



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **North Wales Rail Services**

DATE **25 September 2014**

BY **Edwina Hart, Minister for Economy, Science and Technology**

This statement provides an update on improvements to rail services in North Wales.

Following the UK Government's announcement in July about the upgrade to the Halton Curve railway line, I wrote to the Secretary of State for Transport seeking further information on the project. In response the Secretary of State for Transport has confirmed that the Government is providing £10.4 million in support of the Liverpool City Region Growth Deal to fund the reinstatement of the Halton Curve. This will enable passenger services from North Wales and West Cheshire to directly access Liverpool City Centre and Liverpool John Lennon Airport.

The scheme is currently being developed by Network Rail and detailed proposals are expected to be available early next year. Subject to sign off, the UK Government has indicated that the scheme will be delivered in 2016/17.

The scheme has been identified as a priority by the Ministerial Task Force on North Wales Transport and is likely to make a significant difference to travellers on both sides of the border. The reintroduction of the Halton Curve will allow for more flexibility in rail services in that area and we have commissioned a study in conjunction with Merseytravel to assess demand and MerseyTravel have separately commissioned further work to develop options.

Furthermore, over the summer I responded to the UK Government's consultation on the TransPennine Express and Northern Rail Franchises. Good connectivity between Wales and the North of England is very important to sustaining and developing regional economies, and I am keen that all opportunities are taken to strengthen this connectivity during the process of renewing the franchises. My response raised issues around connectivity with services to and from Wales, the Wales and Borders services to and from Manchester, the TransPennine Express services, security and safety, passenger experience and Active Travel.