



Rt Hon Patrick McLaughlin MP
Secretary of State for Transport

07 December 2015

Dear Patrick

I am writing to welcome the recent publication of your report on Phase 2 of HS2 and the announcement that HS2 would reach Crewe in 2027, six years earlier than the planned completion of Phase 2. It is vital to ensure that the benefits of HS2 are maximised and as geographically dispersed as possible.

Completing the line to Crewe by 2027 will expedite the beneficial effects of reduced journey times and increased capacity of HS2 to the economies of the North, including North Wales. However, in order to maximise the potential afforded by these opportunities, the integration of HS2 with existing rail infrastructure and services through an integrated hub solution at Crewe is essential.

David Higgins' HS2 Plus report also recommended that classic compatible services using HS2 and existing rail infrastructure between Crewe and North Wales should be considered. I am disappointed, therefore, that classic compatible services to North Wales via Chester are not mentioned in the Phase 2a report.

A direct service using HS2 infrastructure would bring significant benefits to people along the route on both sides of the border. Under current plans, the requirement to change from the existing rail network to HS2 at Crewe may not deliver the transformational change afforded to other areas on the classic compatible network.

Electrification between Crewe and Holyhead is required to run classic compatible services to Chester and North Wales. As you are aware, we are

supporting the development of the case for electrifying this route, and between Crewe and Warrington. Electrification during Control Period 6 would align with the timescales for the delivery of HS2 to Crewe and significantly improve integration between the existing rail network and HS2 in order to maximise and disperse the potential benefits of HS2.

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