



# Press Release

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## **CECA: Cancelling HS2 To The North Would Make Britain A “Laughing Stock”**

Contractors have said that rumours that the UK Government plans to axe the Northern parts of HS2 - if verified - suggest that it has given up on its infrastructure agenda.

Overnight reports have emerged that the Chancellor and Prime Minister are considering options to cancel the second phase of HS2, which was expected to deliver high speed rail to Manchester.

HS2 has been in planning for more than a decade and secured Parliamentary approval on the back of plans to serve the north of England, unlocking vital capacity on overstretched northern rail routes.

Now this all appears to be under threat, with reports suggesting the Government are looking to scrap this work in favour of tax cuts ahead of the next General Election.

Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA) chief executive Alasdair Reisner said: “In recent years, the Government has taken successive chunks out of its proposed plans for HS2. We are now at the point where very little of the northern elements that were originally put forward are now looking set to go ahead.

“Cancellation of such a nationally-significant project will level down rather than level up, massively undermining the ability of the UK economy as a whole to grow, and threaten delivery of Net Zero by 2050.

“In simple terms, a decision to axe the northern sections of HS2 would mean that we are unlikely to see high speed rail in the North anytime in the first half of this century.

“No British Government has made such a short-sighted and self-harming decision since Harold Wilson’s administration stopped work on the Channel Tunnel in the mid-1970s.

“Cancelling the second leg of HS2 would not only make the UK an international laughing stock: it will actively undermine the life-chances of generations of Britons, harm our ability to fight climate change, and destroy trust in politics to deliver on a better future for us all.”

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### Notes to Editors

1. The Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA) represents over 300 contractors of all sizes, covering approximately 80% of the civil engineering market in Great Britain. Our members build infrastructure that provides the basis for economic sustainability and quality of life in communities across the country.

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