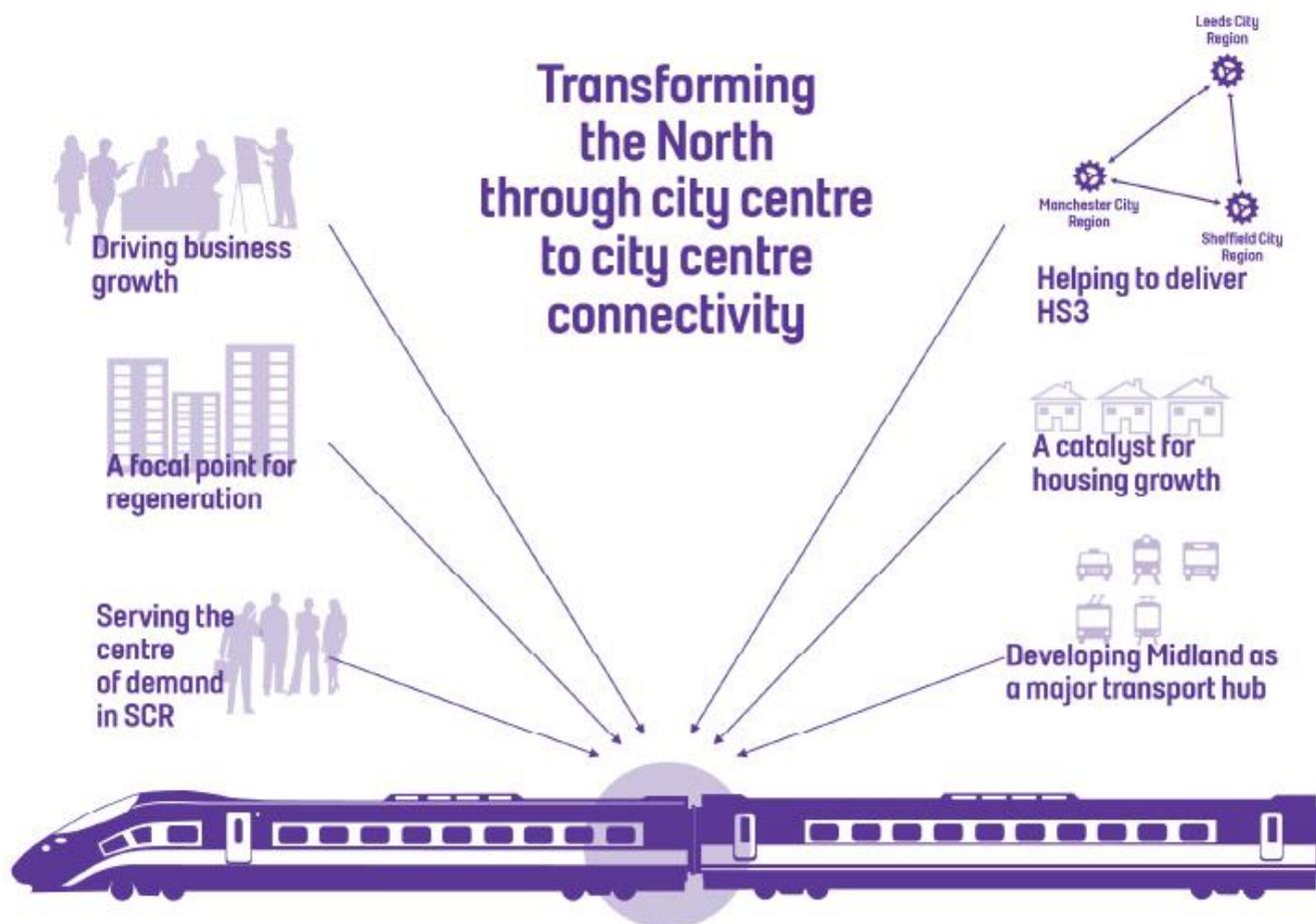


# A Strong & Connected City Centre In An Economically Powerful North



High Speed Two Phase 2b: Crewe to Manchester, West Midlands to Leeds Route Refinement Consultation 2016

Sheffield City Council Response  
March 2017



# High Speed Two Phase 2b: Crewe to Manchester, West Midlands to Leeds Route Refinement Consultation 2016

## Introduction

Sheffield City Council is a strong supporter of High Speed Rail. Our support has always been based upon stations being located where the greatest economic impact, transport benefits and job creation will be delivered.

Just over three years ago, Sheffield City Council submitted its response to the consultation on Government's preferred route for Phase 2 of HS2. This response unequivocally rejected the proposal to locate a parkway station at Meadowhall and set out the overwhelming case for a city centre location instead.

Since then, there have been a number of developments which have transformed the nature of the debate about station location, most notably the establishment of Transport for the North (TfN) and its ambitious plan for Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR), sometimes referred to as HS3. The strong economic rationale behind NPR meant it focused on city centre connectivity.

As this plan developed, HS2's previous station proposal became increasingly untenable and the opportunity for the HS2 route between Sheffield and Leeds city centres to become an integral part of NPR has become essential.

At the same time, a campaign led by businesses for a city centre HS2 station was gathering momentum, backed by the local media. This campaign set out how an integrated HS2 and NPR solution in the city centre was not only vital for Sheffield City Region (SCR) growth ambitions, particularly in highly-skilled sectors, but best for UK plc.

In July 2016, HS2 Ltd announced that they would be recommending an alternative way for HS2 to serve SCR, citing the introduction of NPR and concerns about the Meadowhall location as reasons for their change in thinking. This change would involve creating a classic compatible HS2 link into Midland.

Sheffield City Council has welcomed the proposed change to the station location in SCR. However, in keeping with previous submissions from Sheffield City Council, our continued support still requires the broader context to be put in place and key commitments to be fulfilled.

This consultation response sets out Sheffield City Council's position to HS2 Ltd and Government, and how we think Sheffield and SCR must maximise the benefits of HS2.

In summary, our support for HS2 is based upon five principles:

- i) HS2's **economic growth potential is maximised** through the selection and design of route and stations;
- ii) HS2 **fully integrates and complements with Northern Powerhouse Rail** with the northern loop and junction in place to enable high speed journeys to continue north of Sheffield;
- iii) Route and station designs are fully funded to ensure that future capacity and **growth in passenger numbers is not compromised;**
- iv) **HS2's growth potential across Sheffield City Region is realised** by ensuring appropriate local connectivity is in place and by harnessing the project to drive skills development and stimulate innovation and capacity;
- v) The potential negative impacts of the route and station are **managed in the most effective way** and with appropriate scheduling, good communication and engagement with local partners and a proactive approach to assessment and payment of compensation to affected parties.

The past three years have demonstrated that HS2 Ltd and Government are open-minded to change when there is a strong economic reason for doing so. We hope that this is still the case and that this response will be the starting point for future discussions about how an HS2 link into Sheffield city centre can help to support our plans for growth locally and nationally.



**Councillor Julie Dore**  
**Leader, Sheffield City Council**

# Response to Questions

## **Question 7: Do you support the proposal to amend the route to serve South and West Yorkshire? Please indicate whether or not you support the proposal together with your reasons.**

Sheffield City Council (SCC) is a strong supporter of High Speed Rail. However, our support has always been based upon stations being located where the greatest economic impact, transport benefits and job creation will be delivered.

In January 2014 the council submitted a response to the HS2 Phase 2 Consultation. As part of this, the council set out the reasons why it strongly disagreed with the proposal to locate the South Yorkshire station at a parkway location near Meadowhall, rather than a city centre location. Our reasons for that view, which was also shared by the bulk of the business community in Sheffield, remain as strongly held today and for information we attach our 2014 consultation response [here](#) and a more recent summary of the case for a city centre station [here](#).

The council's 2014 response set out its preferred option of the main HS2 route running through Sheffield with a city centre station location at Victoria. Given Victoria's city centre location, the amount of developable land around it and the high levels of Council land ownership in the area, the Council stated that Victoria was potentially one of the most exciting development prospects on the HS2 line. The idea was supported by London and Continental Railway as part of their [Development Review](#).

Since this response, we have seen the establishment of Transport for the North (TfN) as part of the Northern Powerhouse vision for the North. TfN's [Northern Transport Strategy Report 2015](#) recognises that the North of England has a number of large cities and areas of economic activity that perform well individually but, due to the poor transport connectivity, agglomeration benefits are not being achieved. Improvements to rail and road infrastructure are essential to creating a single cohesive and well-connected economy in the North.

*"Much of the knowledge economy thrives in cities where ideas and innovation are created and the opportunities to grow are greatest. City centres in particular house these sectors, which rely on good rail links to connect businesses to each other and bring commuters into work from surrounding suburbs."*

Northern Transport Strategy 2015

Sheffield City Council's position is that a main route through Victoria remains the optimal solution for HS2 and NPR in Sheffield City Region, in terms of frequency of service, economic

impact and wider Northern connectivity. Whilst we acknowledge that the Victoria option is not being consulted upon, we are totally convinced that the new route and station proposals by the Secretary of State, connected to Leeds city centre via a 'loop' for NPR, are a much improved option compared to the previous route proposing a station at Meadowhall.

Our support for HS2 is based upon five principles:

- i) HS2's **economic growth potential is maximised** through the selection and design of route and stations;
- ii) HS2 **fully integrates and complements with Northern Powerhouse Rail** with the northern loop and junction in place to enable high speed journeys to continue north of Sheffield;
- iii) Route and station designs are fully funded to ensure that future capacity and **growth in passenger numbers is not compromised**;
- iv) **HS2's growth potential across Sheffield City Region is realised** by ensuring appropriate local connectivity is in place and by harnessing the project to drive skills development and stimulate innovation and capacity;
- v) The potential negative impacts of the route and station are **managed in the most effective way** and with appropriate scheduling, good communication and engagement with local partners and a proactive approach to assessment and payment of compensation to affected parties;

Subject to a number of caveats outlined below, SCC is of the view that the current proposals satisfy these principles and as a consequence **we support the proposal to amend the route.**

#### **i) Maximising HS2's growth potential**

Having advocated for a HS2 city centre location in Sheffield for a number of years, SCC is very supportive of the proposal to serve the city centre with a HS2 link. We understand the reasons behind the decision to locate the link at Midland given its existing connectivity and the poor suitability of the Meadowhall alternative, and welcome the opportunity this provides to build on Midland's existing connectivity and develop the station as a major transport hub, linking current services with HS2, NPR, and other rail aspirations, thus maximising connectivity to/from Sheffield city centre.

Midland's city centre location allows SCR to maximise the economic benefits of HS2. In their report, '[Beyond the High Street; Why our city centres matter](#)' Centre for Cities outlined how in large cities, city centres are playing an increasing role in city-wide economic performance and that many of the highest skilled and best paid industries, which have been critical sources of jobs growth in recent years, prefer to locate in city centres. Knowledge intensive business services (KIBS) jobs are almost twice as likely to be concentrated in the central areas of cities, compared to private sector employment in general. KIBS jobs tend to cluster in city centres because they benefit from agglomeration; public transport infrastructure; a

concentration of skilled workers; access to good quality culture, leisure and retail, leisure and cultural facilities and the vibrancy and sense of place that only exists in city centres.



City centres are unique drivers of their city region economies. They are centres of commercial, cultural and academic activity providing jobs for commuters from a wider geography on a daily basis. Sheffield city centre does not yet punch its full weight to the detriment of the whole city region. If SCR is to realise its growth aspirations, the economic role of the city centre must be increased significantly.

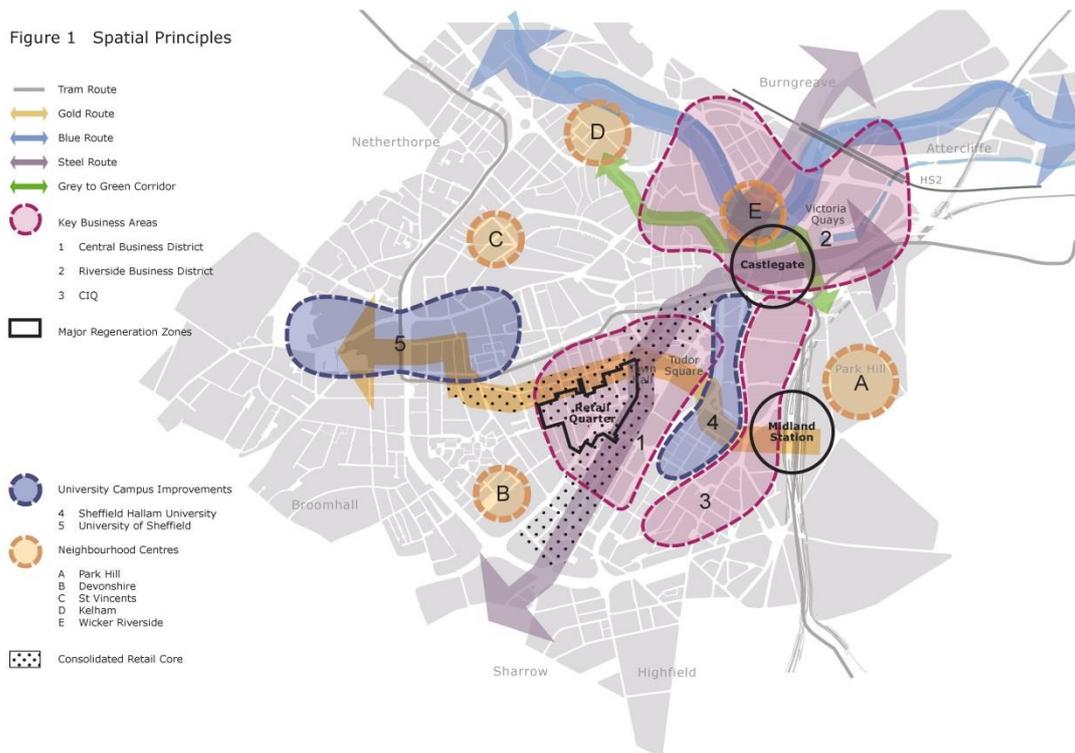
The Sheffield City Region Integrated Infrastructure Plan identifies Sheffield city centre as the highest driver of new jobs and one of the region's key spatial priorities, acting as the largest hub for Knowledge, Creative and Digital Industries, Leisure, Higher Education, Culture and Financial and Professional Services. This has also been reflected in recent land use modelling on behalf of Sheffield City Region which confirms the city centre as the location for three out of five of the City Region's priority growth sectors. The sectors forecast for the highest jobs growth in the Sheffield City Region Independent Economic Review, undertaken by Ekosgen, are business, professional and financial services (BPFS) and creative and digital industries (CDI). These sectors are concentrated in Sheffield city centre and are those that have the most potential to be influenced by access to high speed rail.

Locating the HS2 station at Sheffield Midland has the potential to act as the centrepiece of new development to attract and support these growth sectors, by increasing the size and scale of the Central Business District and creating a series of development opportunities to accommodate the expansion of the sectors.

The past fifteen years has seen a significant upturn in Sheffield’s office development market. The Council has overseen the successful establishment of three new business districts, each of which has a distinctive function:

- prestige accommodation mainly for Business, Professional and Financial Services in Central
- larger floor plate in Riverside
- CDI in the Cultural Industries Quarter (CIQ)

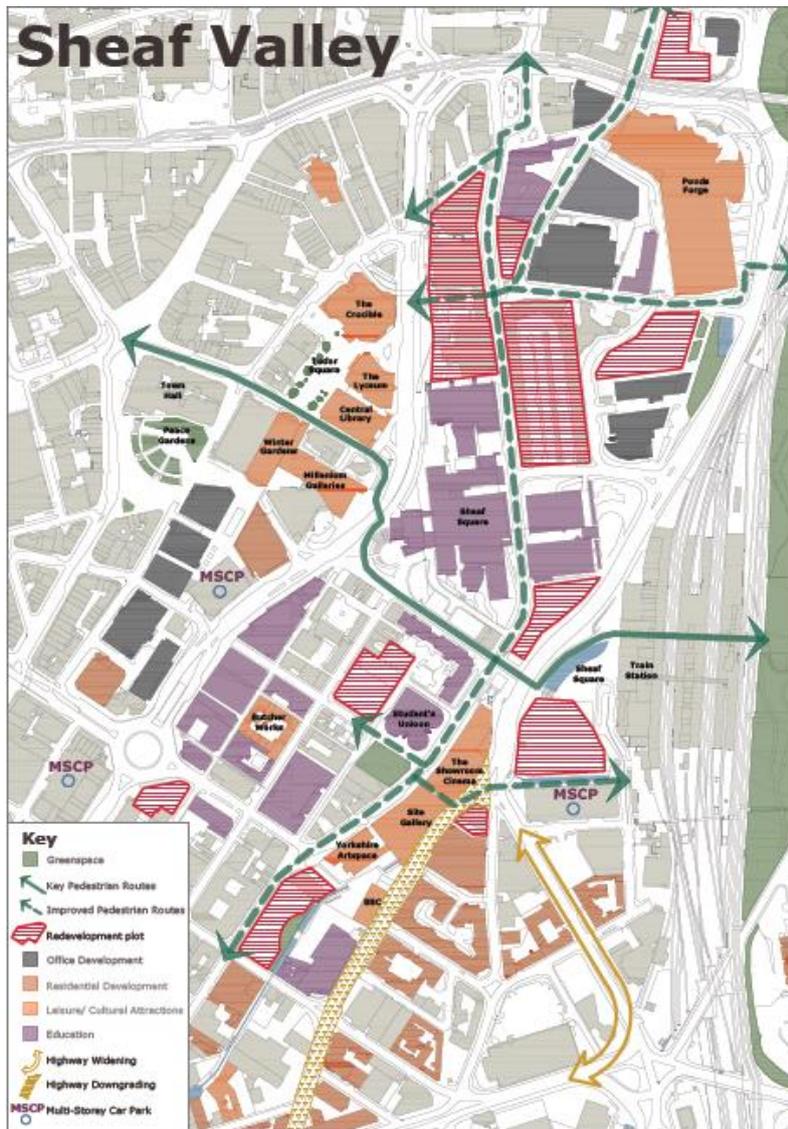
In the next ten years the three business districts are expected to physically coalesce to create a denser office and workspace environment whilst maintaining their unique identities. The proposal to establish an expanded station at Midland for HS2 and NPR services provides an opportunity to accelerate the extension of the Central Business District so that it conjoins the CIQ and Riverside Business Districts.



There is already an existing office cluster in the vicinity of Midland Station largely occupied by CDI businesses in the CIQ and Digital Campus. Sheffield Hallam University has also a major presence with its City Campus and owns a group of development sites and opportunities which as they are brought forward, together with the existing high quality public realm, will transform the approach from the station into the heart of the city centre.

However the Council is currently finalising a refreshed version of the City Centre Masterplan and this identifies a series of significant sites becoming available in the immediate environs of the station. These include publicly owned opportunities such as the Homes and

Communities Agency owned Sheaf Square; a rationalisation of underused parts of the Pond Street Bus Station and potentially the Royal Mail sorting office.



As well as the office and university development pipeline there is significant scope for high density new housing to be developed around Midland.

The specialist regeneration developers Urban Splash are about to commence the next phases of the iconic Park Hill project immediately to the rear of the station; planning applications are being prepared for at least three large scale private rented sector developments within a 10 minute walk and an initial scoping exercise by the council's City Regeneration Division has identified potential sites for a further 1,500 new homes within a similar distance which could be catalysed by confirmation of the HS2 and NPR proposals.



## **ii) Transport for the North**

SCC has strongly advocated improved connectivity across the North of England and has worked with other cities and city regions to make progress in delivering this vision, particularly as a founding member of TfN and other key initiatives. Sheffield City Council has consistently highlighted the importance of HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) being seen as a single, integrated strategy for the North, not isolated projects. We are optimistic that this is now being demonstrated in Government thinking but more action is required to turn concept into reality through the individual decisions before us now.

Currently, economic interactions between the cities in the North of England are weak. However, geographically similar regions in other parts of the world demonstrate that a dense, well-connected network of cities can form a successful single economic entity which is greater than the sum of its parts. Faster connections between the UK northern cities could grow demand for services, creating a single labour market for employers and employees and provide businesses with access to new markets. Prominent examples of such internationally competitive city networks are the Randstad in the Netherlands and the Ruhr region in Germany. Within the Randstad, city to city distances are about 30 – 50 miles and are interconnected with fast rail services every 15 minutes.

SCC is fully behind the key ambition for a NPR network providing more frequent and faster journeys between the hub cities of the North including Sheffield, Manchester and Leeds city centres and is fully supportive of the NPR work, including as a member of TfN through SCR.

Although the TfN work on the Sheffield to Manchester corridor is at the stage where several options remain under investigation, it is important that this remains in mind when making decisions on the network. SCC supports the work being done by TfN's NPR workstream on developing an Indicative Train Service Specification which includes NPR aspirations, as well as HS2 and other regional and local aspirations, with all these services serving Midland station as a rail hub for the city and city region.

As set out in the following section of our response it is absolutely vital to ensure that proposals for Midland Station ensure that there is sufficient capacity provided to serve a substantial predicted growth in passenger numbers using all of these services.

The Sheffield to Leeds corridor is more directly germane to this consultation and is addressed further in our response to Question 8 on the northern loop, which SCC strongly supports. Indeed our support for the HS2 route through South Yorkshire is predicated on the development and delivery of the northern loop and junction back onto the HS2 route into Leeds. A spur into Midland without this will miss an opportunity for HS2 to form part of the NPR network, providing this loop and junction enables the NPR conditional output of journey times of less than 30 minutes between Sheffield and Leeds to be achieved. It also enables opportunities for HS2 to provide increased links between the Midlands (e.g. Birmingham) and the North with consequent increased agglomeration benefits.

The economic vision for a new network of competitive Northern cities sits behind the rationale for Transport for the North: represents a particular opportunity with Leeds and Sheffield which should not be missed.

The benefits of HS2 will be maximised by being part of a larger strategy to enhance connections to other long distance destinations, including internationally, in addition to other northern, midland and local destinations. This is particularly germane as Phase 1 of HS2 does not currently include a seamless connection between HS2 and HS1 as was originally proposed when HS1 was being planned.

### **iii) Midland station future passenger growth**

Plans for the Midland station itself need to match our ambition for the area that surrounds it. Reconfiguration and development of the station area using high quality design principles are necessary to ensure Midland is improved to the standard of a HS2 station, not an existing station accommodating additional HS2 trains. This must include improving the passenger experience and maximising the economic potential of the station, but it also sends a statement of what HS2 is doing for Northern cities such as Sheffield.

Midland already has the potential to become a focal point for the surrounding area. The high quality public realm outside the station means that Sheffield boasts one of the finest gateways of any city in the UK. The station is a listed building which provides a sense of character and heritage, something that we believe can be enhanced with further complementary development of an outstanding architectural quality so that the station becomes a destination in its own right similar to St Pancras, Rotterdam and Antwerp.

Midland is already regarded as a bottleneck, with Network Rail identifying this precise stretch as a "red stress level" - one of the highest capacity restraints anywhere on the existing national rail network. We seek firm assurances that the provision of new services will take account of this and that work to increase the capacity at the station will be undertaken where necessary, allowing for passenger growth and not compromising local connectivity.

However, there is a need for change, and the arrival of HS2 provides the perfect opportunity to redefine the purpose and sense of place at Midland. The station already experiences levels of overcrowding on certain platforms and staircases. These issues must be resolved and future capacity built in, including additional platforms where needed

Similarly, the public concourse through the station acts as a bridge between two sides of the city but also creates a psychological and physical barrier between them. The current configuration limits rail providers' ability to protect revenues and the opportunity must be taken to resolve this, whilst improving the accessibility seeking access across the station and for those visiting the station as a destination in its own right.

The council is also seeking assurances on the following issues:

- Electrification: SCC would expect the whole HS2 line to be electrified including the Stonebroom spur and Erewash Valley Line all the way into Midland station and continuing from Midland to the northern junction back onto the HS2 line. We would expect this to be co-ordinated with Midland Mainline electrification (where we are waiting for confirmation that this will be completed in the next Network Rail Control Period to 2023). Carrying out this work will have significant impact on rail bridges along the routes as well as at Midland station: having more clarity on timescales would be very welcome. SCC is looking forward to welcoming electric trains into Sheffield Midland to improve air quality and journey times;
- Trains per hour: Sir David Higgins' ['Sheffield and South Yorkshire Report 2016'](#) stated that 'up to' two classic compatible trains an hour could run into Midland from London. SCC regards this as the **absolute minimum** and as being in addition to existing services, not substituting for Midland Mainline services which not only serve London but link at St Pancras International into international services, and connect SCR to the East Midlands, including Leicester and Nottingham. HS2 should be able to accommodate the potential for more trains to run, should future demand require this.

#### **iv) HS2 related growth potential realised across Sheffield City Region**

To realise the whole value of HS2, we need to look beyond the immediate station environs and consider how the wider city region could stand to benefit from the new development. We are looking forward to working with Government through SCR on developing the SCR HS2 Growth Strategy to identify how best to take advantage of these opportunities.

These benefits can be harnessed by looking at local connectivity to ensure that the jobs created in Sheffield city centre are easily accessible to all residents within SCR and beyond. Providing reliable high quality connectivity to other growth areas across SCR will also be important.

Sheffield and the wider city region have a number of assets that mean they are well placed to maximise the wider benefits of HS2. The rail industry across SCR includes more than 200 companies employing over 6,500 people including major rail manufacturing companies such

as DB Schenker, Wabtec, Volker Rail and Hitachi in Doncaster and Davy Markham and William Cook in Sheffield. These could benefit both directly and indirectly from HS2 and HS2 also could attract other rail-related businesses into the region in the future.

The potential for inward investment by rail-related businesses will be assisted by the National College for High Speed Rail in Doncaster, which will attract up to 2,000 students to deliver HS2 and other projects to modernise and innovate rail across the country. We also welcome the commitment to build the HS2 maintenance depot in Staveley near Chesterfield.

In relation to a South Yorkshire parkway station and how this could add to benefits for the North, this is not an issue covered by this consultation and SCC has not taken a view to date. Considerations would include good connectivity and fit with NPR aspirations as well as benefits and costs to SCR as a whole.

#### **v) Managing negative impacts**

SCC has always focused on the economic case for a city centre station, rather than looking at the details of route options. The Council only advocated a city centre through route as an alternative to the Meadowhall route; we did not propose the alternative route which is currently being considered.

In our previous response we highlighted the impact that the initial preferred route past Meadowhall would have on key strategic sites in SCR and businesses of national significance. That route also removed up to 1,500 new homes from the proposed masterplan for the Waverley New Community in Rotherham.

Since the submission of our response in 2014 the area has become an even greater focus for investment and development with the establishment of the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District (AMID). As a result we welcome the changes to the route that result in removing the blight and uncertainty on sites in the AMID.

However, we are aware of the impact the new proposed route will have on communities in South Yorkshire, particularly in Rotherham and Doncaster. The Council would ask for consideration to be given to proposals which attempt to mitigate the impact of the new route.

**Question 8: Do you support the potential development of a northern junction to enable high speed services stopping at Sheffield to continue further north? Please indicate whether or not you support the proposal and your reasons.**

**SCC strongly supports the development of a northern junction to enable high speed services stopping in Sheffield to continue further north.** Indeed, our support for the route through South Yorkshire is predicated on the development of a northern loop and junction as this would enable the achievement of the NPR Sheffield to Leeds aspiration as well. We believe that a commitment to this must be made in conjunction with decisions on HS2. It would also enable HS2 services to use Sheffield as a through station to take London to Sheffield services further north, including potentially to other destinations within SCR. It would also allow other HS2 services such as Leeds to Birmingham to run through Sheffield, so providing opportunities for HS2 to provide increased links between the Midlands (e.g. Birmingham) and the North with consequent increased agglomeration benefits.

There is a great opportunity here to integrate the complementary aims of HS2 and NPR to better connect major cities and promote transformational change. A simple spur into Midland would miss out on this opportunity. With a northern loop and junction, HS2 can form part of the NPR network, providing greater opportunities for HS2 services and also enabling achievement of the TfN conditional output of journey times between Sheffield and Leeds to be less than 30 minutes. This connection is vital to the SCR economy and will help to realise agglomeration benefits of HS2.

The rail journey between Sheffield and Leeds city centres currently suffers from both connectivity and capacity issues. The fastest train takes a minimum of 40 minutes for a 29 mile journey and there is only one train per hour at this speed. This has impacts on the passenger experience which in turn acts as a barrier to growth in commuter markets.

We therefore consider it imperative that provision for the junction is included in the Phase 2B Hybrid Bill and will be supporting and pressing for the NPR Sequence 2.5 work on developing the business case for the northern loop – which HS2 is involved in - to be expedited in the necessary timescale. The earlier NPR work on how to achieve the aspiration for the Sheffield to Leeds corridor showed that other options involved additional significant infrastructure interventions and disruption to current services.

Paragraph 6.24 of the Phase 2B Command Paper notes that funding to complete the loop to the northern junction will be considered as part of TfN's work and future Network Rail investment plans. However, the loop would also be of benefit to HS2 services as mentioned above and so could potentially be included within HS2 investment plans, even if in conjunction with others. We would encourage the Government to consider this, in the context of Northern Powerhouse, and to provide a positive response.

Paragraph 8.8 of the Phase 2B Command Paper also notes that there is an option under consideration to create a new connection for services travelling north from Sheffield to

serve York, Newcastle and Hull via Leeds station. This is something that SCC fully supports and it adds further weight to the case for the northern loop and junction.

Additionally, we would like to encourage consideration of building from the north, from Leeds southwards and including the northern loop and junction allowing early operation of NPR services between Sheffield and Leeds. This would bring forward Northern Powerhouse benefits arising from HS2 and NPR.

**Question 9: Do you support the proposed location of the northern junction in the vicinity of Clayton? Please indicate whether or not you support the proposal and your reasons**

As set out in the response to Questions 7 and 8, SCC support for the HS2 route through South Yorkshire is predicated on the development of the northern loop and junction back onto the HS2 route into Leeds. **So we strongly support a northern junction with the necessary grade-separation, upgrading and electrification.** As Clayton is the location where the Dearne Valley line would cross the HS2 line, it appears to be an appropriate location for the junction. SCC is not, of course, familiar with any local issues at the location so would just simply ask, in general terms, that impact on people and property in the area is minimised.