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## **Notes of HS2 Working Group - Joint Meeting with Stoke on Trent City Council**

**Held at the Civic Offices, Newcastle under Lyme on 19 February 2014 6pm -7 25pm**

### **Present**

#### **Elected Members**

Councillors Stringer (Chair), Becket, Loades and Peers,

Councillor Ruth Rosenau, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Transportation Stoke on Trent City Council

Apologies were received from Councillor G Cairns

### **Officers**

Guy Benson (Head of Planning Services), Nesta Henshaw (Head of Environmental Services) Pete Price (Assistant Director Place Management) Stoke on Trent City Council, Austin Knott (Planning and Transportation Policy Team Manager) Jayne Briscoe (Democratic Services )

The Chair welcomed Councillor Rosenau and the officers from Stoke on Trent City Council to the Working Group.

Pete Price (Assistant Director Place Management) emphasized the once in a century opportunity that HS2 could bring to the region in terms of economic, social and urban transformation. He delivered a presentation which had been informed by Alan James an internationally renowned rail planner who had been commissioned by Stoke on Trent City Council.

During the presentation he explained the key benefits of the Stoke proposal:-

- Saving of £5.2 bn
- 80km less new-build HSL
- Urban brownfield route via Potteries, less rural land taken
- 19km shorter overall
- Better for the environment – Less CO2

Manchester would benefit 7 years earlier than HS2 Phase 2 plan, and trip times would be

- 30 mins faster than today
- 12 mins faster than HS2 2026
- Only 4.5 mins slower than HS2 2032/33

### **Members Comments and Questions**

It was confirmed that the current alignment required minor changes. The trains were quieter than the pendolino and would stop at Stockport. The station was not costed. It was confirmed that the double decker trains travelling at 330 kilometres per hour would use the green/purple line via Stoke.

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The proposed route would deliver a noise benefit to Stone. It was suggested that Newcastle under Lyme should be shown on the diagram.

Pete Price confirmed that the proposals offered the opportunity for the North Staffordshire urban area to become a core centre in the UK and focus for regeneration. The proposals were in alignment with the existing spatial core strategies of Stoke and Newcastle.

Members viewed conceptual drawings of the proposed station. With improvements to the road network, the station would be able to handle international travel and parking facilities for 10,000 cars.

A delegation from Stoke on Trent Co meet with Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham Councils to explain the benefits of the North Staffordshire bid.

Pete Price confirmed that there would be no realignment on the blue track, there would be no compulsory purchase and it would not affect housing. The issue lay with the second tunnel. In terms of noise impact Austin Knott referred to the modelling carried out in Germany where environmental measures were stern, the services were quiet.

Members felt that more specific localised work was needed particularly in relation to

- Blight
- Effect on train services from Kidsgrove, where did the existing services run from if this additional capacity was utilised?

There was concern for the future of the London –Midland line from Crewe which currently had the cheapest rail fare to London.

Pete Price referred to potential conflict but was reassured by the expert consultant who had given assurances that there were sufficient passing places and with minor adjustments the 16-20 trains per hour would not conflict with the HS2 trains.

Pete Price confirmed that a mass of improvements in and around Etruria Valley would be needed and that localised rail links were critical. Local people wanted a really good local service.

There were some concerns about the amount of work required in Macclesfield. It was confirmed that an adjustment would be needed at Elworth.

The information on land exchange was not concise enough and costs were not sufficiently tied down.

The need to find a large voice was recognised. Councillor Rosenau asked for support for the HS2 bid and for it to be vocal. Stoke on Trent City Council would be lobbying hard and asked for supporters to do the same. At the current time Staffordshire County Council would not come out in support of the bid. Members agreed that a bigger voice in Parliament was needed, the next 3 months were critical in the decision making process. It was suggested that a copy of the presentation be sent to Phil Bennion MEP.

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Nesta Henshaw asked that further work be carried out in terms of environmental assessment specifically for Kidsgrove. Guy Benson required more comfort that the increase in traffic on the line would not prejudice the large employment scheme's located along the line. Austin Knott stated that the scheme would not prevent freight being moved along this line and the consultations included proposals to transport smaller packages via TGV. Future increases in demand for rail freight were anticipated.

Pete Price referred to arrangements to reacquire the rail expert consultant to be able to continue on with a number of work streams, including further work covering the Kidsgrove area

Guy Benson summoned up the proposals as a bold move by the City which would ultimately bring benefits to the area if it was successful.

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