Dear Sir/Madam,

The City Council welcomes the opportunity to respond to HS2 Ltd’s consultation on route and station proposals for High Speed Two, West Midlands to Manchester and Leeds (“HS2 Phase 2”). The City Council strongly welcomes these proposals as an essential step in providing a national high speed rail network that is an engine for growth with Birmingham and the West Midlands at the heart of the high speed rail network.

HS2 will be transformational; it forms a once in a generation opportunity to provide a step change in our economy, particularly for our Core Cities, by boosting integration, adding essential additional rail capacity and connectivity, improving competitiveness and reshaping and rebalancing our economy away from the south east. HS2 will allow the West Midlands to promote itself as a great place to do business; at the heart of the Y-network and with competitive lower operating costs.

We welcome the ambition of the national HS2 Growth Taskforce to challenge Government, cities and the private sector to step up to the transformational opportunity HS2 presents. The City Council, along with the Core Cities Group and the West Midlands Go-HS2 consortium, continues to fully support HS2 and work with Government to realise benefits of high speed rail.

The City Council strongly welcomes that analysis undertaken for HS2 Ltd by KPMG indicates that implementation of the HS2 ‘Y’ network could mean the West Midlands regional economy benefitting from an annual boost of £1.5bn to £3.1bn. Furthermore, we are greatly encouraged that analysis undertaken for Centro by KPMG in 2013 indicated that, if the HS2 ‘Y’ network was combined with a package of local transport connectivity enhancements the West Midlands could benefit from 50,000 additional jobs, an average Gross Value Added increase of £680 per worker and a £4bn increase in economic output per year.

We do wish to raise several strategic matters and constructive suggestions for improvements to the current Phase 2 proposals, in order to maximise their benefits - these are provided below.

**Regeneration & Economic Benefits**

- There is much evidence, including the above, to suggest significant opportunities for rebalancing the national economy away from the South East, to the benefit of other locations such as the West Midlands;
- There is a need for the City Council to continue to work to maximise economic benefits locally, and to continue to work with other partners, HS2 Ltd and Central Government to ensure that the rebalancing opportunities are realised;
- It is crucial that current initiatives such as the national HS2 Growth Taskforce are translated into sustained efforts to maximise opportunities from this long-term project, and that these are coordinated with HS2 Ltd’s necessarily defined remit in delivering a railway and stations, the design of which are important components in the ultimate level of benefits from HS2;
Particular locations at which efforts should be concentrated are: around Curzon Street Station and Birmingham Interchange where ongoing masterplanning has demonstrated the opportunities for regeneration and job creation; at Washwood Heath Depot which should be the principal advanced engineering maintenance centre for the HS2 network; and providing a HS2 Training Academy in the city, taking advantage of our strong engineering and manufacturing base, providing a national centre of excellence for the high speed rail industry; and

Without this wider commitment, as the Core Cities Group has raised, there is a risk of negative rebalancing - redistributing economic capacity from cities like Birmingham to London, or to other locations.

Station Locations

The Manchester and Leeds stations appear to be well-integrated into existing transport networks given their City Centre locations – we therefore welcome proposals for those stations; however

The East Midlands and South Yorkshire parkway stations would require further investment to ensure that they are fully integrated from a transport and economic perspectives to maximise benefits. We believe the aim should be that Derby, Nottingham, and Sheffield city centres benefit from direct HS2 trains to/from Birmingham city centre, potentially by the use of classic-compatible trains, (e.g. some trains serve Derby, and some serve Nottingham), in addition to Manchester and Leeds;

In particular for Sheffield, we support the delivery partner report published by Sheffield City Council and South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPT), entitled “Maximising the economic impact of HS2 investment in Sheffield”. This recommended that a city centre station (at a re-opened Victoria) could approximately double the number of jobs created by HS2 serving a South Yorkshire HS2 station, and that local proposals to integrate the Victoria station with the local transport network have potential to provide a high standard of connectivity for onward journeys, including for access to a wider range of destinations (i.e. wider than Meadowhall) on the existing rail network at the Sheffield Midland station, and to/from the West Midlands. We believe from the evidence above that HS2 Ltd’s proposed Meadowhall station would perform less favourably in wider economic and transport connectivity perspectives. We therefore support a Sheffield City Centre station at Victoria;

We therefore request that opportunities be explored (including evidencing consideration of classic compatible trains and tunnelling) to provide HS2 access from Birmingham directly into Sheffield, Derby and Nottingham city centres in the future subject to the wider economic and funding situation, engineering feasibility and business case;

We support the principle of HS2 trains serving intermediate station/s between the West Midlands and Manchester, to widen the spread of benefits from HS2 including increasing those benefits to Birmingham. Whilst we agree that HS2 Ltd’s proposed stop at Crewe would have considerable rail connectivity advantages, we are concerned that the greater potential level of demand, and regeneration potential, of Stoke on Trent and North Staffordshire have not been given sufficient weight in HS2 Ltd’s proposals. In particular we note that as raised by Stoke on Trent City Council, a station serving the North Staffordshire conurbation could have significant regeneration benefits while the absence of such provision could have a detrimental impact negative impact, specifically up to £78.38m/-0.9% GDP per annum (as indicated by HS2 Ltd’s own report on Regional Economic Impacts published September 2013), which should be taken fully into account in the overall assessment of Phase 2. We therefore request that HS2 Ltd give fuller consideration to a wider range of options to allow HS2 trains to/from Birmingham serving both Crewe and Stoke on Trent/North Staffordshire (e.g. some trains serve Crewe and some Stoke on Trent/North Staffordshire) in order to achieve equitable connectivity and economic benefits, including that opportunities be explored (including evidencing consideration of classic compatible trains and tunnelling) to provide HS2 access from Birmingham to Crewe and Stoke on Trent/North Staffordshire in the future subject to the wider economic and funding situation, engineering feasibility and business case; however

Notwithstanding the above recommendations, we emphasise that the core principle of HS2 comprising, in the main, new dedicated high speed lines should not be compromised,
maintaining the strategic capacity, journey time and therefore economic benefits to Birmingham and the other Core Cities.

**Connectivity & Journey Times**

- It is encouraging that the route is, as promised, largely a dedicated high speed line, maximising capacity and journey time benefits for travellers to and from the West Midlands and supporting them via connections with the existing rail network. It is welcome that a potential initial solution for further extension is set out north of Wigan, which has the potential for further journey time savings, modal shift from air and economic benefits, and we request that HS2 Ltd incorporate this into Phase 2. In addition, we request that HS2 Ltd’s currently proposed connection with the West Coast Main Line (WCML) to Wigan (i.e. at Bamfurlong) remain in the Phase 2 proposals, to allow the existing town and city centre stations for Wigan and Preston respectively to benefit from direct access to HS2 trains (and therefore fast economic links) to and from Birmingham (as the current HS2 proposals specify).
- The realigned link to the West Coast Main Line (WCML) at Handsacre in Staffordshire is likely to act as a capacity constraint until the completion of Phase 2. A more permanent solution including a properly segregated route is required, for capacity and also punctuality. In addition to a properly segregated route, we request that the Handsacre link be retained in the HS2 Phase One design, in order to allow direct classic-compatible trains to provide improved rail connectivity north and south (including for example locations such as Stafford) making better use of the proposed High Speed network.
- The latest indications are that the West Midlands could on the whole benefit from much better connectivity, but for the existing rail network particularly this is still understandably subject to uncertainty given timescales and wider rail industry planning. HS2 Ltd will need to urgently work with the rail industry, including through the rail industry’s Long Term Planning Process (LTPP) to ensure that the West Midlands will benefit from much better connectivity. Certainly the City Council needs to be comfortable that future service levels will not be inferior to the current levels. It is also essential that a fit for purpose double track connection is included in Phase 1 to HS1, with direct links from Birmingham to locations south east of London, and Continental Europe.
- There is a concern regarding journey times to/from existing city centres for the East Midlands and South Yorkshire stations – including to the Core Cities of Nottingham and Sheffield, if the HS2 trains do not take passengers directly to city centres, and an additional journey on local transport is then needed. This is of significant concern given the major demand that will continue for travel to/from the West Midlands and these city centres. It is suggested that HS2 Ltd give further consideration to serving these city centres with HS2 trains directly, potentially partially using existing rail lines, and/or new tunnelling; however
- Notwithstanding the above recommendations, we emphasise that the core principle of HS2 comprising, in the main, new dedicated high speed lines should not be compromised, maintaining the strategic capacity, journey time and therefore economic benefits to Birmingham and the other Core Cities.

**Aviation Policy**

- We consider that it is difficult to see the potential benefits to the West Midlands for the potential HS2 Heathrow Airport Spur, with a potential danger of abstraction away from Birmingham Airport, and additional cost;
- There is a need to consider views on this choice in the context of the Government’s aviation policy review, the recommendations of which do not provide clarity on whether Heathrow or Gatwick (or indeed both) would be the focus of aviation expansion. In either case however, it is apparent that this would place additional pressure on already constrained aviation capacity in the South East;
- The opportunity for interchange for Heathrow access from the HS2 Old Oak Common station would still give better rail connectivity between the West Midlands and Heathrow than currently; and therefore
- The City Council opposes implementation of the HS2 Heathrow Spur.
Next Steps

As well as continuing to engage with English cities along the Phase 2 routes north of the West Midlands, we are keen to engage more fully with the UK and Scottish Governments, as well as Scottish and northern English cities, on better connections; we believe that links north from Birmingham are as important as those to the south.

This engagement will become even more important as we await specific proposals for further reducing rail journey times and increasing capacity between England and the Scottish Central Belt, to ensure that fast links between Birmingham, Glasgow and Edinburgh are part of a truly national high speed rail network with widely-spread economic benefits.

In summary, we continue to fully support HS2 and will carry on working with the Government, HS2 Ltd and other partners in order to maximise the benefits that HS2 will bring.

Yours faithfully

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Appendix A - City Council Responses to Specific Consultation Questions

(i) **Do you agree or disagree with the Government’s proposed route between the West Midlands and Manchester as described in Chapter 7? This includes the proposed route alignment, the location of tunnels, ventilation shafts, cuttings, viaducts and depots as well as how the high speed line will connect to the West Coast Main Line.**

We welcome that HS2 Ltd has given consideration to extending the HS2 route to the north of Preston (specifically Brock between Preston and Lancaster, as outlined as part of the documents the Government published in January 2013), though are disappointed that this is not included in the current proposals. We request that HS2 Ltd extend the HS2 route to Brock as previously considered, which we believe would provide additional capacity and journey time benefits, either preferably as part of Phase 2, or if not as part of the further improvements/new sections of line between the North West of England and Scotland that HS2 Ltd is investigating. In addition, we request that HS2 Ltd’s currently proposed connection with the West Coast Main Line (WCML) to Wigan (i.e. at Bamfurlong) remain in the Phase 2 proposals, to allow the existing town and city centre stations for Wigan and Preston respectively to benefit from direct access to HS2 trains (and therefore fast economic links) to and from Birmingham (as the current HS2 proposals specify).

As we will raise in our response to the Formal Environmental Statement (ES) for HS2 Phase One (London-West Midlands), we note that the realigned link at Handsacre still connects into the complex and congested section of the West Coast Main Line between Lichfield and Colwich Junction. This is likely to act as a capacity constraint until the completion of Phase 2 of HS2 in 2032/3.

We welcome HS2’s Phase One ES proposal for signalling and track improvements on the existing line between Lichfield and Colwich Junction, which appears to be intended to provide some incremental capacity enhancement. However we remain of the view that a properly segregated route for HS2 trains between these locations is required, for capacity and also punctuality, and so this end we would support the continuation of the proposed Manchester spur to an alternative connection with the West Coast Main Line to the north of Colwich Junction as part of a further design refinement to the Phase 1 HS2 route. In addition to a properly segregated route, we request that the Handsacre link be retained in the HS2 Phase One design, in order to allow direct classic-compatible trains to provide improved rail connectivity north and south (including for example locations such as Stafford) making better use of the proposed High Speed network.

We support the principle of HS2 trains serving intermediate station/s (and therefore including relevant route proposals) between the West Midlands and Manchester, to widen the spread of benefits from HS2 including increasing those benefits to Birmingham. Whilst we agree that HS2 Ltd’s proposed stop at Crewe would have considerable rail connectivity advantages, we are concerned that the greater potential level of demand, and regeneration potential, of Stoke on Trent and North Staffordshire have not been given sufficient weight in HS2 Ltd’s proposals.

In particular we note that, as raised by Stoke on Trent City Council, a station serving the North Staffordshire conurbation could have significant regeneration benefits while the absence of such provision could have a detrimental impact negative impact, specifically up to £78.38m/-0.9% GDP per annum (as indicated by HS2 Ltd’s own report on Regional Economic Impacts published September 2013), which should be taken fully into account in the overall assessment of Phase 2.

We therefore request that HS2 Ltd give fuller consideration to a wider range of options to allow HS2 trains to/from Birmingham serving both Crewe and Stoke on Trent/North Staffordshire (e.g. some trains serve Crewe and some Stoke on Trent/North Staffordshire) in order to achieve equitable connectivity and economic benefits, including that opportunities be explored (including evidencing consideration of classic compatible
trains and tunnelling) to provide HS2 access from Birmingham to Crewe and Stoke on Trent/North Staffordshire in the future subject to the wider economic and funding situation, engineering feasibility and business case.

Notwithstanding the above recommendations, we emphasise that the core principle of HS2 comprising, in the main, new dedicated high speed lines should not be compromised, maintaining the strategic capacity, journey time and therefore economic benefits to Birmingham and the other Core Cities.

(ii) Do you agree or disagree with the Government’s proposals for: a. A Manchester station at Manchester Piccadilly as described in Chapter 7 (sections 7.8.1 – 7.8.7)? b. An additional station near Manchester Airport as described in Chapter 7 (sections 7.6.1 – 7.6.6)?

We agree with the Government’s proposed stations at Manchester Piccadilly and Manchester Airport; these appear to offer a high standard of integration with the local and regional transport networks.

(iii) Do you think that there should be any additional stations on the western leg between the West Midlands and Manchester?

We support the principle of HS2 trains serving intermediate station/s between the West Midlands and Manchester, to widen the spread of benefits from HS2 including increasing those benefits to Birmingham. Please see our response to question (i) above for more detail concerning Crewe and Stoke on Trent/North Staffordshire.

(iv) Do you agree or disagree with the Government’s proposed route between West Midlands and Leeds as described in Chapter 8? This includes the proposed route alignment, the location of tunnels, ventilation shafts, cuttings, viaducts and depots as well as how the high speed line will connect to the East Coast Main Line.

We request that further consideration is given to serving city centres directly with through HS2 trains to and from Birmingham. The East Midlands and South Yorkshire parkway stations would require further investment to ensure that they are fully integrated from a transport and economic perspectives to maximise benefits. We believe the aim should be that Derby, Nottingham, and Sheffield city centres benefit from direct HS2 trains to/from Birmingham city centre, potentially by the use of classic-compatible trains, (e.g. some trains serve Derby, and some serve Nottingham), in addition to Manchester and Leeds;

In particular for Sheffield, we support the delivery partner report published by Sheffield City Council and South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPT), entitled “Maximising the economic impact of HS2 investment in Sheffield”. This recommends that a city centre station (at a re-opened Victoria) could approximately double the number of jobs created by HS2 serving a South Yorkshire HS2 station, and that local proposals to integrate the Victoria station with the local transport network have potential to provide a high standard of connectivity for onward journeys, including for access to a wider range of destinations (i.e. wider than Meadowhall) on the existing rail network at the Sheffield Midland station, and to/from the West Midlands. We believe from the evidence above that HS2 Ltd’s proposed Meadowhall station would perform less favourably in wider economic and transport connectivity perspectives. We therefore support a Sheffield City Centre station at Victoria.

We therefore request that opportunities be explored (including evidencing consideration of classic compatible trains and tunnelling) to provide HS2 access from Birmingham directly into Sheffield, Derby and Nottingham city centres in the future subject to the wider economic and funding situation, engineering feasibility and business case.

Notwithstanding the above recommendations, we emphasise that the core principle of HS2 comprising, in the main, new dedicated high speed lines should not be
compromised, maintaining the strategic capacity, journey time and therefore economic benefits to Birmingham and the other Core Cities.

(v) Do you agree or disagree with the Government’s proposals for a. A Leeds station at Leeds New Lane as described in Chapter 8 (sections 8.8.1 – 8.8.5)? b. A South Yorkshire station to be located at Sheffield Meadowhall as described in Chapter 8 (sections 8.5.1 – 8.5.8) c. An East Midlands station to be located at Toton as described in Chapter 8 (sections 8.3.1 – 8.3.6)?

We agree with the Government’s proposals for stations at Leeds New Lane, Sheffield Meadowhall, and East Midlands (Toton), as initial proposals subject to further more detailed investigation of options to also directly serve the existing city centres for South Yorkshire and East Midlands.

We support the principle of HS2 trains serving intermediate station/s between the West Midlands and Leeds, to widen the spread of benefits from HS2 including increasing those benefits to Birmingham. Please see our response to question (iv) above for more detail concerning the East Midlands and South Yorkshire.

(vi) Do you think that there should be any additional stations on the eastern leg between the West Midlands and Leeds?

We support the principle of HS2 trains serving intermediate station/s between the West Midlands and Leeds, to widen the spread of benefits from HS2 including increasing those benefits to Birmingham. Please see our response to question (iv) above for more detail concerning the East Midlands and South Yorkshire.

(vii) Please let us know your comments on the Appraisal of Sustainability (as reported in the Sustainability Statement) of the Government’s proposed Phase Two route, including the alternatives to the proposed route as described in Chapter 9.

We support the principle of HS2 trains serving intermediate station/s between the West Midlands and Manchester, to widen the spread of benefits from HS2 including increasing those benefits to Birmingham. Please see our response to question (i) above for more detail concerning Crewe and Stoke on Trent/North Staffordshire.

We support the principle of HS2 trains serving intermediate station/s between the West Midlands and Leeds, to widen the spread of benefits from HS2 including increasing those benefits to Birmingham. Please see our response to question (iv) above for more detail concerning the East Midlands and South Yorkshire.

(viii) Please let us know your comments on how the capacity that would be freed up on the existing rail network by the introduction of the proposed Phase Two route could be used as described in Chapter 10?

The latest indications are that the West Midlands could on the whole benefit from much better connectivity, but for the existing rail network particularly this is still understandably subject to uncertainty given timescales and wider rail industry planning. HS2 Ltd will need to urgently work with the rail industry, including through the rail industry’s Long Term Planning Process (LTTP) to ensure that the West Midlands will benefit from much better connectivity. The City Council has consistently engaged with the LTTP and looks forward to continuing to do so working with other West Midlands partners including through the West Midlands Regional Rail Forum. Certainly the City Council needs to be comfortable that future service levels will not be inferior to the current levels.

(ix) Please let us know your comments on the introduction of other utilities along the proposed Phase Two line of route as described in Chapter 11?
The introduction of other utilities along the proposed Phase Two line of route appear a cost effective approach to providing key national infrastructure, for example broadband. We also support the principle of development of cycling infrastructure utilising the HS2 route. However this is on the proviso that: it does not lengthen the delivery timescale of HS2; that the costs of such infrastructure are borne by their promoters and not by the HS2 project; and that such infrastructure does not cause additional disruption to HS2 services once HS2 commences operation.