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12th March 2012

Dear Graham Stringer MP and Stuart Andrew MP,

Nottingham City Council's Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Britain's Railway Capacity

1. Nottingham's growth plans

1.0 Nottingham is a core city with a strong and diverse economy worth around £12 billion a year, making a significant contribution to the national economy. The Head Quarters of fifty regional and national companies including Alliance Boots, E.ON, Experian, Speedo and Capital One are in Nottingham. Having businesses like these here creates a virtuous circle with more people and businesses drawn into the City.

1.1 The City has a growing service sector and science based economy. To support this Nottingham has clear deliverable ambitions. The city's Enterprise Zone has the potential to create 10,000 jobs, located on a tram route this could potentially link to a HSR Station. An Office Review carried out in the City predicts that Nottingham will need to find employment space for an extra 13,000 workers in the business services sector alone over the next 15 years and the health sector providing a further 9,000 jobs.

1.2 The quality of Nottingham's workforce has recently been recognised with the city being ranked as the second best micro city in Europe in terms of human resources, this is in addition as being ranked as a leading European city of the future¹.

1.3 The Greater Nottingham area is a designated Growth Point. By 2028 around 50,000 new homes will be built. Nottingham will be providing local infrastructure and ensuring there are jobs for the growing population. To support this, there is a need for national infrastructure to link people and businesses to other Core Cities and London to allow people to get to and from Nottingham to support economic growth.

¹ FDI European Cities and Regions of the Future 2012/13

1.4 Nottingham has the scale and density to grow much more rapidly if it can address some of its barriers to economic growth. High quality rail links integrated with an award winning public transport (bus and tram) network connecting the Station to the City Centre and the surrounding built up area, means that high levels of sustainable accessibility are achieved.

1.5 There is an urgent need to address the current economic down-turn and to ensure that measures are implemented are sustainable, to allow for long term growth. To help do this Nottingham has produced The Nottingham Economic Growth Plan (copy supplied with submission). This plan demonstrates to citizens and businesses in Nottingham or who are thinking of locating here, the actions we will undertake to attract investment and create jobs, highlighting what the private and public sector can do to create jobs.

2. How transport will support business competitiveness

2.0 It is clear Nottingham is a major city with huge potential to grow further. The challenge is to maintain and grow Nottingham's economic output in line with comparator UK and European cities. It is clear that transport has a key role to play in this, the Chamber of Commerce lists transport and particularly improved rail connections as a top priority to encourage business growth.

2.1 Locally we are delivering a world class public transport network with major investments in bus and tram services and leading nationally on the introduction of a Work Place Parking Levy to contribute local investment into these services. A key scheme for the city is Nottingham Station 'the Hub'. This £69 million redevelopment of Nottingham Station will put it at the heart of the transport network, providing interchange with all modes of transport including the soon to be expanded Nottingham Express Transit tram system.

2.2 With the support of national infrastructure Nottingham can truly deliver, through the agglomeration benefits of being connected to the other major UK and European economies.

2.3 Through the construction of high quality infrastructure it will enable and encourage innovation and investment and encourage the private sector in Nottingham to grow. This in turn will lead to high quality jobs for a skilled labour force which emanates in part from the City's two Universities and burgeoning health sector.

3. The Midland Main Line – an urgent priority

3.0 The Midland Main Line (MML) is currently Nottingham's rail link to the Capital and this falls well short of the standard of journey time and level of investment on other classic main line services.

3.1 HSR will not come to Nottingham until 2032 and the City cannot be expected to put up with the sub standard connections to London and the north that are currently provided via the MML. Nottingham needs good national connections to London and other core cities now in order to remain competitive. Addressing the line speed issues of the Midland Main Line ahead of electrifying the route is the best way in the short to medium term to allow this.

3.2 There is clear evidence that additional capacity is needed on the MML to support sustainable economic growth. Within the area covered by the East Midlands Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) demand forecasts predict by 2019 an average growth of 28% in numbers between London and the RUS area, in addition to a predicted 40% growth in travel to

Birmingham over the same period². This is well before HSR will come to Nottingham, highlighting the need to invest now.

3.3 Network Rail has recognised this and we will continue to work with them to ensure the immediate start on all required upgrades to the line to reduce the journey time between Nottingham and London to 90 minutes. Once this work is complete the line should then be electrified in order to save the industry money, improve reliability and reduce rail's carbon output – all of which are key government targets.

4. HSR – planning for the future

4.0 Nottingham City Council is strongly supportive of the national 'Y' High Speed Rail (HSR) network and this support has been demonstrated with submissions to the Transport Select Committee and to the Government's formal consultation. (We would be happy to provide copies if required). But this support is clearly on the basis that Nottingham, as a driver of the East Midlands economy is well connected to the HSR network.

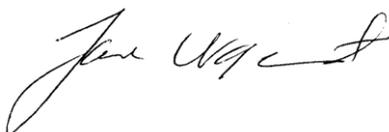
4.1 Railways can carry large numbers of people quickly for a much lower carbon cost than the strategic road and motorway network. The commitment to invest in the HSR network is a clear demonstration by the Government that they are working towards achieving both economic growth and carbon reduction.

4.2 To remain competitive with other developed nations it is essential that the UK embraces the latest rail technology and follows world leaders in HSR, China, Spain, Japan and France to implement a comprehensive high speed network serving the Country's main cities and economic drivers.

4.3 Nottingham City Council strongly believes a HSR network is needed for the benefit of the national economy. HSR is the best and only way to provide for the longer term strategic connections to in order to grow the economy whilst minimising the environmental impact of travel.

4.4 HSR will link core cities to each other, Heathrow and other airports improving international links. If HSR is to deliver on its potential the full network must be built and the East Midlands Station must be located to benefit from strong links to the bus, tram and classic rail network. It is inevitable and welcomed that the HSR Station will encourage growth around the Station location but it is essential that the Station is located to ensure that Nottingham, the major economy of the East Midlands fully capitalises on the investment.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Jane Urquhart
Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation

² East Midlands Route Utilisation Strategy (Network Rail 2010)