

TravelWatch NORTHWEST

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promoting quality public transport.....

Minister of State for Transport,
 Department for Transport
 Great Minster House
 33 Horseferry Road
 London
 SW1P 4DR

11th December 2020

Dear Minister of State,

HS2 Phase 2B Western Leg Design Refinement Consultation

TravelWatch NorthWest (TWNW) is an independent Community Interest Company representing all public transport users in NW England. We are pleased to give our views as follows to this call for evidence, in respect of our region.

As likely with many other organisations TWNW has its supporters and detractors for HS2. Notwithstanding this, given the national commitment to the project, we are broadly supportive of HS2 from the point of view of relieving capacity to allow other services to flourish and integrating with other services as much as possible to spread the benefits to our region as widely as possible.

The integration of HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) is also crucial and we welcome the commitment to this. (See additional comments below).

Question 1a What are your comments on the proposals to provide a connection between HS2 and the West Coast Main Line north of Crewe?

We agree and made this point in our response to the Crewe Hub consultation back in October 2017. Crewe has been and still is an important hub for services including local and regional services to many parts, i.e. further North, Merseyside, Manchester, North Wales, the Welsh border area and the Potteries. It is essential to continue these links with HS2.

Question 1b What are your comments on the revised proposal for the Crewe North Rolling Stock Depot and the inclusion of an IMB-R at the site?

We have no comments on this question.

Question 2a: What are your comments on the proposed changes to the design of Manchester Airport High Speed station?

We know that the proposed location of the Manchester Airport HS station will be some distance from the Airport Terminals. We can appreciate the reasoning behind this location but stress that the best possible measures must be taken to ensure that passenger interchange arrangements are as convenient as possible.

One question to be asked is with climate change central to all political thinking, along with the push for much reduced air travel, are the extensive additional enhancements for Manchester Airport still required?

To set against this we do recognise the need for provision for NPR services at the station and also the attraction of its location for Park and Ride.

Question 2b: What are your comments on the proposed changes to the road network around the new Manchester Airport High Speed station?

No comment other than to repeat the need to optimise interchange with the Airport itself.

Question 3a: What are your comments on the inclusion of two additional platforms into the design of Manchester Piccadilly High Speed station?

It is unfortunate that whereas we understand that rail operators believe that through stations are more efficient than terminating stations, HS2 has terminating stations at every major location: Euston, Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds. In Manchester at least we firmly support the concept of a HS2 West – East orientation through an underground station at Piccadilly as advocated by the Mayor of Greater Manchester and in the following report by Greengauge 21 published earlier this year -

www.greengauge21.net/the-rail-needs-of-the-north-and-the-midlands-/

Together with a tunnel under central Manchester this would enable through fast NPR trains between North Wales/Chester, Liverpool, Blackpool, Barrow and Glasgow and a variety of destinations east of the Pennines. It would also be possible for some HS2 services to continue their journeys in that direction, hopefully on a high speed route.

Importantly such a station would also be the ultimate solution for relieving the congested Castlefield corridor. In normal times the Castlefield corridor (the “Manchester bottleneck”) is a major problem. Capacity problems on the

corridor have been made worse by the opening of the Ordsall Chord. Under previous plans for the Manchester bottleneck, it was always proposed that improvements at Manchester Piccadilly and Oxford Road would complement the construction of the Ordsall Chord. That has not been the case.

Question 3b: What are your comments on the proposed changes to Metrolink around Manchester Piccadilly High Speed station?

We welcome any developments to improve interchange between Metrolink and Heavy Rail in Manchester.

Question 3c: What are your comments on the proposed inclusion in the design of passive provision for a future Manchester to Leeds junction?

We agree that there must be integration between NPR and HS2 in Manchester. We think that looking to the future it should be more ambitious as in line with our comments to question 3A above.

Question 3d: What are your comments on the proposed relocation of the Manchester tunnel portal to avoid the need to demolish the train care facility at Ardwick Depot?

We have no comments

Question 3e: What are your comments on the proposed changes to the road network around the new Manchester Piccadilly High Speed station?

We have no comments

Question 4: What are your comments about the proposed train stabling facility at Annandale?

We are taking the opportunity here to make some broader comments in view of the statement in paragraph 2.120 referring to “.....two 400m trains running from Euston each hour and splitting at Carlisle into two 200m trains to serve Glasgow and Edinburgh. HS2 trains will also serve Scotland from Birmingham.”

We understand that platforms at Carlisle and Preston will be lengthened to accommodate 18 coach HS2 trains. We have a major concern regarding services at the intermediate stations between Preston and Carlisle. Whereas from information currently on the HS2 website, Lancaster may have through HS2 trains to London this does not appear to be the case with Oxenholme and Penrith. (There are also similar concerns about Warrington Bank Quay, Stockport and Wilmslow the latter two of which are entirely off the HS2 network). ***We fear passengers to/from Oxenholme & Penrith, as well as the other stations highlighted may lose their through services and be forced to change trains when taking journeys to/from London.***

If the services were to split at Preston rather than Carlisle there would be more opportunity for calls to be made at the intermediate stations between Preston and Carlisle. The HS2 website does also say that “***the final HS2 timetable is subject to revision and consultation***” so we would of course expect to be able to put our views at the appropriate time.

Regarding the siting of the stabling facility at Annandale, it is unfortunate that space could not be made available in the brownfield area of the Kingmoor Marshalling Yard just north of Carlisle station. In this context the consultation paper states (paragraph 2.135) that “most trains stabled at the Annandale Depot would start and end passenger service at Carlisle”. Yet, as the plan has HS2 trains running through to and from Glasgow/Edinburgh, it is not clear that there would be an appreciable number of trains starting and ending “passenger service at Carlisle”.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours faithfully,

John A Moorhouse

John Moorhouse
Company Secretary