

# **RAIL NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR THE MIDLANDS AND THE NORTH**

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**Call for evidence**

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# Introduction

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On 11 February 2020, the government published the independent Oakervee review of the High Speed 2 (HS2) rail project and announced plans to proceed with HS2, with construction of Phase 1 from London to the West Midlands set to begin in April. At the same time, the government announced its intention to draw up an Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the north, to identify the most effective scope and sequencing of relevant investments and how to integrate HS2, Northern Powerhouse Rail and other rail investments.

As part of this, the government announced that the Integrated Rail Plan would be informed by an assessment of the rail needs of the Midlands and the north to be undertaken by the National Infrastructure Commission.

In undertaking its assessment, the Commission will:

1. consider how best to integrate HS2 Phase 2b and wider transport plans in the Midlands and the north, delivering benefits from investments more quickly
2. assess options for scoping, phasing and sequencing delivery of HS2 Phase 2b, Northern Powerhouse Rail, Midlands Rail Hub and other proposed rail investments
3. consider how best to deliver rail connectivity with Scotland.

Our approach will be informed by the terms of reference for the Integrated Rail Plan, which can be found [here](#). Further information on the schemes referenced above can be found at the following links:

- **HS2 Phase 2b**
- **Northern Powerhouse Rail**
- **Midlands Rail Hub.**

**Issues relating to Phases 1 and 2a of HS2 are out of the scope of the assessment.** The Infrastructure and Projects Authority (a separate organisation to the Commission) will also undertake a review on lessons learned from cost overruns. Those issues are not covered in this call for evidence.

# 1. Call for evidence

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In order to provide a robust assessment, the Commission is aiming to gather a wide range of views and data from different stakeholders. This call for evidence is a first step to building this evidence base and will be supported by broader analysis and stakeholder engagement over the course of the assessment.

The Commission is developing the methodology that it will apply during the assessment and will publish further details of this in due course. However, two key areas of analysis have already been identified. These are:

1. **Connectivity** – faster and more direct place-to-place travel
2. **Capacity** – the potential for more trains to run where they are needed, particularly on crowded commuter routes.

Although the following section includes targeted questions, the Commission would also welcome general responses relating to how the assessment of the rail needs of the Midlands and the north should be taken forward.

It is not expected that respondents will answer all questions. Please answer only those questions where you have evidence that you think it is important for the Commission to consider as part of its assessment.

## Call for evidence questions

Within the answers to the questions, please provide sources for detail such as impacts on connectivity, capacity, greenhouse gas emissions and costs.

1. What potential investments should be in scope of the Commission's assessment of the rail needs of the Midlands and the north?
  - In answering this question, please consider the **terms of reference for the Integrated Rail Plan**, particularly that HS2 Phases 1 and 2a are out of scope.
2. Which set of rail investments do you believe would, together:
  - a. best unlock capacity within the Midlands and the north?
  - b. best improve connectivity within the Midlands and the north?
3. Within the set of investments you identified, which individual investment(s) should be the highest priority?
  - Please explain your rationale for this and how this would affect the phasing and sequencing of the full set of investments you identified.

4. What supporting policies need to be in place to deliver the benefits of the investments you identified? If there are any dependencies with other investments/policies, how confident are you that these supporting policies will be put in place?
5. What impact would the investments you identified have on greenhouse gas emissions? In particular, how would they affect the UK's ability to meet its domestic and international targets, including the Paris Agreement and net-zero?
  - In answering this question, it would be helpful if you could consider the expected decarbonisation of road transport, as set out in the Commission's **National Infrastructure Assessment** and **Freight Study**.
6. In addition to greenhouse gas emissions, what are the potential environmental effects (positive and negative) of the investments you identified?
7. Aside from those delivered by improved connectivity and greater capacity, what broader impacts on people's quality of life could the investments you identified have?
8. How would the costs and benefits of the investments you identified be distributed economically, socially and geographically?
9. Which set of investments would best improve rail connectivity with Scotland?
  - If these are different to the investments you identified above, please explain why.
10. What would be the impact of the investments you identified on connectivity between the Midlands and the north, and other parts of the UK?
  - Please explain where and how impacts would occur.
11. What would be the impact of the investments you identified on international connectivity across the Midlands and the north?
  - Please consider the impact on both ports and airports.

## 3. How to respond

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Responses should be no longer than 20 pages in total (not including supplementary data) and should be emailed to: [railneedsassessment@nic.gov.uk](mailto:railneedsassessment@nic.gov.uk).

The deadline for responses is **29 May 2020**.

Please use examples, data, evidence, and relevant international examples to support your statements where possible.

Evidence will be reviewed thereafter by the Commission. If further information or clarification is required, the Commission Secretariat will contact you.

The Commission is not planning to accept responses to the call for evidence in hard copy. Please contact the Commission by the email address above if this poses a problem for your response.

Representative groups responding to this call for evidence are asked to give a summary of the people and organisations they represent, and where relevant who else they have consulted in reaching their conclusions when they respond.

### FoI and privacy statements

There may be occasions when the Commission will share the information you provide, including any personal data, with external analysts. This is for the purposes of consultation response analysis only. The Commission's privacy policy can be found [here](#).

We may also publish any responses received to this call for evidence, excluding personal data. However, information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) or other relevant legislation. If you want information that you provide to be treated as confidential please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory code of practice with which public authorities must comply and which deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidentiality.

In view of this, it would be helpful if you could explain to the Commission why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If the Commission receives a request for disclosure of the information, it will take full account of your explanation, but cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Commission.

The Commission is subject to legal duties which may require the release of information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or any other applicable legislation or codes of practice governing access to information.

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