

# PM confirms HS2 will go ahead alongside revolution in local transport

- HS2 will go ahead to deliver essential North-South connectivity, greater capacity and shorter journey times, with construction for Phase 1 from London to the West Midlands set to begin in April
- Decision comes alongside new investment for vital local transport links as PM sets out his vision to overhaul the UK's transport network, including £5 billion to improve bus and cycle links outside London, as well as vital upgrades to local roads
- PM commits to accelerating progress on Northern Powerhouse Rail with an integrated plan to maximise benefits of rail investments across the North, informed by an assessment from the National Infrastructure Commission
- Reform package will improve governance at HS2 Ltd to ensure project is delivered better and more efficiently

HS2 will go ahead alongside radical improvements to local transport networks all across the country, the PM confirmed today.

In a statement to Parliament he set out that after careful consideration of the independent Oakervee review, the decision has been taken to proceed with HS2. With the right reforms in place, HS2 will become the spine of the country's transport network, bringing our biggest cities closer together, boosting productivity and rebalancing opportunity fairly across the country.

Alongside this, the PM outlined his vision for a revolution in local transport to ensure that towns and cities in every region have the modern, joined up network needed to fire up economic growth.

A multibillion pound package to transform buses and cycling will deliver at least 4,000 new Zero Emission buses, higher frequency services (including evenings and weekends), more affordable, simpler fares, and new priority schemes to make routes more efficient. The £5 billion in new funding will also help build over 250 miles of new, high quality separated cycle routes, and dozens of 'Mini-Holland' schemes to make town centres safer for cyclists and pedestrians.

The PM also pledged further upgrades for local connections including:

- Cutting congestion and boosting the local road network across the country by accelerating local schemes to the next stage of development, from Hartlepool and Cheadle in the North to Melksham to Salisbury in the South West
- Upgrading Bristol East Junction station to tackle a major pinch point in the South West rail network, so that passengers can travel in and out of Bristol more easily

- Taking forward work to improve the A1 north of Newcastle, strengthening the link to the Scottish Border

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

Delivering better, faster and more reliable transport connections is the way to close the opportunity gap across this country.

But it is not and never will be an 'either/or' between big projects and local services.

Dramatic improvements to local transport and the decision to proceed with HS2 will shift this country's centre of gravity away from the capital and transform connectivity between our towns and cities.

I am drawing a clear line under the mismanagement of the past – HS2 must be delivered more efficiently and cost-effectively so that communities feel its benefits more quickly, particularly those in the North.

Douglas Oakervee's independent review into HS2 has today been published in full. After thorough analysis of the benefits and impacts of the project, work on Phase 1 (the route between London and Birmingham) is set to start in April. Government will revive the legislation to deliver Phase 2a (connecting Birmingham to Crewe) as soon as possible so that preparation works can move forward.

The Prime Minister told Parliament that he is committed to Phase 2b of the project, extending high-speed rail from the West Midlands to the North. In order to work out how best to deliver Northern Powerhouse Rail and Phase 2b more effectively, government will draw up an integrated plan for rail in the North, informed by an assessment from the National Infrastructure Commission.

This will work to identify the most effective sequencing of all relevant investments in the north, and look at how the two schemes can work together alongside wider investment in transport for the North and Midlands. It will also have a focus on ensuring that lessons are learned from Phase 1 of HS2 to drive down costs.

Recognising that better East-West connections are a priority for local leaders, the Government will look at how best to accelerate the delivery of Northern Powerhouse Rail, including looking at options for a new delivery body. The decision to proceed with HS2 is accompanied by a clear commitment to drawing a line under past failures of leadership, transparency and cost control, and a recognition that to go forward, things must change.

The PM outlined a number of measures to instil discipline and financial order to the project, including:

- Appointing a dedicated minister with specific oversight and

accountability for HS2

- Redefining HS2 Ltd's role so that they can give maximum focus to successfully delivering Phase 1 and 2a, and making new delivery arrangements for Euston station and the design and construction of Phase 2b, to ensure better value for money and on time delivery
- Improved transparency through regular reports to Parliament from the responsible minister

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

I've been clear that we needed all the facts to decide the way forward with HS2. Fully informed by a comprehensive and detailed scrutiny of all the facts, now is the time to drive HS2 forward, alongside a 'High Speed North' plan to give the North and Midlands the capacity and connectivity it vitally needs.

We are also clear that the project must reform and improve, with clearer accountability and transparency to ensure its incredible benefits are matched by a tight control of costs.

Our vision for increasing opportunity and prosperity across every part of our country doesn't stop with HS2. We achieve that not only through investing in critical national projects to transform journeys in the future, but delivering on the vital connections people rely on today to ensure no community is left behind.

Douglas Oakervee, Chair of the independently-led review into HS2, said:

I am proud of the work that the Review Panel has carried out. The Review's Report is a comprehensive appraisal of a challenging project. I believe the recommendations help offer it a way forward, a means of increasing scrutiny and oversight, protecting the interests of passengers and taxpayers, and rebuilding confidence in an important piece of critical national infrastructure which will do much to rebalance the economy.

I am delighted that a decision on the project has been made, and it is now the job of the government to take this ambitious project forward.