



RT. HON. CHRIS GRAYLING MP  
Member of Parliament for Epsom and Ewell  
House of Commons  
London  
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Dear Colleague,

I wanted to write to you following inaccurate reports that the Government was de-prioritising rail investment in the North of England.

This Government is committed to investing in the Northern Powerhouse – this includes being fully committed to working with Transport for the North (TfN) on plans for Northern Powerhouse Rail. We have already provided TfN with £60 million funding to develop plans for this important strategic national investment project. Over the coming years, we will work with TfN to make the business case as strong as possible to ensure this project delivers on our ambition of dramatically improving connections across the North and boosting the regional economy.

Over the past week there have been claims that the Government is prioritising Crossrail 2 over Northern Powerhouse Rail: this is totally untrue.

The fact is that that our position on Crossrail 2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail is the same – we're working with Transport for London in exactly the same way as we're working with TfN. But, as Crossrail 2 has been nine years in the making, it is a few years ahead of Northern Powerhouse Rail, which was first mooted in 2013. That is the only difference.

Crossrail 2 is at an early development stage and the business case will need to be approved before it progresses. It is our intention to work with both projects with the aim of delivering a more reliable railway that delivers for passengers and underpins economic growth.

Furthermore, Northern Powerhouse Rail is not the only rail scheme that we are investing in within the North. Our current investment is being delivered through infrastructure and other upgrades including:

- Over £1 billion to upgrade one of the largest rail networks in the country through the Great North Rail Project – this has already delivered improvements between Liverpool and Manchester, including faster journey times and more seats, and will transform the North's rail services by 2020.
- The Northern and TransPennine Express franchises are providing new trains, including more than 500 new carriages, room for 40,000 extra passengers and more than 2,000 extra services a week by 2020, including new fast services right across the region. This £1.2 billion package of investment will also deliver improvements to many of the region's stations as well as rolling out free Wi-Fi at stations and on trains.
- Major upgrades to rail links across the Pennines, improving connections between key transport hubs in the North of England, including Manchester, Leeds and York. Plans for the Transpennine Route Upgrade are currently being designed and developed with input from Rail North, to enable us to deliver significant improvements to passengers from 2022.

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This is an important period for the future of transport investment in the North. We are delivering a significant investment now, and are working with colleagues in the North to make plans for further investment in the years to come, and I look forward to working with you and your colleagues as these plans take shape.

Will be back

**Chris Grayling MP**