

Mayor and Chair: HS2 foundation stone for northern rail

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Andy Burnham, the Mayor of Greater Manchester, and Allan Cook, Chair of HS2 Ltd, highlight the importance of HS2 in realising the ambitions of Northern Powerhouse Rail.

Allan Cook, Chairman of HS2 Ltd, said: “HS2 creates the foundations for Northern Powerhouse Rail to spread prosperity across the whole of the North. Together they will make it easier for people to move between towns and cities across the North and the Midlands. Commuters will experience more comfortable and less stressful journeys, and businesses will benefit from better connections with each other and their customers.

“So it’s not a question of either or, we need both. Having Northern Powerhouse Rail without HS2 is like having the M62 without the M6 and the M1.”

Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, said: “The North has huge economic potential but we have been held back because our transport infrastructure is simply not good enough, with a lack of capacity to support fast and frequent connections for routes serving our towns and cities. HS2, linked with Northern Powerhouse Rail, can act as a catalyst for local growth and supporting UK plc. Together, both could support a doubling of the economic output of Greater Manchester to around £132 billion by 2050, contributing at least 40,000 new jobs and 13,000 new homes to the local economy.

“The North needs to come to the front of the queue for transport investment and HS2 would be the catalyst for making that happen over the coming decades.”

The news comes as Allan Cook visits Manchester for the first time as Chair of the company constructing Britain's new high speed railway. His meeting with the Mayor is a clear sign of commitment from the two to see both projects delivered in unison for the betterment of the North.

Northern Powerhouse Rail is the proposed railway upgrade programme that will link towns and cities across the north, delivering radical changes and much improved services and journey times. HS2 is the new high speed train line that will link over 25 towns and cities from Scotland through to the South East, joining up nearly half of the UK population, and is set to deliver £92 billion of benefits to the UK economy.

Across the country HS2 station sites have been preparing for the arrival of the new railway by drawing up economic plans to take advantage of better connections across the country. The redevelopment plans for Manchester have the potential to deliver 40,000 new jobs for the city with both HS2 and NPR working together. This prize will be put at risk if both schemes aren't delivered.

HS2 is key to unlocking the Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) network, and will provide the foundation on which NPR ambitions can be realised. By utilising the spare capacity released on the northern sections of the HS2 network to enable future NPR services, the two projects work seamlessly to maximise the benefits of the UK's investment in future rail.

There are key corridors that are dependent on infrastructure delivered by HS2 in order for NPR to operate, including:

- Manchester – Liverpool (via Warrington): NPR services could use HS2 infrastructure, including the 13 kilometre Manchester tunnel, to serve HS2 stations at Manchester Airport and Manchester Piccadilly. Therefore, it would be possible to deliver NPR's ambitions for a 30 minute journey between Manchester and Liverpool
- Sheffield – Leeds: NPR services could use HS2 infrastructure north of Clayton Junction to serve Leeds HS2 station
- Leeds – Newcastle via the HS2 junction: this would enable trains from Manchester, Sheffield and the Midlands to travel via Leeds and on to York and the North East. This could also release capacity for more local and commuter services east of Leeds
- Sheffield – Manchester: NPR services could benefit from investment by the HS2 electrification programme on the Midland Main Line

HS2 is scheduled to be completed by 2033, and proposals put forward by Transport for the North, including Northern Powerhouse Rail, are scheduled for completion in the next 30 years.

Works on the first phase of HS2 from the South East to the Midlands are already underway on over 250 locations. Over 7,000 jobs and 250 apprentices are working on the programme, and around 2,000 businesses have delivered work on HS2.