



# Curtailing HS2 is the wrong decision for Britain's future, says Sustainable Transport Midlands

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## Press Release

In a statement, Sustainable Transport Midlands (STM) has voiced its profound disappointment and concern regarding the recent decision to cancel all further phases of the High Speed Two (HS2) rail project north and east of Birmingham. The organisation firmly believes that this decision could have significant ramifications for Britain's future and the quality of its transport infrastructure.

Harry Burr, STM's Chief Executive Officer, says: "HS2, delivered in full, would be a transformative project that would do more than just reduce journey times. It would unlock capacity across the country's rail network, enabling enhanced local, commuter and regional services, improving connectivity between towns and cities, and operating a more efficient and reliable railway for all passengers"

STM underscores the urgent need for increased rail capacity to facilitate modal shift from road and air networks to rail, therefore reducing carbon emissions, improving air quality, enhancing safety, and elevating the overall quality of life in towns and cities across the nation, reducing transport poverty on a wide scale.

David Frankal, STM's Project Development Director, says: "The decision to halt HS2 phases north and east of Birmingham has far-reaching implications for the nation's sustainable transport network. It is just not right that decisions of this scale should be taken unilaterally in the lead-up to a general election, especially after 14 years of cross-party consensus and the extensive development of HS2."

"We vehemently oppose the lifting of safeguarding and the sale of land along HS2 Phase 2's planned route, as well as any actions that may permanently constrain the ability of future governments to reinstate these vital plans. We urgently call upon all political parties and local authorities to unite in opposing such measures."

However, on a positive note, STM welcomes the increased funding allocated to local authorities across the country for investment in sustainable transport modes, including buses, light rail/metro systems, and new railway stations or lines under the 'Network North' initiative. The organisation also welcomes the commitment to enhancing the frequency of trains between Birmingham and Leicester, the funding allocated for Phase 2 of the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill

metro expansion in the West Midlands, and the extension of the £2 bus fare cap until December 2024.

Harry continues by shining a light on the new investment announced into Midlands Rail Hub: “We are particularly pleased with the full funding commitment for the Midlands Rail Hub, valued at £1.75 billion, which promises significant benefits for our entire operating region across the Midlands and its neighbouring areas through a series of short- to medium-term interventions.”

Beyond its region, STM also welcomes commitments to electrify the North Wales Coast Line (Crewe to Holyhead), the Hope Valley Line (Manchester to Sheffield), and the Selby Line (Leeds to Hull). In addition, STM has called for an explicit commitment to reopen the Leamside Line, emphasising its strategic importance to the rail network as well as the regional advantages it can bring to the North East.

Moreover, Harry adds: “We need more clarity from the Department for Transport as to which schemes they are promising to fund and deliver, and which schemes are being presented as examples of how new funding for local authorities could be utilised.”

“We completely reject the notion that other investments can only be assured through the cancellation of HS2 and the reallocation of funds from it. Governments should be committed to investing in both high-level strategic and local transport priorities”

STM opposes the 'reallocation' of funds from HS2 Phase 2 towards road schemes and advocates for the redirection of this promised funding towards sustainable transport investments. As an organisation deeply committed to the green future of Britain's transport network, STM will continue to advocate for the development and enhancement of a comprehensive and sustainable national transport network.

To read STM's full statement, please visit their dedicated webpage at <https://transport-mids.com/hs2>

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### **About Sustainable Transport Midlands**

Sustainable Transport Midlands is a Community Interest Company based in Northampton, specialising in working with local authorities and stakeholders to deliver a greener and more efficient public and active transport network for those in the Midlands.