

## **COUNCIL MEETING – 11 DECEMBER 2024**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CORPORATE POLICY COMMITTEE: CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL SUPPORT FOR PROPOSED FUTURE RAIL SCHEMES**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council**

- 1. Provisionally supports:**
  - a) the proposed Liverpool to Manchester Railway section of NPR; and**
  - b) b. the use of the High Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester) Bill to deliver the Liverpool to Manchester Railway provided that the conditions set out in paragraph 31 of this report are met.**
- 2. The Council remains a member of the Liverpool to Manchester Partner Board, acting at all times, under the agreed positions set out above.**
- 3. The Council welcomes the progression of alternative options to HS2, to improve rail connectivity and capacity between the Midlands and the North West, but the Council would only lend its support to schemes that put Crewe at the heart of the solution and deliver:**
  - a) Enhanced connectivity from Crewe with improved direct services to key conurbations including London, Birmingham and Manchester;**
  - b) Enables, facilitates and delivers the necessary capacity, upgrades and rationalisation at Crewe Station to enable any new services on an alternative north-south link to call at Crewe;**
  - c) Supports and enables investment and growth in Crewe including the regeneration of Crewe Town Centre and provision of high quality links to the Crewe Station, and**
  - d) Provides appropriate and sufficient mitigation against the negative impacts of the scheme, and its construction, on the borough, its residents and business and on the local environment.**
- 4. The Council only support the use of existing powers secured via the HS2 phase 2a hybrid bill to deliver part of any alternative north-south rail link if the scheme delivers the conditions set out above.**
- 5. The HS2 Member Reference Group be re-established and refocussed to support the Council's strategic rail priorities and positions.**

6. **Approve the revised Terms of Reference and membership changes for the Member Reference Group as proposed in Appendix 2, subject to the membership being extended to include Cllr Stewart Gardiner.**
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**Extract from the Minutes of the Corporate Policy Committee held on 28 November 2024.**

**47 CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL SUPPORT FOR PROPOSED FUTURE RAIL SCHEMES**

The Committee considered the report which set out work to date to establish a Cheshire East Council position on two emerging rail proposals impacting the borough (Liverpool to Manchester Railway section of Northern Powerhouse (NPR) project and the High Speed 2 (HS2) alternative Midlands – North-West Rail Link.

Having a clear council position on rail matters impacting the borough was essential to ensure Cheshire East could engage fully with key partners, including central government and sub-regional authorities and the Private Sector Consortium, to further understand the impact and benefits for the borough.

The Committee agreed that the wider benefits for the Borough and beyond needed to be considered and form part of the Council’s lobbying. Delivering capacity improvements at Crewe Station would support opportunities for new strategic connections at Crewe and free up capacity for other lines, unlocking wider benefits. It was confirmed that once the Council had a clear agreed position, officers could begin to explore further costs, impacts and benefits that would be clearly communicated with members and local communities. Ensuring Cheshire East residents, and future generations, benefited from any proposals was important.

The Committee welcomed the proposal to re-establish the Member Reference Group. The Member Reference Group would be key in sharing intelligence and seeking member views throughout the process. A friendly amendment was supported by the Committee that the Member Reference Group Membership (Appendix 2) be expanded to include Councillor Stewart Gardiner as the local ward member for Knutsford, an area which would be impacted significantly by the proposals.

**RESOLVED (by majority):**

That the Corporate Policy Committee recommend to Full Council that:

1. The Council provisionally support:
  - a. the proposed Liverpool to Manchester Railway Section of the NPR.

- b. the use of the High-Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester) Bill to deliver the Liverpool to Manchester Railway.

provided that the conditions set out in paragraph 31 of the report are met.

2. The Council remains a member of the Liverpool to Manchester Partner Board, acting at all times, under the agreed positions set out above.
3. The Council welcomes the progression of alternative options to HS2, to improve rail connectivity and capacity between the Midlands and the North-West, but the Council would only lend its support to schemes that put Crewe at the heart of the solution and deliver:
  - a. Enhanced connectivity from Crewe with improved direct services to key conurbations including London, Birmingham and Manchester;
  - b. Enables, facilitates and delivers the necessary capacity, upgrades and rationalisation at Crewe Station to enable any new services on an alternative north-south link to call at Crewe;
  - c. Supports and enables investment and growth in Crewe including the regeneration of Crewe Town Centre and provision of high quality links to the Crewe Station and;
  - d. Provides appropriate and sufficient mitigation against the negative impacts of the scheme, and its construction, on the borough, its residents and business and on the local environment.
4. The Council only support the use of existing powers secured via the HS2 phase 2a hybrid bill to deliver part of any alternative north-south rail link if the scheme delivers the conditions set out above.
5. The HS2 Member Reference Group be re-established and refocussed to support the Council's strategic priorities and positions.
6. Approve the revised Terms of Reference and membership changes for the Member Reference Group as proposed in Appendix 2, subject to the membership being extended to include Cllr Stewart Gardiner.