

Date: 7 September 2022

**The Right Honourable Elizabeth  
Truss MP, Prime Minister of the UK**  
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**Lord McLoughlin CH**  
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Dear Prime Minister,

### **Transport for the North**

Many congratulations on your appointment as Prime Minister. I am writing in my capacity as Chairman of Transport for the North. The political and business leaders on the Transport for the North Board want to work with you and your Secretary of State positively and proactively throughout your premiership to bring about the changes we need to see in the North's transport network.

We welcomed your strong commitment to seeing Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) constructed in full, as you set out in Leeds. We have developed clear and agreed plans for the network, costed at £43bn (of which £17bn was committed in the Integrated Rail Plan), including our preferences for a mix of new lines and major upgrades as a network spanning from Liverpool in the west to Hull in the east, and from Newcastle in the north to Sheffield in the south.

Early confirmation will send a clear signal to the North about the government's intentions to reverse decisions taken in the Integrated Rail Plan (IRP), including on the Eastern Leg of HS2. The Transport Select Committee concluded that the proposals published in the IRP fail to achieve the long-term step change for the rail network across the North.

An early announcement will give confidence to places, businesses and investors, about future investment and regeneration potential for places across the North, such as Bradford, Crewe, Darlington, Lancashire and Warrington. We know from the experience of Birmingham how the prospect of HS2 and NPR in future can be a catalyst for growth. We believe there are significant steps that would see progress accelerated in the next 18 months to three years and enable early benefits to be realised before the end of the decade (making progress towards levelling up).

The priority this autumn must be to keep the North moving through the coming months, provide confidence to passengers about reliability of services, ensure people can get to work, and to support our operators to deliver. In our view, the following actions are essential and could be delivered immediately alongside wider measures to protect households and businesses this winter:

- The Government should ensure regulated rail fares will remain at current levels and not rise in line with current levels of inflation. It could also extend the centrally-funded £2 cap on bus fares for a further 6 months (in line with

measures implemented in Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region and West Yorkshire).

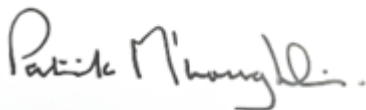
- Providing additional financial support for train operating companies (TOCs) to enable full restoration of services withdrawn during the pandemic, and further extending recovery funding to support both bus and light rail services in local communities up to September 2023) to provide a planned and predictable transition to the new normal.
- Given the current impacts of critical driver shortages on bus and train services, there is an urgent need to recruit and train drivers to strengthen the resilience of public transport operations. We advocate developing a series of driver training academies across the North as a matter of urgency.

We recognise that significant investment has been made in maintaining services during the pandemic and during the subsequent recovery. Millions of people across the North rely entirely on public transport and are at real risk of further disadvantage. In recent months, the North has led the recovery of rail patronage and accepted tough compromises to service patterns to keep our transport networks operational. Without further support, a further decline in confidence and sense of managed decline feels inevitable. The operational difficulties on the West Coast Mainline are of significant concern and we hope to see them resolved as a matter of urgency. Our Rail North Committee will be meeting with Avanti next week.

Increased funding in the short term would represent an investment in our people, places and businesses, providing the foundation for a strong economic recovery in the North. There is significant potential for progress in the remainder of this parliament to unlock opportunity across the North, maximise productivity and decarbonise our transport system. These include affordable measures for rail, road, digital mobility and freight (including the development of Freeports). Our initial proposals are set out in the annex to this letter and we will work with DfT ministers on positive, clearly defined measures in the forthcoming Spending Review.

I hope this letter is helpful and I would very much welcome the opportunity to work on these suggestions with the Secretary of State for Transport as co-sponsors of NPR to bring forward those opportunities and agree priorities for early delivery.

Yours sincerely,



Lord McLoughlin CH  
Chairman, Transport for the North