



Greater Manchester  
All Party Parliamentary Group

**Chair** Lucy Powell MP  
**Vice Chairs** Lord Goddard of Stockport, Ivan Lewis MP, Baroness  
Morris of Bolton, Chris Green MP, Jim McMahon MP  
**Secretary** Jonathan Reynolds MP  
**Treasurer** Yasmin Qureshi MP

## Non-Verbatim Minutes

### Greater Manchester APPG

## What Northern Powerhouse Rail and HS2 mean for Greater Manchester and the North

Runway Visitor Park, Concorde Hanger, Manchester Airport, Manchester

13:00 – 14.30, Friday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2018

### Welcome and introductions

**Lucy Powell**, *Chair of the Greater Manchester APPG*, welcomed everybody to the meeting. The meeting will explore what Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) and HS2 mean for Greater Manchester (GM) and the North.

**Andrew Cowan**, *Chief Executive of Manchester Airport*, welcomed attendees to the meeting and outlined Manchester Airport's ongoing £1bn transformation programme, developing a world class gateway for the region and country. £1m a day is being spent on construction and £30m on the supply chain in GM. Three quarters of staff are from GM and there are 200 apprentices on site.

Andrew noted that the airport serves 220 destinations, supporting the good connectivity needed to achieve the ambitions set out in the Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review. However, good connectivity starts 'on the ground', not least with rail. 22 million people are within two hours' travel to Manchester Airport, but only 3 million by rail – a figure that would treble with NPR.

### What do Northern Powerhouse Rail and HS2 mean for Greater Manchester and the North?

**Andy Burnham**, *Mayor of Greater Manchester*, said that NPR and HS2 are essential to the Northern Powerhouse, will bring cities closer together, close the productivity gap and give significant investment opportunities for towns like Wigan, as well as making Manchester Airport one of the best-connected in the world and placing Manchester at the heart of the Northern Powerhouse economy and Piccadilly the crossroads of the North.

Nevertheless, it is vital to build infrastructure once and build it 'right' to give the maximum benefits to the region and the North. The primary challenges for NPR and HS2 at present are:

- The arrangements at **Piccadilly Station**: whether to create an underground level for the new lines, thereby following European practice of having local and intercity connections on different floors (the preferred option for GM); or building level with the existing station by expanding it. The surface level option could mean trains effectively have to 'turn around' causing a six minute delay



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- The arrangements at **Manchester Airport**: a fast rail line is not sufficient in itself; it needs to be linked as much as possible to wider connections e.g. Metrolink and bus services. There is a question mark over why local councils are being asked to contribute (seemingly unlike the West Midlands towards Birmingham International), given that the main beneficiaries of a HS2 connection at Manchester Airport will be those that live outside of GM.

The Mayor summarised the costs of upgrades in London stations for reference: King's Cross totalling £500m, Victoria £700m, St Pancras £800m, Waterloo £800m, London Bridge £1bn and the planned upgrades for Euston for HS2 expected to cost £1.5bn. Customers going between Manchester and Euston should get the same experience at both ends.

In response to a later question from **Jeff Smith** as to what the extra costs of an underground station at Piccadilly are, **Andy Burnham** said that current indicative figures suggest between £800m and £1.2bn.

**Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe**, *Leader of Bradford Council and Chair of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority*, said that all of the North has suffered from a lack of investment, not least Bradford which is the largest city in the UK not on a through line. Bradford is also the 'youngest' city in the UK with nearly 25% of the population under the age of 16.

The Leeds-Liverpool Canal was once the equivalent to Northern Powerhouse Rail. Both West Yorkshire and Lancashire set up companies to build it, with major difficulties ensuing: it took 50 years to build, was over budget by six times and it was not possible to get a narrowboat past Wigan due to differing canal sizes.

This differs to the present where there is a unified plan for the whole of the North. NPR with Bradford included on the route would reduce journey times between Bradford and Leeds to 8 minutes and with Manchester to 20 minutes. This would deliver economic opportunity for all and mean £15bn added GVA for the rest of England. The time to invest is now.

**Chris Green**, *Vice-Chair of the Greater Manchester APPG and Parliamentary Private Secretary to Jo Johnson*, welcomed the success of Manchester Airport which exemplifies the vision of George Osborne's powerhouse. Much of the talent and skills in the North are in close proximity but people are not always able to access opportunities (unlike London). There are concerns regarding Theresa May and Phillip Hammond's commitment to the Northern Powerhouse, however these are misguided; the commitment remains.

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Connectivity is vitally important to different parts of the country in different ways. Many lines have freight, local and intercity trains all on the same track, which are difficult to effectively manage. Recent investment in the North includes the Mersey Gateway which has helped tackle a bottleneck in Runcorn, in south Liverpool, as well as electrification between Liverpool and Manchester, now complete, and electrification between Manchester and Preston now taking place.

However, delays when upgrading Victorian infrastructure are always possible. Boring through the Pennines is one such area where careful consideration needs to be given. Jo Johnson, Minister for Rail, has said that new trains need to be digitally ready for new signalling. Meanwhile Manchester Airport should become internationally more important. There are many opportunities for residents from businesses choosing to locate here.

The GM Spatial Framework has huge importance for GM as a whole. The first version of GMSF was problematic because it created a doughnut around Greater Manchester of executive homes causing congestion from people commuting. GM needs more high density housing located more centrally which is connected to transport links. It also needs significant investment in housing: GM can lead the way.

**Sir Richard Leese**, *Leader of Manchester City Council and Deputy Mayor for the Economy and Business*, said that the Calder Valley line is too slow and can take well over an hour to travel between Manchester and Bradford. Manchester is also the 'youngest' city in the UK, if it is calculated on the average age of residents due to its high proportion of 18-40 year olds.

HS2 and NPR will take over a decade to complete, and there is a need to focus on the short term as well, e.g. improving Oxford Road and Piccadilly links and the existing Manchester-Leeds line.

The original HS2 proposal would not have gone to Manchester Airport, with HS2, DfT and the Treasury only agreeing to spend the extra money because of the economic case put forward. Moreover, the original economic case did not include NPR, which improves benefits significantly. Beneficiaries (users) of the station are likely not to be residents of GM.

HS2 is not predominantly for reducing journey times. It is about increasing capacity, both freight and commuter. NPR will share stations with HS2 at both the airport and Piccadilly. This further improves economic case and phenomenally improves connectivity for cities like Bradford. The right investment will bring 40,000 jobs to Piccadilly alone and create 13,000 homes. This may be a once-in-a-two-century opportunity; the current West Coast line was built *before* Victorian times and is over 200 years old.

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## Questions and Answers

**Lucy Powell** introduced the panel of expert witnesses: **Lorna Pimlott**, Director of Sponsorship & Policy Phase 2 of HS2 Ltd; **Barry White**, Chief Executive, Transport for the North (TfN) and **Jon Lamonte**, Chief Executive of Transport for Greater Manchester.

**Jonathan Reynolds, MP for Stalybridge and Hyde**, queried the new TransPennine Express timetable and whether it includes enough capacity for direct connections across parts of the GM region to places such as Stalybridge and Hyde.

**Jeff Smith, MP for Manchester Withington**, highlighted the need for Labour and ultimately cross-party lobbying of Government on the issues raised. He also asked how many years it would take for the gained economic benefit to be repaid.

**Tony Lloyd, MP for Rochdale**, echoed Jonathan Reynold's point by saying that towns outside the city centre are economically important in own right, with greater connectivity across the piece needed to coincide with big ticket schemes. Ultimately each journey begins at home and ends at another door.

*In response*, **Barry White**, TfN, said that a whole network approach is necessary, with a view to what will be needed in 20 years. TfN is co-planning with DfT to produce a Draft Strategic Outline Business Case which will be submitted in draft this summer and completed by the end of 2018. It will not set out specifics (e.g. on Piccadilly) but include options, costs and provide a high-level outline. This ultimately gives the TfN board, made up of 19 leaders of councils and mayors in the North, the ability to take the decisions, not TfN's unelected executive.

While most decisions will be taken over the next two years, Barry appreciates the need for a decision on Piccadilly by late Autumn 2018. The business case will include detailed analysis of both the surface level and underground level option taking into account a number of factors.

**Andy Burnham** highlighted the importance of good transport to residents, with most letters from the public he receives concerning the subject. He has set up the GM Transport Board which attempts to get bring all stakeholders together, public and private. Also looking towards a more multi-modal approach to travel with more parkway Metrolink stations in GM; city centre to city centre travel is a somewhat outdated notion.

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He added that there is a need to bring the North together, and the first convention of the North will happen on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June in Newcastle, coinciding with the Great Exhibition of the North.

**Graham Brady, MP for Altrincham and Sale West**, said that the mid-Cheshire line does not connect to the airport. This could link Chester and Altrincham. It would be absurd for the airport station to not be at the airport, however the £1bn additional cost could be saved by removing the concrete viaduct.

**Jo Platt, MP for Leigh**, asked what benefit residents of her constituency would get from HS2 which will cut through it. Leigh is the fifth largest town in the country without a rail line. Need for good connectivity evident from the popular guided busway. Ultimately still big issues with social mobility.

**Kate Green, MP for Stretford**, queried the environmental benefits and challenges of HS2 and NPR. Increased traffic could mean spillover onto the M60, worsening already bad traffic. What highway infrastructure is needed?

**Afzal Khan, MP for Gorton**, stressed Gorton's poor connectivity, with Victorian era structures and no disabled facilities.

**Mike Kane, MP for Wythenshawe and Sale East**, compared the current climate to building the Manchester Ship Canal, the previous 'powerhouse' in the 1870s. There is significant political backing now for Northern transport investment amongst leaders.

*In response*, **Lorna Pimlott**, HS2 Ltd, said that HS2 is about creating fast city-to city transport, linking up the regions and improving productivity. Investment out of London is key; supporting the skills and employment needed to keep top graduates in the North, a need only enhanced by Brexit. Although the decision will ultimately be DfT's not HS2's, they are working closely with other partners like DCLG and TfGM to get the best solution. The Hybrid Bill will be going to Parliament in 2019.

**Jon Lamonte**, TfGM, noted that the 28 million people passing through Piccadilly at present are only going to increase. Vital to improve bus connections, links at Piccadilly Gardens, Metrolink as well. For the Piccadilly/ airport arrangements, standard transport appraisal from DfT won't be enough: need a political answer. Working with Highways England to allow decent flows of traffic on junctions 5 and 6.

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**Susan Hinchcliffe** suggested that the approach is benefit-led, improving connectivity for people's lives. The central point is releasing capacity; not journey times to London. Commute between Bradford and Leeds is biggest in the country and three quarters drive. Links to the city-centre station is Bradford's priority; can support an increased agglomeration effect in the North.

### Concluding comments

**Andy Burnham** pointed towards £160m investment in walking and cycling in Greater Manchester, with Olympian Chris Boardman appointed to lead the scheme. Cutting traffic congestion will bring environmental benefits by reducing air pollution. Free bus pass for 16-18 year olds being progressed with a timetable for implementation expected soon. Zonal Metrolink pass also being explored.

More than half of stations in GM have are inaccessible for wheelchairs. The Transport Secretary turned down GM's bid for rail station devolution, there is therefore an impetus on the Government to rectify this.

Investment in stations in London is so high because of the high value of surrounding land. Land value in Manchester and surrounding Piccadilly is not at present but likely will be in 50 years. Long term commitment to rebalancing economy means getting the right investment now. This is about our economic future for this century and the next.

**Lucy Powell** noted that there is mostly consensus on these issues, and she and other local leaders will be lobbying together to campaign on them. Thanks to the speakers, MPs, stakeholders and everybody in attendance. Thanks to the sponsors: United Utilities, Greater Manchester Housing Providers, Manchester Airport Group, Amey, Natwest and DevoConnect for organising the meeting.

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