



ASSOCIATION of TRAIN OPERATING COMPANIES

**Association of Train Operating Companies
Response to High Speed Rail: Investing in Britain's Future - Consultation**

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Contact details:

Michael Roberts
Chief Executive
Association of Train Operating Companies
40 Bernard Street
London WC1N 1BY
Michael.roberts@atoc.org

Part 1

Question 1

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

Yes. The development of high speed rail and in particular High Speed 2 (HS2), with the Y-shaped network that the Government proposes, can provide much-needed additional capacity on the rail network and offers the prospect of a significant improvement in city to city journey times. It sets a clear, long-term plan that will help bring significant journey time gains not only between London and many regions of the country, including the Midlands, the North West, Yorkshire, the North East and Scotland, but also between the Midlands and the conurbations of the central belt. It will release capacity on all three of the existing North – South main line corridors (the West Coast, Midland and East Coast Main Lines).

Beyond these immediate impacts, a high speed rail network of this kind would provide substantial, broader benefits in development and environmental terms. In particular, it would:

- improve the economic development of the regions served, increase their competitiveness and reduce their peripherality;
- contribute to the country's longer-term environmental goals by attracting passengers from air and car, whilst also taking the pressure off runway capacity in London and the South East; and
- through the release of rail capacity, unlock the development of improved commuter and regional services on today's North-South main lines, particularly the West Coast, whilst permitting improvement in both the capacity and transit times of freight services. Achieving the latter would make a significant contribution to the development of the strategic freight network that the rail industry has been developing since 2007.

An important aspect of high speed service planning is the ability to operate trains beyond high speed lines, i.e. over the 'classic' network. Around two-thirds of the train-mileage operated by TGVs in France is on the classic network, with the trains using the high speed lines to reduce journey times on the main corridors. In Germany, the equivalent proportion for the ICE network is even higher. High speed trains based on advanced rail technology have the advantage of being compatible with the conventional rail network, so that they can use existing city centre stations or run through to destinations where new construction cannot be justified.

One of the principal benefits of a new high speed network in Britain would be the creation of additional capacity to meet the growing needs of passengers and freight customers across the network, both on high speed and 'classic' lines. A recent report by Greengauge 21 (of which ATOC is a member) on 'Capturing the benefits of HS2 on existing lines'¹ demonstrates that the building of HS2 would also allow the delivery of a wide range of improvements and increased capacity on traditional lines to the North West of London, in the West Midlands and beyond.

A wide package of regional benefits could be enabled by the release of capacity on the classic network that HS2 allows. The following improvements at regional stations exemplify what could be implemented – these would not be possible without HS2 and could not be delivered as effectively by a further upgrade of the West Coast Main Line e.g. Rail Package 2 (RP2):

- i) Trent Valley (Lichfield, Tamworth, Nuneaton) - regular, frequent services (every 30-minutes) to London and the North West.
- ii) Coventry - an improved package of, regular local and fast services to Birmingham; cross-country services to/from North West, the South doubled in frequency from hourly to 30-minutes; retention of a high frequency (30-minute) fast service to London Euston through use of more economic service options (e.g. shorter trains in off-peak); new north - south service options possible via Coventry (e.g.: between Nuneaton, Coventry, Kenilworth (new station) and Leamington/Stratford; between Coventry, Kenilworth (new station) and Bicester, High Wycombe & London Marylebone.)
- iii) Rugby – the present irregular or low frequency (hourly) services replaced by regular 30-minute services to London and the North West.
- iv) Northampton – peak hour service increased by 66% from three to five trains with a reduction of 13 minutes in the fastest journey time.
- v) Milton Keynes – fast, peak services to London increased by over 100% from four to nine trains per hour; introduction of regular (hourly/30 minutes) direct services to West Midlands, Manchester, Liverpool and Scotland; potential for, new journey opportunities on services to/from the new East – West Rail Link (Oxford – Milton Keynes - Bedford)
- vi) Watford - opportunities for regular frequency (30 minute) services to/from the West London Line and south London.

The impact of HS2 on freight services running on the classic network will also be positive. The release of capacity by the reduction of faster services will be exponential, since the speed of freight services will be more closely matched to that of the existing and new passenger services remaining on classic lines. This could, in effect, see the replacement of a fast service transferred from the classic network by both a new semi-fast regional service and an additional freight service.

¹ High Speed Rail – Capturing the benefits of HS2 on existing lines. Greengauge 21 February 2011.

The proposals under RP2, by contrast, would deliver only marginal improvements for passenger services, fail to make possible the significant package of regional service benefits outlined above and would not deliver any major improvements in freight capacity. Even if a more fundamental upgrade of the WCML was considered there are significant physical limits on what could be done: for example, construction of two new parallel tracks alongside the existing line would be impossible in some locations and the curvature of the route would still constrain line speeds to similar levels as those of today. It would bring further major disruption to the WCML and still require an expansion of capacity at Euston station for only marginal benefits when compared to HS2.

High speed rail can also deliver a form of transport that has the potential to be extremely low in terms of carbon consumption, as a consequence of the 'decarbonisation' of electricity supply which is being planned by Government to meet national carbon reduction targets. Analysis by ATOC for Greengauge 21² has shown that a journey by present high speed rail services generates only 33% of the CO2 emissions of a comparable car journey and 25% of the emissions of an equivalent journey by air and this advantage will widen over time. Although energy use increases with speed, the sophisticated design of high speed trains together with their high load factors substantially offsets this.

The case for HS2 is supported by recent trends in modal shift from domestic air routes to rail. ATOC's latest findings³ show that the delivery of improved, faster, rail services has led to a major transfer from air to rail. Between 2008 and 2010, the combined rail-air market share for rail on the London – Manchester corridor rose from 69% to 79%, whilst between London and Glasgow it rose from 12% to 20%. HS2 offers the prospect of further modal shift away from domestic air services, helping to mitigate the GB transport sector's carbon footprint.

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?

ATOC supports the Government's conclusion that the line should be planned as a Y-shaped network serving not only Birmingham but also Manchester, the East Midlands, Sheffield and Leeds. The earlier plans for a route to Birmingham alone would limit the benefits that high speed rail could bring; the plans for a Y-shaped network will deliver greater advantages, in particular by offering high speed services to and from Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and Sheffield. On these routes, today's current journey times of 2 to 2.5 hours to London can be reduced to 1 to 1.5 hours. The Y-shaped network with connections to Birmingham will also improve connectivity between many of the cities in England's central belt to underpin economic regeneration here as well.

The additional high-speed journey opportunities presented by the Y-shaped network between the Midlands and the conurbations in the central belt, both east and west of the Pennines can help tackle road congestion on routes between these centres. The main motorways in these areas, the M1 and M6, are already at capacity due to the high levels of short to medium distance traffic; beyond measures to promote a smoother flow of traffic, there are few alternatives to expand the motorways to accommodate further growth. By taking long

² Energy consumption and CO2 impacts of High Speed Rail: ATOC analysis for Greengauge 21, ATOC, April 2009

³ "Shift from air to rail heralds 'turning point' in how people travel between UK's main cities" ATOC, 5 April 2011.

distance traffic from the motorways, HS2 offers a sustainable alternative to more substantial measures to expand road capacity which otherwise might be needed.

The Y-shaped network will also allow full consideration of the Government's commitment to explore further options with the Scottish Government for reducing journey times to and from Scotland, although we expect that the costs involved here are likely to mean that the trade-off will be between new route construction and selective upgrades of the existing routes. The Y-shape network will also allow Scotland to gain some immediate journey time benefits from the first stage project now being consulted on, with Anglo-Scottish expresses able to use the new high-speed line south of the Trent Valley and further savings would be possible once the Y-shaped network reaches the North West.

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 High Speed 1 line to the Channel Tunnel?

ATOC fully supports a phased roll-out and supports the plan that the second phase of the programme will include a spur to Heathrow. The link to Heathrow should not be the primary objective as the main market will be for city centre to city centre journeys. The examples of France, Germany and Spain show that a high speed rail network can abstract air traffic without having stations directly at airports.⁴

ATOC notes that the proposed Crossrail Interchange station at Old Oak Common would provide links into the Central London business district, the City and to Heathrow. However, it believes the longer-term business case for all HS2 and most Great Western trains to call at this station needs to be examined carefully with consideration given to the impact on journey times and any benefit associated with the interchange opportunities created. The proposed strategy would undermine the journey time benefits of HS2 and lead to an increase in journey times on the Great Western from London to Reading, Bristol, South Wales and the South West if stops on all Great Western trains were introduced. In the future, following development of a Heathrow spur, some of the advantages of Old Oak Common as an HS2 interchange station for high speed services would naturally disappear and an overall balance therefore needs to be struck between interchange benefits, journey time disbenefits and the timing of any eventual direct link to Heathrow.

Thus connecting Heathrow to HS2 via a spur may make sense in the longer term, providing a sound business case is proven, which is why a phased approach is logical and will allow the high-speed market in Great Britain to develop. For Heathrow specifically, the spur solution will avoid the journey time penalty that diverting the high-speed line via the airport would have created and it could also unlock the potential for additional extensions of the high-speed network to the South and South West.

ATOC believes that the decision to carry out preparatory works for an eventual link to HS1 is important as, providing a good business case can be established, it will allow the development of journey opportunities into the wider European high speed network, not only from the Midlands and the North, but also from Heathrow, the West and the South West. The establishment of a link to HS1 will also accord closely with the EU's 2011 Transport White Paper objectives to complete a pan-European high-speed rail network⁵, enabling links into existing high speed services across the EU (e.g. to Lyon, Bordeaux, Amsterdam, Cologne and Frankfurt) .

⁴ The networks in France and Germany, for example, initially focussed on city to city centre traffic and were only extended to airports (specifically Lyon, Paris, Charles de Gaulle and Frankfurt) later on.

⁵ "Roadmap to a single European Transport Area" – EU Commission DG MOVE - http://ec.europa.eu/transport/strategies/2011_white_paper_en.htm

Part 2

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?

ATOC's only comment regarding the route is with regard to the London terminal. ATOC supports the Government's decision to base the London terminal of the high speed line at Euston. However, a comprehensive view is needed here of the additional demand this will pose for the already crowded tube network. One option that ATOC and Network Rail have looked at is the possible diversion of London Midland services at Willesden into the new Crossrail network. This would release track and platform capacity at Euston whilst bringing commuters directly into the West End rather than having to change onto tube and bus services. Such a project would potentially also permit the HS2 platforms to be accommodated within a smaller station 'footprint' due to the release of suburban platforms, facilitating reduced disruption during the station's rebuilding.

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?

ATOC has no comments on the impact mitigation strategy or the proposed 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?

ATOC has no comment on the sustainability appraisal of the proposed route.

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?

ATOC has no comment on the compensation packages being proposed for the new line.