



## CONSULTATION RUNS UNTIL JULY 29TH 2011

The HS2 Consultation ends on July 29th.  
The Transport Select Committee are also evaluating HS2.  
Stop this appalling waste of money by getting involved.

In our February newsletter we warned that despite the Public Announcement of the Preferred Route 3 going to Consultation, there was still a danger that HS2 could be re-routed across the Hughenden Valley, through North Dean, under Speen and through Risborough.

On February 28th, the HS2 Consultation was launched and this runs until July 29th. As previously advised, HS2 Ltd are running a series of roadshows along the Preferred Route and a leaflet is available giving details of the Alternative Route, which we have reproduced on pages 3 & 4 of this newsletter.

We are concerned that the purpose of the Alternative Route information may be to try to influence people to respond to the consultation and suggest that Route 2.5 through this area should be adopted instead of the preferred route. If this were to happen, there will be no further consultation.

As you will know, the Speen Area Action Group and the Federation against HS2 - of which we are active members - is fighting High Speed Rail outright.

It makes no sense financially or environmentally, nor will it do anything for regional development. Despite Government manipulation of the business case, an increasing body of evidence from across the country and from

respected organisations such as the Adam Smith Institute shows that passenger numbers are greatly inflated, time saved and its value exaggerated and jobs created are not new but redistributed, mostly around London. Insufficient consideration has been given to a perfectly viable alternative by upgrading the West Coast Main Line at 10% of the cost, which can be implemented in line with real demand and with dramatically less disruption.

Despite this, HS2 remains a Government vanity project, but we still believe that with your support and involvement, another U-turn can be created.

On page 2, we show some points to summarise the arguments we believe can be made against each question in the Consultation if you want to respond right now. However, you might want to wait, as we are preparing some more detailed response material, based on work by the High Speed 2 Action Alliance and others. This will be made available on the Speen website, and we are also planning to hold a **Public Meeting at the Speen Village Hall on May 10th at 8:00 p.m.**

You will also be able to visit the local HS2 roadshows, which are being held as below:

Chalfont St Giles Blizzards	9 <sup>th</sup> May
Aylesbury	
Stoke Mandeville Stadium	10-11 May
Great Missenden Link Road	12 May

Wendover Memorial Hall	13-14 May
Amersham & Chiltern RFC	18-19 May

These roadshows are meant to show the benefits of HS2, but people who have attended early events suggest that staff have little real understanding of the issues and are simply repeating standard messages.

At the Public Meeting, we will present the latest details on HS2, and be happy to answer any questions you might have, before attending the roadshows or completing your consultation responses.

As a result of significant campaigning pressure and previous submissions to the Transport Select Committee, an enquiry has been launched which seeks submissions on the strategic case for High Speed 2 by **May 16th**. This is an additional opportunity to influence the Government on HS2 - please visit Speen website for more details.

We have two key opportunities to get our voices heard;  
- Transport Select Committee by May 16th  
- HS2 Consultation by July 29th

Do not let these pass without comment, and don't forget the Public Meeting on **May 10th at 8:00 p.m. Speen Village Hall**

# High Speed 2 Consultation - Suggested key points for responses

**Q.1** This question is about strategy and the wider context: **Do you agree that there is a strong case for enhancing the capacity and performance of British intercity rail network to support economic growth over the coming decade?**

**SAAG believes the answer is No - in the context of HS2 being the only solution being presented for consideration**

- Rational increases in demand can be met by developing the West Coast Main Line under Rail Package 2 proposals which will cost less than 1/10 the cost of HS2, create minimal environmental impact and provide a scalable solution for the foreseeable future.
- Alternative scenarios have not been developed to evaluate the benefits of this investment, for example versus improvements in commuter services or road transport
- Despite Government claims, there is no real evidence that HS2 will be in the public interest or improve the North/South divide - most of the economic advantage accrues to London and the South East, using HS2's own published data.
- We believe that large scale enhancement to the rail network should only be done in a way that ensures the rail network will cause significantly lower carbon emissions after the enhancement takes place - HS2 is carbon neutral.

**Q.2** This question is about the case for High Speed Rail: **Do you agree that a national high speed rail network from London to Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester (the Y network) would provide best value for money?**

**SAAG believes the answer is No**

- Rail Package 2 offers a cheaper alternative to addressing reasonable estimates of future demand, therefore this high speed rail network does not provide the best value for money.
- As the Consultation does not provide sufficient details of alternative solutions and different scenarios for future demand growth - simply taking an extreme growth case, by definition it is not possible to determine whether this is the best value for money.
- Overall domestic travel shows signs of saturation for both short and long distance journeys, the DfT's rail demand forecasts are excessive and take no account of impacts from high speed internet connectivity on future travel trends.

**Q.3** This question is about how to deliver the Government's proposed network: **Do you agree with the Government's proposals for the phased roll-out of a national high speed network, and for links to Heathrow Airport and the High Speed 1 line to the Channel Tunnel?**

**SAAG believes the answer is No**

- A valid case for investment in a high speed rail network has not been made by the Government.
- The current business case is for the London to Birmingham phase only. That business case is flawed. There should be a business case for the entire HS2 programme before decisions to commit £bn are made.
- Alternative improvements to the rail system, such as Rail Package 2 (RP2), would not involve phasing because they cost significantly less money than the £33bn which the Government proposes spending on HS2 to Leeds and Manchester.
- There is no expert evidence that a modal shift from domestic air travel to rail will occur if HS2 is connected to Heathrow or HS1.

**Q.4** This question is about the specification for the line between London and the West Midlands: **Do you agree with the principles and specification used by HS2 Ltd to underpin its proposals for new high speed rail lines and the route selection process HS2 Ltd undertook?**

**SAAG believes the answer is No**

- International experts agree that for high speed trains to be really worth building, the distance between stations should be at least 150km. Britain is a small island compared to other European countries with high speed rail and its major cities are closer together. By the time the proposed route has got out of London to an area where trains can run at maximum speed, the distance will be far less than 150km. Hence the speed chosen by the DfT and HS2 Ltd is not suitable for Britain.
- The 1<sup>st</sup> phase HS2 would not be delivered till 2026, whereas alternatives can deliver needed capacity much more quickly.

**Q.5** This question is about the route for the line between London and West Midlands: **Do you agree that the Government's proposed route, including the approach for mitigating its impacts, is the best option for a new high speed rail line between London and the West Midlands?**

**SAAG believes the answer is No**

- If there was a sound business or environmental case for building a high speed railway at all (this question being the subject of a Transport Select Committee Inquiry), there may be some justification for the question - as it stands, there is not. Therefore, as the principles upon which the entire project are invalid, any question concerning route selection is invalid.

**Q.6** This question is about the appraisal of Sustainability: **Do you wish to comment on the Appraisal of Sustainability of the Government's proposed route between London and West Midlands?**

**SAAG's comments:**

- Chapter 5 of the Consultation has a short summary of the Appraisal of Sustainability: the actual document is extensive. However, despite the length of that document the Environmental Impact Assessment has not yet been published. It is therefore inappropriate to ask this question, and potentially proceed with a major infrastructure project without such detailed assessment, particularly as it is already known that HS2 threatens 160 wildlife sites: there will also be loss of 21 ancient woods, in existence since 1600 AD, and huge swathes of agricultural land. Vibration will impact on a further 27 woodlands. The HS2 route goes through 4 Wildlife Trust reserves and 10 Sites of Scientific Interest. There will be irreparable damage to the Chiltern aquifer which supplies water to millions of homes in London and the South East.
- There are no proven savings in CO2 emissions because of the speed and resultant power consumption of the trains, and despite the rhetoric, as accepted by HS2's Sustainability Report, there will be no significant modal shift from air or car travel to trains.
- The construction period and its aftermath will have a significant, detrimental and permanent impact on the leisure and tourism industry along the entire route.

**Q.7** This question is about blight and compensation: **Do you agree with the options set out to assist those whose properties lose a significant amount of value as a result of any new high speed line?**

**SAAG believes the answer is No.**

- This is the second time the Government has consulted the public on blight associated with HS2. It has indicated that a further consultation will take place in 2012. Further consultations will take place for the second phase to Manchester and Leeds.
- The Consultation suggests there may be a different compensation scheme for areas affected by the second phase. The idea that people in different parts of the country will receive different compensation packages is unfair.
- Vibration and noise will blight homes. There is no compensation in place for the many homes/businesses which will be blighted by noise and vibration

# Alternative Routes Considered “Route 2.5”

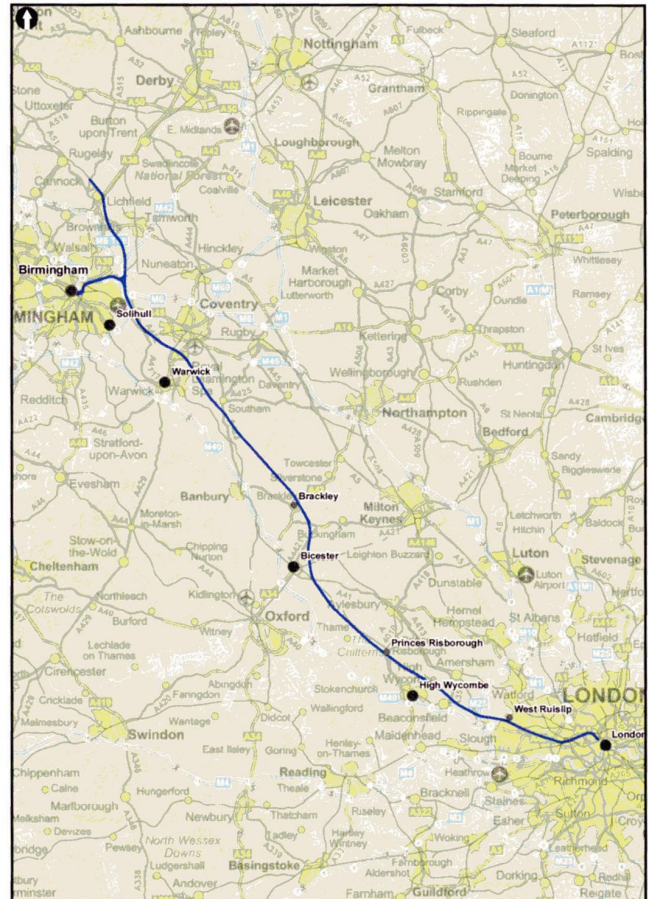
Find out here about an alternative route for HS2 (London to West Midlands) that we looked at when developing options including:

- a description of this alternative route; and
- key factors considered for this route.

## The Line of Route in Detail

This would offer a potential alternative route through the Chilterns AONB. It would be the same as the proposed Route 3 between Euston and West Ruislip, where it would diverge to pass Beaconsfield and High Wycombe on their eastern sides, entering the Chilterns AONB near Seer Green and continuing at surface level (including a number of short viaducts). It would avoid impacts on other areas of habitation by means of two long tunnels through the remainder of the Chilterns AONB separated by a new 720 metre viaduct to span the lower reaches of the Hughenden Valley. The route would surface north of the Chilterns, outside the AONB to the west of Princes Risborough, then strike north to rejoin the proposed Route 3 and the former Great Central corridor south of Brackley.

## Alternative “Route 2.5”



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## Key factors considered

### Cost

- It would be around £800 million (including risk) more expensive to construct than the proposed route.

### Demand

- Journey times would be around a minute and a half longer than the proposed route, which would reduce the benefits of HS2.

### Sustainability

- Route 2.5 would follow the same alignment as the proposed route from Euston to West Ruislip and from Brackley to the West Midlands, therefore would have the same impacts in terms of sustainability from our proposed Route 3 along these sections.
- The differences between the two are chiefly their effects in the Chilterns. Route 2.5 would have a shorter distance on the surface in the Chilterns AONB, but it would cut a new transport corridor through the landscape whereas Route 3 follows the existing A413 corridor. Route 2.5 also requires a 700 metre viaduct, up to 22 metres high, across the Hughenden Valley. This would cause a large number of people to be affected by noise in that valley. It would also affect views of the valley.

- This route would also have more significant impacts on townscapes than Route 3, including around Haddenham, Ilmer, Chearsley, Dorton and Kingsey. The tunnel under Gerrards Cross would be likely to require a vent shaft in or close to the town. A further 50 properties were estimated to be demolished including 30 residential dwellings.
- In March 2010 it was estimated that around 3,500 properties might be annoyed by noise.

## If you would like more detail on this topic

Please visit our website – <http://highspeedrail.dft.gov.uk/> – where you will see the "High Speed Rail: Investing in Britain's Future – Consultation" and all the documentation published alongside it, as well as detailed maps of the proposed route between London and the West Midlands and images and visualisations.