



Sustainable Transport Midlands's statement on HS2 and Network North

Statement

We believe the decision to cancel all further phases of HS2 north & east of Birmingham **is the wrong decision for Britain's future**. HS2 was not only about cutting journey times; most importantly, it was about **releasing capacity across Britain's rail network** for more local, commuter and regional services, as well as more seats between our major cities, and running a more efficient and reliable network for all passengers. We urgently need more capacity on our rail network to enable modal shift from road and air networks to rail, in order to reduce our carbon emissions, as well as improving air quality, safety and overall quality of life in our towns and cities.

We believe it is wrong for these type of decisions, with long-term implications for our transport network, to be taken unilaterally by a government in the run-up to a general election, especially after 14 years of cross-party consensus and development of HS2. **We unequivocally oppose the lifting of safeguarding and selling of land along HS2 Phase 2's planned route**, and any other actions that could permanently limit the ability of a future government to reinstate these plans. We urgently call on all political parties and local authorities to oppose any such measures.

We welcome the increased funding for local authorities across the country to invest in sustainable transport modes, including **buses, light rail/metro and new railway stations or lines**, as part of 'Network North'. We also welcome the commitment to **enhancing the rail service frequency** between **Birmingham and Leicester**, as well as the funding being made available for Phase 2 of the **Wednesbury to Brierley Hill metro extension** in the West Midlands.

We are pleased with the commitment to **fully fund Midlands Rail Hub**, a commitment worth £1.75bn, benefitting the whole of our operating region across the Midlands and its bordering areas, with several small- to medium-term interventions.

Outside of our operating region, we welcome commitments for further rail electrification, including **the North Wales Coast Line, the Hope Valley Line (Manchester to Sheffield)**, and **electrification between Leeds and Hull**. We are calling for an explicit commitment to **reopen the Leamside Line**, as we believe this represents a strategic interest for the rail network, as well as local benefits for the North East. We also welcome **the extension of the £2 bus fare cap** until December 2024.

We are urgently calling for **further clarity** from the Department for Transport as to which schemes are explicitly being funded and promised, and which schemes are being proposed as examples of how new money for local authorities **could** be spent.

We do not accept the claim that other investments can only be promised with the cancellation of HS2 and 'released funds' from it, as we believe governments should be investing in both high-level strategic and local transport priorities. We do not support the 'reallocation' of funds from HS2 Phase 2 towards road schemes, and call for **the reallocation of this promised funding to sustainable transport investments.**