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**Sent:** 17 March 2016 08:50

**Subject:** HS2 Update

All,

Transport and connectivity are high on the national agenda this week. I thought it would be helpful to consider what the announcements mean for Leeds and the city region.

I was pleased to see Lord Adonis' [National Infrastructure Commission report on northern connectivity](#) recognise Leeds' economic impact as the third biggest UK city, and also highlight the opportunities and benefits of Leeds and Manchester joining economic forces. HS3/Northern Powerhouse Rail will reduce travel time and increase capacity between the two cities, and the commitment of £300m to kick start this and other key northern transport schemes is welcome.

To make the most of this opportunity and the enormous potential of the north, we must ensure that the Leeds-Manchester core connects into the wider Leeds City Region, and east to Hull, south to Sheffield and north to the Tees Valley and Newcastle. We're making that city-region connectivity case strongly to Government.

The role of HS2 in this is also key. As John Cridland, Chair, Transport for the North, noted: "Not only will HS2 transform connectivity from the North to London, the Midlands and Scotland, in certain locations it will play an important part in delivering the Northern Powerhouse Rail Vision."

Phase one of the HS2 Bill moves into the Third Reading in Parliament next week, a key milestone and an opportunity for us to continue to make the case for this investment. Please add your voices to this and highlight the impact HS2 will have for jobs and economic growth for this generation and the next.

HS2 will relieve the immediate demand and capacity pressures experienced by passengers and business freight users in Britain every day; and will improve productivity in the North and the Midlands by creating a step change in connectivity. Addressing both these issues is vital to rebalancing the national economy and creating a catalyst for growth across the country.

The benefits of HS2 can already be felt as investors factor it in to their plans, and Leeds will continue to grasp the opportunities it brings. Today Leeds City Council has announced a 'call for ideas' on South Bank Leeds and launched the new website [www.southbankleeds.co.uk](http://www.southbankleeds.co.uk) We welcome your ideas and thoughts about the area – one of Europe's largest regeneration areas, and the site for the HS2 Yorkshire Hub – as we move into the final stages of developing a masterplan. We are keen to encourage early visible improvements to add to the huge educational investment being made in the two colleges, free school and University Technical College, ideas to capitalise on the catalytic effect of Burberry's arrival and the HS2 station, connections to nearby communities, liveability and shouting loudly about this brilliant opportunity to shape the city! Please share your views by email to [southbank@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:southbank@leeds.gov.uk) or contact me to arrange a conversation.

Best wishes

Tom

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