



News Release

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For immediate use

Growth Track 360 calls for the continued delivery of HS2 from Birmingham to Manchester via Crewe for the good of the UK, the climate and the economy

Business and local authority leaders from North Wales, the Wirral and Cheshire West and Chester in the Growth Track 360 partnership have joined the chorus of organisations, stakeholders and rail users opposing the cancellation of HS2 Phase 2b from Birmingham to Manchester via Crewe.

Growth Track 360 Chair and Leader of Cheshire West & Chester Council, Councillor Louise Gittins, said:

"HS2 is a key part of Levelling Up. It will modernise the UK's rail network and ready it for the growth in rail travel that will be required for modal shift from road to public transport to reduce carbon emissions.

If the Northern leg between Birmingham and Manchester is not completed the nation will be left with a truncated line. The Government will have wasted the £22.5bn already spent on the Old Oak Common to Birmingham leg and the £2.3bn spent on planning the Birmingham to Manchester route.

Critically, the Government will have signalled that it judges that UK PLC cannot afford to Level Up and invest in the North."

Growth Track 360 Vice Chair and Leader of Flintshire Council, Councillor Ian Roberts, said:

"Cancellation of the Birmingham to Manchester leg of HS2 would be a symbol of failure.

Public transport in Great Britain is in crisis. We need leadership to develop it as an alternative to the car, which is necessary to decarbonise transport. We have a system where it is commonplace that trains are late or don't run, bus services are withdrawn and passengers pay more for less.

The price of curtailing HS2 today would be paid in the future with lost jobs, a lack of capacity in the UK to deliver future rail investment, a worsening of Britain's competitiveness as a location and the

deepening of divisions between different parts of the UK."

Ashley Rogers, GT360 Business Representative, Chief Executive of the North Wales Mersey Dee Business Council, said:

"Businesses have supported HS2 as a means of maintaining the competitiveness of the UK economy because good infrastructure enables economic growth and prosperity. It is important that Britain has transport infrastructure that is comparable to other developed nations to retain and sustainably grow its advanced industries and service sectors and to encourage further investment into the UK.

HS2 is a critical means of creating additional capacity and improved service levels on the railways. Those improved rail services integrated with bus and active travel will take traffic off the roads and reduce congestion, exhaust pollution and carbon emissions. HS2 is fundamental to UK plans to improve economic productivity and mitigate against climate change.

A decision to cancel the Northern leg of HS2 will waste previous expenditure on the scheme from Birmingham onwards and result in a sub-optimal route for the South and the Midlands with zero benefit for our businesses and communities in the North West of England and North Wales."

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Notes for Editors:

1. Growth Track 360 is a public-private partnership established in 2016 uniting North Wales, the Wirral and Cheshire West and Chester. Its goal is improving cross-border transport connectivity with specific emphasis on rail.
2. Growth Track 360 works closely with key stakeholders, their policies and objectives including the Welsh Government, Transport for the North, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, Mersey Dee Alliance, Ambition North Wales, Transport for Wales, the West and Wales Transport Forum and the private sector.
3. The aims of Growth Track 360 are described in a YouTube video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2FokJJDIZA> taken from an event held in the Houses of Parliament on 20 February 2023.

See next page for contacts.....

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