

Responding to the HS2 Consultation Questions

This is your opportunity to make your opinions heard!

- Please go to the Government's HS2 Roadshow at the Wendover Memorial Hall on **13th/14th May** and ask questions.
- Afterwards take part in the public consultation by answering the seven consultation questions.
- Do this online at **<http://highspeedrail.dft.gov.uk>** or in writing (you can collect a paper Response Form from the Roadshow or by telephoning 0300 321 1010).
- N.B. The online response form has a limit of 2000 characters per question.
- As well as individuals, it is important that local businesses, interest groups & Parish Councils also respond.
- The most effective submissions will be those that address the details of the plan and offer evidence to support their views.
- Do not reproduce these answers exactly as shown – **please use your own words otherwise your response may be discounted.**
- It is vital that everyone affected responds to the consultation **before 29th July 2011.**



Question 1:

Do you agree that there is a strong case for enhancing the capacity and performance of Britain's intercity rail network to support economic growth over the coming decade?

Answer:

The case is not yet proven. As yet, I do not have sufficient evidence to prove that spending the large sums of taxpayers' money demanded by the HS2 current plans will support economic growth in any area of the UK & particularly in those areas most in need. Some benefits such as value of time saved require closer examination. Britain already has good inter-city high speed links between London, the Midlands and further North. I am not convinced that the forecast demand for extra capacity will materialise. So, no, with the information available to me, there is not a strong case for this project.

- **No compelling case for Ultra High Speed - increases environmental impacts and risk for no real benefit**
- **Timing is wrong for the country, the economy and the voter - we cannot afford it!**
- **Cheaper alternatives exist to provide rail capacity e.g. additional rolling stock on West Coast Main Line (WCML)**
- **Will not solve North South divide but will attract jobs to London and connecting cities rather than disperse them, so London is the overall winner.**
- **Does not explain how HS2 will deliver economic growth**
- **Ignores freight and the opportunity to get lorries off the roads**
- **Will not eliminate domestic air travel.**
- **Better investments to provide growth are available, e.g. high speed broadband, funded apprenticeships etc**
- **The benefits of a HS network reportedly achieved in other countries will not be replicated in the UK because of geography and existing infrastructure**
- **Strategic weaknesses – the plan should be aimed at diverting car journeys to rail, therefore it needs to stop at population centres e.g. Milton Keynes, rather than HS2's focus on new journeys**

- **Environmentally, HS2 is not aligned to our goals of CO2 emission reductions - it adds to the problem. No environmental case has been made for this proposal**

Question 2:

Do you agree that a national high speed rail network from London to Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester (the Y network) would provide the best value for money solution (best balance of costs and benefits) for enhancing rail capacity and performance?

Answer:

On the information available to me, I cannot agree this would provide a best value for money solution. Not enough evidence is given of other route options for me to answer this question. Business and leisure travel demands should be separated, not simply stated as capacity. In addition to the information given in the Consultation Documents, I need to know what other options have been considered, and their costs. I do not have any information on the proposals for any other discounted route options or whether starting an HS rail network at a location other than London has been considered.

- **Business case is flawed and provides no supportive basis for investing such a huge sum of money**
- **Benefit based on *businesspeople not doing productive work* when travelling, which is patently wrong**
- **There are cheaper alternatives to addressing capacity e.g. *more coaches on the WCML***
- **It is unaffordable – it will starve other transport projects and wider projects**
- **The demand case is seriously overstated**
- **As is the Benefit Cost Ratio**
- **Costs understated e.g. interest charges are not included**
- **Commercially it will lose money as happens with HS1**
- **Trains and scheduling are unproven at proposed speeds and frequency**
- **The proposal ignores tilting trains and the banking of rails which would allow a more flexible route**
- **Other rail planned developments which help capacity *are ignored* e.g. Chiltern Railways Evergreen project**
- **The plan asks for a decision on the *whole route* without providing the detail and impacts of the *whole route***

Question 3:

Do you agree with the Government's proposals for the phased roll-out of a national high speed rail network, and for links to Heathrow Airport and the HS1 line to the Channel Tunnel?

Answer:

I do not agree with the current proposals as outlined in the Consultation Document, which begin with the London-Birmingham link. We already have a good high speed rail service between those 2 cities; therefore the greatest advantages, if there are any to be realised, will only come into play if the line succeeds in travelling further north. Links to Heathrow, HS1, the Channel Tunnel and London do not all have to be provided in the same way. Links between the rest of the UK and London are already good. These plans have not been properly thought through and further options should be explored before any money is committed to any high speed network.

- **No compelling business, environmental or strategic case has been made for this High Speed network**
- **Better linkage if it had a terminal at Heathrow rather than a spur**
- **Better value and approach to leverage existing rail network**
- **Less disruption if it followed major transport routes e.g. the M1 or M40 corridors**
- **Property blight will run into decades**
- **Alternatives would offer less disruption e.g. additional WCML carriages or Chiltern Line upgrade**
- **Working hours need to be restricted – Government has not explained how this will be done**
- **Construction site compounds will blight the countryside for years**
- **Construction traffic congestion will cause major disruption through small towns and villages all along the line**
- **There is no information as to how noise, dust and vibrations will be controlled during the construction process.**

Question 4:

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?

Answer:

No, I do not agree. The basic principles adopted by HS2 Ltd were *flawed* with an overriding emphasis on speed and time saving at the expense of all aspects of the environment. Environmentally this proposal makes the Carbon Emissions challenge even harder once you add in the CO2 emissions associated with the construction of the line. Noise increases with speed and will be a major issue.

- **Route selection was based solely on speed and straightness**
- **Unproven operational reliability of signalling, safety processes and systems**
- **Ignored AONB, green belt, farming land, footpaths, ancient monuments and listed buildings in route planning**
- **It will blight whole communities with noise, dust, vibration and pollution**
- **HS2 trains travel at 250mph, over 60mph faster than HS1 and yet there is no rail service currently in operation anywhere in the world travelling above 220mph.**
- **The UK population is being used as a guinea pig for this High Speed Rail experiment with untried technology**
- **Classic compatible trains require a design variant with associated development risk**
- **Design risk leading to project overspend due to HS2's desire to go faster than anyone else**
- **The route does not follow transport corridors as good planning dictates**
- **As rails wear, trains will not be able to run as fast but will be noisier**

Question 5:

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

Answer:

No, I do not agree for the reasons given in Q4 and because strategically it fails to address the issue of moving people away from car journeys and onto trains. The route is wrong and without a link to Heathrow it will not capture the large number of domestic airline movements which the business case needs to justify its existence. The mitigation has failed to address sufficiently the issues and impacts that this flawed approach has driven

- **There will be a huge noise pollution impact on some communities e.g. Wendover**
- **More tunnels should be offered to mitigate the impacts from both a noise and visual perspective**
- **Adopting tilting technology and minimal banking would allow more flexibility in route enabling the route to avoid sensitive areas.**
- **Recent mitigation reports fail to provide criteria for cost benefits of tunnels**
- **HS2 has failed to provide detailed noise and other impacts which people can understand**
- **Route is driven by proposed solely by High Speed; its only rationale is to save time so that spurious benefits can be claimed (e.g. because it has been determined that businessmen do not work on trains!)**
- **Has not attempted to minimise impacts on people and communities**
- **Does not follow transport corridors as good planning dictates**
- **Rail Package 2 offers a better alternative as it is suggested that there other ways of providing rail capacity on an incremental basis, which do not destroy the environment and have a better Benefit Cost Ratio.**
- **How many other AONB's will be impacted north of Birmingham e.g. Peak District, Lake District, the Dales?**
- **Normal High Speed Rail speeds would allow more flexibility in the route.**

Question 6:

Do you wish to comment on the Appraisal of Sustainability of the Government's proposed route between London and the West Midlands that has been published to inform this consultation?

Answer:

Yes, but the lack of a proper Environmental Impact Analysis until after the decision has been taken underlines the point that HS2 Ltd and the Department for Transport do not take environmental issues seriously. There is a lack of clarity and information on the noise impacts of this proposal. What little information that has been made available is insufficient to make a rational judgement. For example the noise maps that have been provided fail to show the true impact of the proposal. Sound barriers will result in unsightly screens.

- **No regard appears to have been taken for the landscape or the environment.**
- **The vague information on jobs "created" does not clearly identify them as transfers - they are not new additions.**
- **There is no readily available information on the likely impact on the environment, the landscape or communities during the construction process.**

There are four main areas for concern:

- **Carbon emissions:** normal HS trains produce 35% more emissions than equivalent car journeys, and HS2 even more. Including emission during construction it will add substantially to the UK's carbon emissions
- **Noise:** HS2 will produce 95dBs at 25 metres - normal speech is 40dBs – any mitigating efforts will produce unsightly walls and barriers across the countryside. High noise levels will be inflicted on residents both during construction and then operation. We need to see the noise maps. How will noise targets be policed and operators controlled if they exceed them?
- **Destruction of the landscape:** Impact on the Chilterns and Green Belt land. It impacts national paths (e.g. The Ridgeway) and closes 79 rights of way in Bucks alone. Other protected areas and historic building may be at risk as it goes North
- **Biodiversity and the ecosystem:** Destruction of habitat will threaten rare species and result in losing many trees. It will cut through 23km of high grade farmland. Huge visual impact - Track is 75m wide including a 25m non-vegetation zone on each side. There will be viaducts over flood plains.

Question 7:

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?

Answer:

No, I do not agree. The consultation document (Annex A) only promises existing statutory mechanisms which are not generous

- **There is a lack of any meaningful information and hard facts on the so-called discretionary support that may or may not be available.**
- **The Government has talked about being generous over the matter of compensation but this is not evidenced to date**
- **We, and many other communities, are already suffering from property blight**
- **There is *no apparent compensation* for the disruption, noise and pollution that will impact communities during the construction process.**

You can respond to the consultation questions online at

<http://highspeedrail.dft.gov.uk>

or you can post a completed Response Form to:

Freepost RSLX-UCGZ-UKSS
High Speed Rail Consultation
PO Box 59528
LONDON
SE21 9AX

Closing date is **29th July 2011**