



Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling MP
Secretary of State for Transport

Rt. Hon. Philip Hammond MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer

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Mayor of Doncaster

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Dear Secretary of State for Transport and Chancellor of the Exchequer

We are writing to reiterate the strong cross party and business community opposition in Doncaster and Rotherham, to the current preferred proposal for HS2 Phase 2B in South Yorkshire.

It is our belief that these proposals will not achieve your ambitions for our transport network, or, most importantly, the future economic prosperity of our country and our people, particularly those who already feel that the economy does not work for them.

When compared to the original Meadowhall option, our evidence shows that the new proposed 'M18 route' will:

- Reduce economic output by as much as £350m per year
- Create in excess of 1000 fewer jobs; and
- Require more than £1bn in additional funding.

The intention of this letter is not to go into further detail of those points, as they are covered at length within our consultation responses. However, we hope you will give serious weight to these fundamental points. Similarly, the Government has already made clear that it will listen to people when developing policy, and act on consultation responses, and we hope the final decision is reflective of the wider consultation responses from other organisations and members of the public.

We welcome your recognition of the need to rebalance the UK economy, and your commitment to tackle the current economic disparity between our regions. A key objective of HS2 is to help deliver this economic rebalancing. However, the current proposals were rejected by Sir David Higgins in 2014, as they will not achieve those goals. In his report *Rebalancing Britain* (October 2014) Sir David said the spur option would provide limited benefits to Sheffield City Centre but "did not provide the connections and journey times necessary to serve the wider Sheffield city region effectively" and, "nor would they deliver an equitable approach across the North or meet the vision of a truly high speed network for the country."

Sir David was right then, and the reality of this assessment has not changed.

We are certainly supportive of the need to grow the economy of Sheffield, and recognise the importance that the city plays in the economic success of our region. However, most people in South Yorkshire live in the boroughs of Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham. Over the last five years of available data, these boroughs have provided both the majority of economic output in South Yorkshire, and have seen faster levels of economic growth than Sheffield. Whilst additional support for Sheffield's economy is clearly important and welcome, economic growth in these other areas must also be supported. It is therefore imperative that HS2 delivers the maximum benefits to our region as a whole, including the majority of its residents and business, not just those in Sheffield.

Furthermore, the new proposals will actually stymie regeneration in already deprived areas within the Dearne Valley, by demolishing much needed brand new housing and blighting future housing development. Many communities in this area already suffer from low levels of economic activity, employment and skills, and voted strongly to leave the European Union. In South Yorkshire, in the absence of another Parkway Station, the only way to deliver benefits to the wider region is to go back to the Meadowhall option or a variation of it. This would not only deliver greater economic benefits, but more inclusive economic benefits. It would also maximise the role of the Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre, a nationally important asset for UK PLC. This area is already home to companies such as Boeing, BAE Systems, Rolls Royce and McLaren, yet is not effectively supported by the Sheffield Midland option.

Our ambitions, for our people and our place, are much greater than those set out in the proposals for a Classic Compatible spur service to Sheffield, with no main line HS2 station. We hope that you have similar ambitions for our region, our businesses and our residents.

We trust you will give these points due consideration, and would be grateful for your observations on these matters.

Yours sincerely



Ros Jones
Mayor of Doncaster

Yours sincerely



Councillor Chris Read
Leader, Rotherham MBC