

Mr Andrew Haines
CEO, Network Rail

High Speed UK
Connecting the Nation

www.highspeeduk.co.uk

cc Managing Director
Transpennine Route Upgrade

20 Hartley Road
Harrogate
HG2 9DQ

20th November 2024

07591 959134

Dear Mr Haines,

We are writing to alert you to critical conflicts inherent in your Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) proposals, that threaten the development of an efficient and optimised railway network in the Northern Powerhouse. Our particular concerns lie with the ongoing TRU works at Ravensthorpe, and with forthcoming TRU works to the east of Leeds Station, specifically:

- The structural form selected for the new 'Baker Viaduct' at Ravensthorpe will block future restoration of the abandoned Spen Valley line, vital for the creation of a new southern rail access to Bradford independent of Leeds and a critical element in a future direct intercity link between Sheffield and Bradford;
- The current TRU scheme to upgrade and electrify the Leeds-Selby/York lines east of Leeds, and associated depot works at Neville Hill, appear to make no allowance for future 4-tracking of this route as the primary intercity corridor, from the North-West and Yorkshire, to Humberside and the North-East (and as a route capable of meeting Transport for the North's 60 minute specification for Leeds-Newcastle journey times).

However, it is possible that other critical conflicts may exist, and it is plainly vital that all such conflicts are identified, and resolved, without delay.

We have no dispute with the fundamental concept of the TRU project, to achieve the maximum feasible improvements along the corridor of the existing Transpennine Main Line. However, this can only be the first stage in a broader strategy to develop new-build 'Northern Powerhouse Rail' (NPR) links across the Pennines; only with such a step-change in Transpennine connectivity and capacity can the ultimate goal of a Levelled-up, Net Zero North be achieved.

It is crucial that current TRU works are fully coordinated and integrated with future optimal development of the Northern Powerhouse's rail network, and to this end, we would presume that discussions have already taken place between yourselves and Transport for the North (TfN). However, we have grave concerns with TfN's conduct of their Northern Powerhouse Rail project, as set out in the attached correspondence both with TfN, and with Northern Mayors (please refer to letters L11, L12, L14, L18 and L19 on <http://highspeeduk.co.uk/newletters.html>); these concerns lead us to believe that TfN has failed to properly identify potential conflicts between current TRU works and necessary future NPR routes.

Our concerns are informed by our own independent development of 'Network North', the Northern module of the wider 'High Speed UK' concept for a national optimised Integrated Rail Plan. Network North's broad configuration is shown in Appendix B, and the location of the Ravensthorpe conflict identified above can be seen at 'Dewsbury I/change' where brown and grey lines intersect; this is the planned location for our planned Dewsbury Interchange station which will provide vital connections in a future optimised West Yorkshire Network, as indicated in Appendix C.

We would invite you also to review our wider plans for railway network development in the North, as set out in the attached document **I03** (also available on the HSUK website www.highspeeduk.co.uk).

Please be assured that HSUK and Network North comprise far more than a 'felt tip concept'. Routes have been designed to a scale of 1:10,000, bespoke station solutions have been developed in all major cities, and a 'demonstrator timetable' is now in place to illustrate both the journey time savings that Network North can achieve, and its overall performance as a transformed railway network for the North.

Please note also that 'Network North' should not be confused with erroneously-titled Government proposals of the same name, announced in October 2023. By contrast, our 'Network North' scheme, long pre-dating the Government's 'Network North' initiative, has been developed completely independent of HS2, to diametrically opposite principles of full integration, network optimisation, and modular configuration.

This radically alternative design philosophy allows Network North to vastly outperform the Northern Powerhouse Rail proposals developed by TfN, on any conceivable criterion; we would invite you to review the '10 Key Performance Tests' set out in Appendix A, and the supporting presentation (available on http://highspeeduk.co.uk/P31_HSUK_NN_Presentation.pdf), to satisfy yourselves as to the multiple inadequacies of the official NPR scheme.

Most importantly, Network North's comprehensively superior performance allows a proper appreciation of what a transformed railway network in the Northern Powerhouse, capable of delivering Levelling-up and Net Zero, might actually look like, for instance:

- Direct services linking Sheffield and Bradford, avoiding the present need to change trains at Leeds – *for which the optimum route by far is via a restored Spen Valley line (Test 1);*
- TfN intercity journey time targets to be met, and transformed capacity to be achieved for local services through Leeds – *only possible with a 4-track route east of Leeds (Tests 2, 4 & 6):* .

In a more general sense, we are developing schemes across the railway network of the Midlands, the North and Scotland, particularly at the principal hub stations, to enable the step-change in connectivity and capacity that will be required for a Levelled-up, Net Zero UK. These schemes will inevitably require major modifications to / development of Network Rail infrastructure across the nation; and, noting the issues already raised in this letter, it is highly likely that there could be significant conflicts with other ongoing Network Rail infrastructure projects.

Accordingly, we believe it to be vital, that we enter into detailed discussions with yourselves, so that you may properly understand the full scope of our Network North scheme, and our broader HSUK initiative. Only with such discussions can future points of conflict be identified, and resolved.

We would respectfully request your immediate cooperation in arranging this meeting.

Yours sincerely,

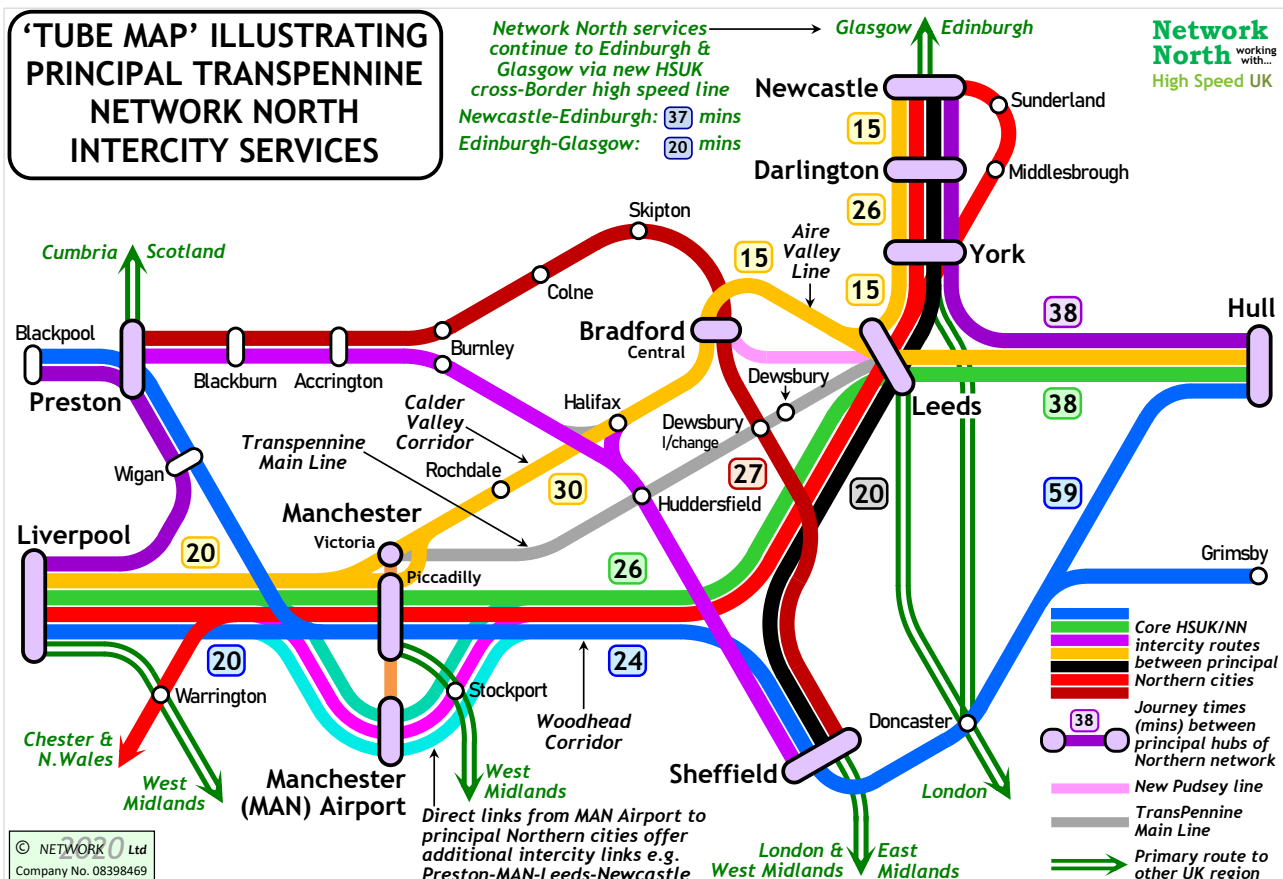
Colin Elliff BSc CEng MICE, Civil Engineering Principal, High Speed UK

APPENDIX A

| 10 Key Performance Tests for Northern Powerhouse Rail <i>Does NPR or Network North (NN) perform better?</i> | | Winner | **Reference to NN presentation |
|--|--|--------|-----------------------------------|
| 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



APPENDIX C

