

# “High Speed Rail essential to levelling up Britain”

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The High Speed Rail Group has released its latest report – ***High Speed Rail: Levelling Up Voices*** – bringing together influential voices from across politics, business and academia to make the case for the benefits of rail infrastructure investment, which include:

- allowing the efficient movement of people and goods in towns and cities across the UK;
- creating larger and more unified labour markets;
- improving peoples’ access to local services;
- enhancing firm-to-firm connectivity; and
- expanding access to new and existing markets.

The group says that in short, investing in and improving transport connectivity results in a boost to living standards, more resources diverted toward skills and education, and restored local pride and opportunity across the UK – all of which are core tenets of the levelling up agenda.

You can download the full report here: [\*\*High Speed Rail Levelling Up Voices\*\*](#)

Following the coronavirus pandemic, economic recovery is central to the Government's forward-looking agenda. But the report contributors make clear that an economic resurgence cannot be achieved without engaging the cities and regions outside of London and the South East. One of the historic and ongoing drivers of the unbalanced national economy has been under-investment in regional transport systems.

While HS2 understandably occupies a prominent position in the discourse around rail infrastructure, the report also touches on the importance of other major projects such as Northern Powerhouse Rail and East-West Rail, amongst others, all crucial in closing the gaps between our regions and counteracting inequalities between the UK's communities. The report also looks beyond existing plans for HS2, including the idea of an 'X' shaped high speed rail network that joins up not only London and the North via the Midlands, but also improves connectivity by reaching Wales and the South West.

The full list of contributors to the report are:

- **Andy Street**, Mayor of the West Midlands Combined Authority (*foreword*)
- **Steve Rotherham**, Metro Mayor of the Liverpool City Region
- **Martin Tugwell**, Chief Executive, Transport for the North
- **Ian Fitzpatrick**, Principal and Chief Executive, National College for Advanced Transport & Infrastructure (NCATI)
- **Cllr Bev Craig**, Leader, Manchester City Council
- **Will Wilson**, CEO, Siemens Mobility Limited UKI
- **Ben Still**, Chief Executive, West Yorkshire Combined Authority
- **Cllr Huw Thomas**, Leader, Cardiff Council

Commenting on the publication of the report, a High Speed Rail Group spokesperson said: "The gaps between affluence and deprivation shrink as the distances between our towns and cities close. High speed rail is levelling up in action, and it should be at the heart of the Government's drive to improve prosperity and wellbeing throughout the country.

"Our latest report is evidence of the multitude of ways that high speed rail can help deliver levelling up. Of course, as our contributors demonstrate, 'levelling up' means different things to different people, but what is consistent between them is reducing regional inequalities, spreading resources and opportunity more evenly, and putting infrastructure in place to bring our communities into the 21st century."

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