



From Lord Berkeley  
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To Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP  
To Rt Hon Liz Truss MP  
House of Commons, SW1

19 August 2022

Dear finalists for Tory leadership,

### **Create an East West 'Red Wall Express' in place of HS2 and save £100 bn!**

In your campaigning, you have both emphasised the challenges of dealing with rapidly increasing energy, health and other inflationary pressures. Here is a solution!

HS2 costs are now forecast to be £136.1bn and rising, with opening delayed until 2036 to Crewe and 2045 to Manchester. There are as yet no safe or costed solutions to the HS2 rail access to Euston or crossing the Cheshire salt mines, nor an agreed East West crossing of Manchester. So in perhaps 25 years' time you will be able to get to and from London more quickly, but not within the Red Wall areas.

Is it not time to cancel most of HS2 and allocate the £136.1bn perhaps up to half to the Red Wall Express and half to the NHS or other pressing needs such as energy bills?

A Red Wall Express high-speed railway for the North (bel) would create not only a high-speed rail line linking Liverpool-Manchester-Leeds and Sheffield but also provide a new line and station for the long-forgotten Bradford, along with many other regional rail electrification and capacity improvements. Capital cost of these 11 main projects is £34.42bn<sup>1</sup> with a BCR of 4.16, constructed in phases for completion by 2035.

Government could save over £100bn by cancelling HS2 Birmingham to Crewe and Manchester and repurpose the London Old Oak Common to Birmingham section, on which construction has started, to provide additional capacity for passengers and freight, without the need for the very costly high-speed design at present being taken forward. At present, HS2's BCR is significantly less than 1.0 and falling, as costs increase and likely passenger numbers decrease.

There are schemes for all of these Red Wall Express options which can be developed quickly; many come from Network North. Small is beautiful and can be delivered much more quickly. A similar scheme can be made for the East West route between Wolverhampton – Birmingham – Derby and Nottingham. Some works could be started before 2024 but firm decisions on cancellations or changes will also bring comfort to the thousands of people along the HS2 route suffering from years of blight or compulsory purchase and unable to sell their properties.

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<sup>1</sup> At 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2021 prices.

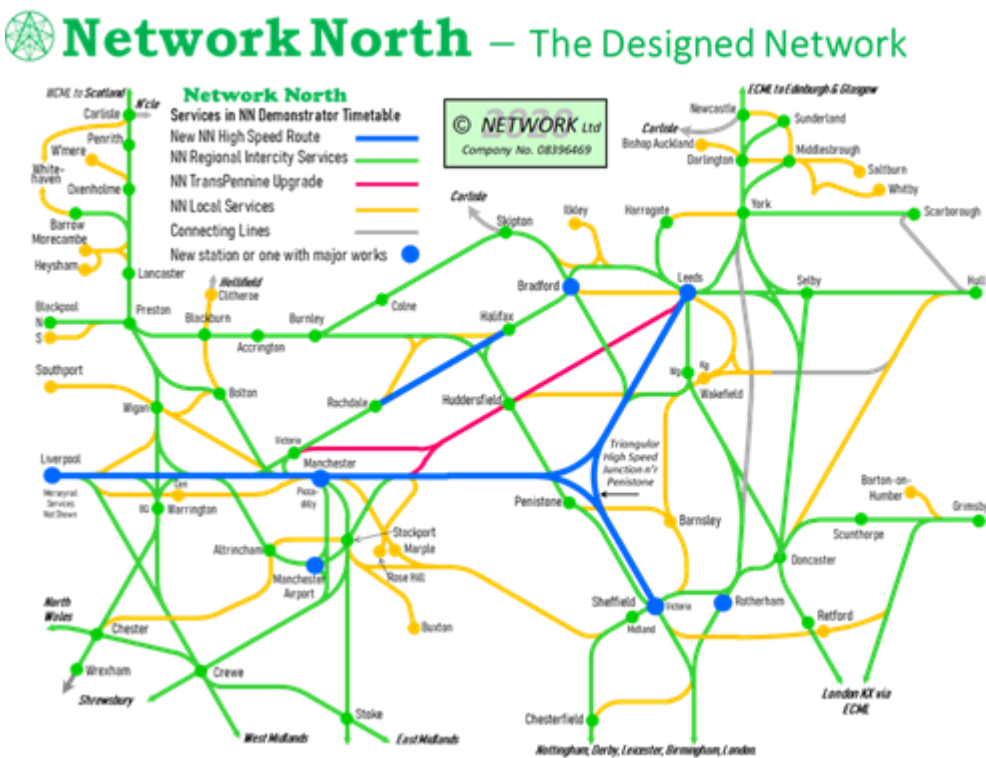
So I ask you - if you are elected Prime Minister in September, will you:

1. Commit to creating the Red Wall Express route and a similar one East West in the Midlands to provide earlier and dramatic improvements to rail services within these regions?
2. Will you cancel HS2 and repurpose the sections already started?
3. Will the resulting savings of around £100bn be helpful to you in balancing the many pressing needs to deal with inflation, energy costs and the Red Wall transport needs at the expense of getting to London more quickly in 20 years' time?

I look forward to your response.

Yours Tony

Tony Berkeley



**Capital Cost**  
**£34.42 Bn**  
 (Fully Electrified)  
 (Without Trains)

**Benefits £143 Bn**

**'Indicative'**  
**Benefit to Cost**  
**Ratio**  
**4.16**

Infrastructure costs north of Newcastle-upon-Tyne or Carlisle and south of Stoke-on-Trent or Sheffield have been assumed to be outside the scope of Network North

**Main Upgrade route costs**

Item	Route	Cost/£ million
01	Liverpool to Manchester Network North Railway	401.66
02	Manchester (Piccadilly) Underground Station	2540.00
03	Manchester (Piccadilly) East Tunnel	3067.32
04	Manchester, Bradford and Leeds Direct Railway	9530.00
05	Manchester Castlefield Corridor Upgrade	3510.00
06	Manchester to Sheffield via Woodhead	3456.10
07	Diggle Route Upgrad; Calder Valley Route Upgrade for Freight	6150.00
08	Hope Valley Line Upgrade & Electrification	670.00
09	Leeds to Hull; Enhancement & Electrification	550.00
10	ECML North Enhancements	4260.00
11	Leeds to Colton Junction, York; Enhancement & Electrification	280.00
	<b>Network North Coast-to-Coast High Speed Rail Links</b>	<b>34415.08</b>

Source – Michael Byng and Network North – all costs quoted at 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr 2021.