not, and can never be the optimised solution that your officials have claimed it to be. This is an inevitable consequence of its predication upon the failed HS2, and it is proved in every aspect of Network North's massively superior network performance, demonstrable and measurable on any conceivable criterion. To illustrate this superiority, we have compiled a brief performance checklist on the following page, which we would invite you and your officials to review.

We believe that the Transport for the North organisation that you head can only meet its fundamental duty to serve the people of the North if it is promoting schemes delivering outcomes that are optimal on whatever metric – connectivity, capacity, journey time or integration. Second-best cannot be an option, and we would urge you strongly to engage instead with the comprehensively superior Network North.

We would be pleased to meet you at the earliest opportunity, and discuss how matters should be taken forward, to ensure that the people of the North get the railway network they need and deserve.

Yours sincerely

Colin Elliff BSc CEng MICE, Civil Engineering Principal, High Speed UK

APPENDIX A

10 Key Performance Tests for Northern Powerhouse Rail		Winner	**Reference to NN presentation
<i>Does NPR or Network North (NN) perform better?</i>			
1	Does NPR offer full interconnection between 11 principal network hubs?	NN	Slides S36-S42
2	Does NPR meet TfN's own journey time specification?	NN	S43-S45
3	Does NPR offer comprehensive direct links to Manchester Airport?	NN	S46-S48
4	Does NPR transform capacity for transpennine passengers?	NN	S9-S13, S49-S54
5	Does NPR transform capacity for transpennine freight?	NN	S9-S13, S49-S54
6	Is NPR supported by detailed schemes to transform principal hubs?	NN	S55-S62
7	Does NPR benefit small town communities beyond principal hubs?	NN	S63-S66
8	Is NPR configuration dictated by cancelled sections of HS2?	NN	S17-S28, S44
9	Does NPR resolve the current network disconnect in Bradford?	NN	S20, S29-S35
10	Does NPR achieve optimum Levelling-up in the Northern Powerhouse?	NN	S14-S15

**HSUK/Network North presentation available on http://highspeeduk.co.uk/P31_HSUK_NN_Presentation.pdf and in the HSUK website Library as Document P31

APPENDIX B

