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for Transport

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From the Secretary of State
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Our Ref:

Thank you for your letter dated 29 September 2015.

I am grateful to you for your work to review and re-plan Network Rail's enhancements portfolio. While I understand and accept that your review is not yet complete, I am pleased that you have been able to give me an early plan for the TransPennine and Midland Mainline electrification schemes which we paused in June. I have always been clear that these schemes were paused and not cancelled and I am now accepting your advice that work can be re-started. As these two important electrification schemes will connect our great cities with modern, faster and more reliable railways and help create a Northern Powerhouse, I would be grateful if they could be un-paused with immediate effect and progressed with some urgency.

This work will sit alongside new TransPennine and Northern rail franchise awards which will be announced in December. I expect these to deliver additional benefits to the travelling public and will see the replacement of the outdated Pacer trains, significantly improve capacity and introduce additional services.

I recognise that there is more work to do on your overall re-plan and that successful delivery of these projects has some cost implications. As you say, it is right that Network Rail are as ambitious as possible in seeking to meet pressures from within existing resources in the first instance, before making a call for additional public funds. I look forward to the conclusion of your work in this area as we head into the Spending Review, and to receiving your full report which remains on track for publication in November.

RT. HON. PATRICK McLOUGHLIN MP