Nottingham City Council Response to the Department for Transport Consultation

High Speed Rail: Investing in Britain's Future – Consultation on the route from the West Midlands to Manchester, Leeds and beyond

The City Council welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the ongoing development of HS2. This is an exciting opportunity to transform the nation's railway infrastructure and Nottingham City Council wishes to play its part in ensuring the right choices are made on the route alignment and station location within the East Midlands.

Responses have only been provided to the questions relevant to Nottingham and the City Council. We would be happy to discuss in more detail any of the points raised.

In July 2011 the City Council provided a positive response to the consultation on the principles of developing a national high speed rail 'Y' network. It has also supplied written evidence in support of HS2 to the Transport Select Committee and to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Britain's railway capacity.

The City Council considers that there is a compelling case in favour of high speed rail. Nottingham as a Core City supports national economic growth but needs better infrastructure and connectivity to exploit its full potential particularly in terms of expanding economic, science and business sectors. Nottingham currently has relatively poor rail connections to other core cities, the north and London. Simply widening roads will not secure the economic and environmental future of the country. High speed rail is vital for providing the additional capacity necessary for meeting the predicted increase in demand for travel over the coming decades.

For a city located in the centre of the country, the improved connectivity of HS2 offers the substantial opportunity to build economic capacity and agglomeration, help close the widening economic productivity gap between the midlands and the north and the south-east, with significant associated social inclusion benefits.

However it is crucial that the long planning and procurement processes for High Speed Rail do not frustrate or delay essential investments in the classic rail network over the intervening Control Periods, in particular the upgrading and electrification of the Midland Main Line and its rolling stock.

The decision to proceed with the development of HS2 can only be made by Parliament in the national interest, based on the most robust and up to date assessments of cost, value for money, economic and environmental impacts. It is noted that a final decision to proceed with the eastern leg of HS2 will be made in the next Parliament through a hybrid bill process.

Assuming the next Parliament does decide to proceed with the Eastern leg of HS2, including a new East Midlands Hub station at Toton, then the following principles should be applied to its development to ensure that the economic potential of the scheme is fully realised:

- Nil detriment to existing plans to upgrade and electrify the Midland Main Line, including enhancements at Derby, Leicester & Market Harborough;

- Nil detriment to existing services and train frequencies to Nottingham Station. If following the introduction of HS2 a significant shift in passenger numbers do occur a reduction in train size should be considered before any reduction in service frequency is implemented to preserve service levels to intermediate destinations from Nottingham such as Leicester and Loughborough;
- Use of existing rail capacity released by HS2 to reduce journey times and develop more regular services to and from Nottingham Station;
- Adverse environmental impacts of the line and new Hub Station should be avoided where possible, or minimised and mitigated through excellent design;
- Full compensation for people and businesses who are adversely effected by the new line at the earliest opportunity;
- Development of high quality frequent 'classic rail' shuttle services between the new Hub Station and Nottingham Station and to Derby and Leicester;
- Maximum access to the new Hub Station by tram, bus, walking and cycling;
- Minimum impact of the new Hub Station on local and strategic roads;
- Effective connectivity between HS2 and existing rail lines, including the option to run ‘classic compatible’ trains from Nottingham and elsewhere in the East Midlands on HS2; and
- Ensuring that rail engineering and construction companies based in the East Midlands have a fair opportunity to win contracts to build the new line and rolling stock.
- Procurement processes are set up to encourage and support the use of local employment and apprenticeships for young people living in Nottingham.
- Ensure development plans for the area around the proposed East Midlands Hub Station are integrated with local planning strategies.

These principles have been used to inform the detailed responses to the questions set out in the consultation document relevant to the City Council.

Regardless of the decision on HS2, the City Council strongly supports the expansion of the inter-city rail network, to meet the projected demand for long distance rail travel (which has doubled over the last 15 years) and to promote local economic growth as part of a balanced approach to national and local transport investment.

Q4: The Route & Supporting information

Do you agree with the Government’s proposed route between West Midlands and Leeds?

The City Council supports the selected proposed route between the West Midlands and Leeds.

The proposed route through the East Midlands follows for the most part the established transport corridors of the M42/A42 and the M1, which will help to limit adverse impacts on local communities and environmental assets.

However, there will still be adverse impacts along the proposed route that will need to be avoided, or minimised and mitigated through the detailed design process.

Underpinning the approach to route and station development should be a commitment to excellent design and community consultation. It is vital to its success that HS2 is seen as an exemplar major infrastructure scheme both locally and nationally.

A short section of the line passes within the City Council's administrative boundary through part of the Nottingham Business Park which will require some business activity to be relocated. So as to ensure employment opportunities are retained locally HS2 Ltd must support businesses to remain within the local area.

In terms of the potential impact on local communities, noise, visual impact and severance are the major concerns.

Whilst it is accepted that the line will be built to a significantly higher engineering standards than the existing Victorian network, the trains will be running much faster. The detailed design of the system must therefore utilise all available noise abatement technologies, including improvements to train aerodynamics, wheel and track design, electric transmission, and including where beneficial utilising mitigation measures such as cuttings, landscaping, noise barriers and tunnel entrance/over-pressure mitigation, designed to minimise the impact on both homeowners and businesses.

Additional sound insulation should be offered to buildings where noise levels are predicted to exceed prescribed levels.

The area adjacent to the proposed route on the western edge of the City currently experiences relatively high environmental noise levels due to traffic on the M1. The relative environmental noise impact of HS2 in the Strelley area is therefore likely to be significantly lower than that expected on the parts of the route in rural areas which typically experience very low ambient and background noise levels. However, further from the M1 and other sources of environmental noise, noise from high speed trains will be noticeable as a new source of transient noise.

Due primarily to the alignment of the route and existing environmental noise levels in the Strelley area the impact from noise/vibration from HS2 on Nottingham's residents and businesses should be relatively low. However, noise/vibration mitigation measures should still be implemented to ensure residents and businesses do not experience noise/vibration levels in excess of relevant environmental noise/vibration criteria.

As highlighted in the Appraisal of Sustainability, there will be natural and heritage assets placed at risk of damage by the proposed route. The Government should ensure that these risks are avoided where possible, or failing that minimised and mitigated, and that the new line is integrated as far as possible into the landscape through the use of sympathetically designed cuttings and tunnels as proposed through the Strelley Conservation Area.

Experience from other major infrastructure schemes, including HS1, indicates that there is potential for environmental enhancements through planting, landscaping and habitat creation. Opportunities should be taken to improve local biodiversity over and above the current situation in line with local and national habitat management and re-creation objectives, rather than just replacing what has been lost. The Government should also work with

landowners to 'pre-mitigate' where possible, through implementing landscaping and planting schemes that will have time to mature before the line is constructed.

The City Council would welcome further dialogue on preserving footpaths and bridleways in the area used by the local community and to develop mitigating solutions acceptable to local people.

Q5: Proposals for Stations

c: Do you agree with the Government's proposals for an East Midlands station to be located at Toton?

The City Council supports the proposals for an East Midlands Station to be located at Toton.

Analysis undertaken by HS2 Ltd indicates that a Hub Station at Toton (with both HS2 & classic rail access) is the best option for serving the Nottingham conurbation and the wider East Midlands region.

Research commissioned by Nottingham City Council, Broxtowe Borough Council and Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire County Councils has indicated that there is potential for significant local economic benefits resulting from the development of the Hub Station at Toton.

The final report 'Maximising the Economic Benefits of the East Midlands HS2 Station at Toton, Volterra Partners, November 2013 key findings are:

- Of the £70.9bn economic benefits estimated at the national level in the central case, we estimate that the benefits to the East Midlands region are around £5.4bn
- New work by HS2 looking into alternative methods of quantifying the benefits of HS2 concludes that it could support economic productivity uplifts of £15bn per annum nationally, of which £1.1bn-£2.2bn, would accrued to the Derby/Nottingham area. This amounts to a 2.2%-4.3% increase in local economic output in 2037.
- HS2 will increase labour connectivity by rail by 14.3% and business connectivity by 23.2% in the Derby/Nottingham area.
- Of the 89,000 FTE jobs estimated to be created nationally, we estimate that 13,350 jobs could be created in the East Midlands. These opportunities relate to the planning and design, construction, rolling stock, operation and maintenance, and renewals.
- These employment opportunities are worth an estimated £575m in annual economic benefits, which even using conservative assumptions would result in a 60 year NPV of over £7bn.
- Half of national employment in the manufacturing of rolling stock is within the East Midlands, meaning that it has a strategic advantage in this sector. Derby is a specific focus, with two thirds of the region's employment in this sector. We therefore believe that Derby could be particularly well placed to take advantage of job creation in this area, which could account for around 2,500 jobs in Derby. However it will be crucial to ensure training opportunities are available to make sure that the working population have the skills to take advantage of this opportunity.

- There exists limited evidence around the benefits of Staveley depot but initial research suggests that it could create around 80 FTE construction jobs and a further 500 FTE operational positions.
- There are considerable opportunities for development both around the Toton site and on other strategic sites nearby. We estimate that current plans for the Toton site could result in between 650 and 875 residential dwellings, and 2,800sqm to 19,800sqm of commercial floorspace which could accommodate up to 1,500 jobs, as well as 200 jobc during the construction phase.
- We estimate that other potential development, including those along the tram route, Stanton Iron Works in Ikleston and the proposed Strategic Rail Freight Interchange near East Midlands airport, could deliver over 4,000 new homes and support over 10,000 new jobs, providing a significant boost to the local economy.

However, in order for the passenger and economic benefits of the Hub Station to be fully realised, it must be of an excellent design standard and fully integrated into the local transport network. In particular, HS2 Ltd must continue to work with the City Council and other partners to establish a comprehensive HS2 connectivity package:

- Effective direct heavy rail access to Nottingham Station (minimum four connecting trains per hour) and similar high levels of connecting services to stations elsewhere. To tie in with the high speed rail concept new dedicated branded rail shuttle services must be established to Nottingham to give the customer a fully coordinated door to door rail journey experience to the centre of Nottingham which will continue to be the single largest destination in the region. It would be unacceptable to serve the Hub Station by simply diverting existing cross country rail services (such as the Liverpool-Norwich service), which will result in increased journey times from Nottingham to destinations served by these services and an inconsistent journey experience for the customer. Research led by Network Rail has indicated a range of alternative options for how the Hub Station could be served by heavy rail. This work should be used a basis for further engagement with the City Council, other councils, the rail industry and other stakeholders to determine an enhanced East Midlands rail network.

- Potential to run trains on both HS2 and the Midland Main Line, to widen connectivity between existing stations in the East Midlands and the north and west of England (making use of spare capacity on HS2 north of the junction at Water Orton) and most importantly to provide for direct services to the existing Nottingham Station in recognition of the City's status as a Core City. In particular there is a strong case for the provision of direct classic compatible rail services from Nottingham Station to Birmingham (and beyond) and from Nottingham Station to Leeds (and beyond). This will enable the development of a 'regional high speed network' to complement the London services for which Network Rail's Long Distance Market Study indicates there is strong latent demand. For such movements to be possible there must be a direct link between the Midland Main Line and HS2, allowing such trains to run on both lines. The East Midlands Councils with support from a number of Local Transport Authorities commissioned Arup to undertake a technical and economic assessment of an MML-HS2 link, which demonstrates that it has the potential to add to the overall business case for HS2. Ensuring

that high speed trains can run onto the existing network is identified by HS2 Ltd as a guiding design principle.

- HS2 Ltd will need to develop a cost effective and practical scheme to provide access to the Hub Station from the A52. There have been a number of proposals for major developments on the Toton site over the last 20 years, including an inter-modal freight terminal. However, access from the A52 has never been resolved to the satisfaction of the Highways Agency. It will be important to develop a credible scheme at an early stage which is also acceptable to local people, relevant councils as well as the Highways Agency.

- A major advantage of locating the East Midlands Hub at Toton is the ability to link with the Nottingham Express Transit (NET) urban tram system. Construction of Phase 2 of NET to Chilwell is already underway and programmed for completion by early 2015. This will terminate a short distance away from the proposed Hub Station. Although the tram will offer an uncompetitive journey time to the City Centre compared to a direct rail shuttle it will provide a mass transit connection through a densely populated corridor and serve key intermediate destinations such as Beeston, Enterprise Zone, Nottingham University main Campus, Queens Medical Centre and the NG2 business park. The terminus at the Hub Station should be designed in such a way as to make a further extension into Derbyshire technically feasible. In practice, this would mean terminating NET above the station, with escalators and lifts to enable passenger to descend to the HS2 platforms, similar to the arrangement currently under construction at Nottingham Station.

- In addition to a NET extension it would also be desirable to explore other tram connection options including tram-train technology that could use existing heavy rail corridors to serve the new station.

- High quality provision should be made in the design for high quality bus passenger facilities. The station design should make provision for both through and terminating bus services. Priority access arrangements for buses should also be considered.

- In addition to NET access to the Hub Station, there must be provision for appropriate local road access and for cyclists and pedestrians in the immediate localities of Toton, Stapleford and Long Eaton. Although the Hub Station will be a regional facility it will have very significant local impacts and it is vital that it is fully integrated into the existing urban fabric, rather than functioning as an alien structure unrelated to surrounding communities.

- The service specification should include provision of a regular public transport link to East Midlands Airport.

Q7:Appraisal of Sustainability

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

The Appraisal of Sustainability is a high level document which has been primarily used to inform consideration of alternative lines of route. As such it is generally of an appropriate standard of detail and scope.

However, in developing and refining the proposed line of route to a level required by a future hybrid bill, much more detailed information and analysis will be required, working closely with the City Council, local communities and amenity groups. Experience from other similar projects suggests that the quality of the outcome will be dependent on the level and quality of such engagement.

Q 8: Freed Capacity

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.

The City Council's support for HS2 is conditional on existing levels of service to Nottingham Station being maintained and the continued commitment to programmed Midland Mainline upgrading and electrification by 2020.

The single biggest potential transport benefit from the development of HS2 in the East Midlands is the ability to re-allocate capacity from the increasingly overcrowded classic rail network to better serve existing stations.

Long distance rail travel has doubled over the last 15 years and has continued to grow despite recent adverse economic conditions and above inflation fare increases.

The Long Distance, Freight and Regional Market Studies produced by Network Rail have all indicated that rapid passenger and freight growth will continue over the next 30 years under all foreseeable economic scenarios.

The Network Rail commissioned study on released capacity (Better Connections: Opportunities for the Integration of HS2) sets out a range of different approaches for how it could be allocated. In relation to the Midland Main Line, the study concluded that there was no case for reducing the number of train paths to London post HS2. In relation to both the East Coast and West Coast Main Lines, the study concluded that there were significant opportunities to reallocate services to better serve intermediate stations.

Current and proposed improvements to the Midland Main Line (including electrification) will enable journey times to London to be reduced to below 90 minutes from Nottingham by 2020 and offer improvements to other destinations including Derby and Leicester that will be vital for HS2 Toton connectivity. The addition of HS2 is also an opportunity to re-orientate services to an even 'clock-face' service, which would also benefit other stations along the line.

A key conclusion of the Volterra work is that if the benefits to Toton are to be maximised the connections to elsewhere must continue to be improved and not in anyway be deferred or downgraded in the iterim. East Midlands Councils have calculated the benefits of improving the Midland Main Line to the East Midlands and South Yorkshire are £450 million. Certainty around these investment decisions are vital for individual users and for securing business investment decisions.

A further finding of the Volterra report was that maintaining existing service patterns to Nottingham Station (including two trains per hour via the Midland Mainline) is vital for maintaining Nottingham City Centre's economic prosperity. It is therefore essential that the new HS2 East Midlands Hub is served by additional rail services not simply through the diversion of existing services to the detriment of journey times.