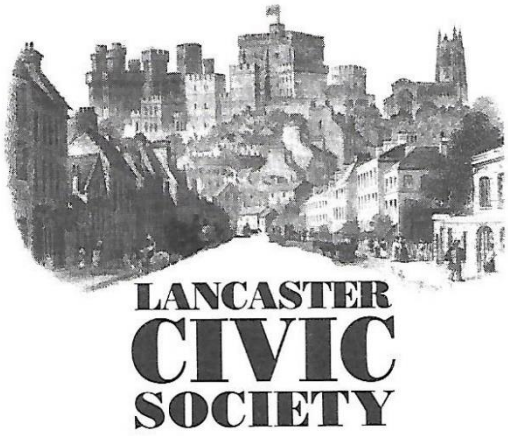


James D Wilkie

LANCASTER
Email: jamesdwilkie@sky.com

Mark Thurston
Chief Executive
High Speed Two Limited
Second Floor, Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

1st October 2021

Dear Mr. Thurston,

Lancaster Civic Society – HS2 – Concerns re loss of direct rail to London

Lancaster Civic Society are extremely concerned about the possibility of Lancaster losing its direct rail connection to London.

In September Lancaster City Council Cabinet considered a report on the impact of HS2 on the city. This revealed that last year, HS2 Ltd produced a report titled PFMv9 (PLANET Framework Mode Assumptions Report).

The Report aimed to provide a summary of modelling and forecasting assumptions to generate part of the economic business case for the project. It establishes a set of train services which HS2 expected to operate, and changes to the existing ('classic') rail network services once HS2 opens.

The impacts highlighted in the Cabinet report include the loss of Lancaster's direct service to London when the first phase of HS2 opens, and the loss of the slower service direct to London which runs via Birmingham New Street when all phases of HS2 are open.

The loss of a direct rail service to London would result in a marked deterioration in the City's rail connectivity. If implemented, Lancaster to London travellers would change to a HS2 train at Preston. Whilst the overall end-to-end journey time would be quicker than the current journey time, the psychological barrier of a change of train is likely to be off-putting to some travellers.

In addition, the removal of a direct Lancaster to London rail service would cause significant damage to perceptions of the prestige of the city, and impact on its attractiveness as a business location.

It is surprising that HS2 Ltd are even considering this at a time when the Government's major policy thrust is that of 'Levelling Up'. Any discontinuation of our direct rail service to London would seriously undermine the Prime Minister's promise to "Level Up'. This threat to Lancaster's direct rail connection to London will blight our ability to retrain and attract investment in the future.

We understand that at present this is a proposal and no final decision has been taken. We would therefore urge HS2 Ltd to immediately reject this possibility and confirm that the direct rail link between Lancaster and London is fully retained.

I look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully,

J. Wilkie

James Wilkie
Hon. Secretary
For and on behalf of Lancaster Civic Society