# Data

<https://www.google.com/search?q=hs2&rlz=1C1GCEA_enGB857GB858&tbs=sbd:1,cdr:1,cd_min:1/1/2009,cd_max:12/31/2018&tbm=nws&ei=73QwXcNgiPaABtmRkrgB&start=0&sa=N&ved=0ahUKEwiDlJCiyr7jAhUIO8AKHdmIBBc4UBDy0wMINQ&biw=1280&bih=529&dpr=1.5>

search keyword

* hs2

## 2009

**20190519**

<https://www.railnews.co.uk/news/2009/05/19-longer-franchises.html>

comment

* running through services to hs1 when the link is made could be considered. and change at ashford international. The pendolino can do 140mph, its designed for it. so why not. the new trains for the Olympics is 140mph train, so why not. I understand the pendolino can run well over 150mph safely if on the right tracks as well, given hs2 is straight. why not do that, makes much more sense, than going into euston and walking down the road

**20091230**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/road-and-rail-transport/6911032/High-speed-rail-must-have-Easytrain-prices-says-Transport-Secretary.html>

High-speed rail must have pricing that suits all pockets, Lord Adonis, the Transport Secretary, has said.

If the Government goes ahead with high-speed rail plans, the services should be subject to airline-style, ''Easytrain'' pricing, he added.

Lord Adonis went on: ''I want Britain to be a pioneer in low-cost, mass-market high-speed rail.

''I want to see not just ''Easyjet'' but ''Easytrain'' - high-speed trains with airline-style pricing and mass market appeal so that high-speed rail is for all and not just the wealthy.''

Plans for a multibillion-pound north-south rail line with 250mph trains are due to be presented to the Government.

Contained in the report from a company set up by the Government, the plans will include a detailed route - exact to within 18 inches - of a brand-new line from central London to the West Midlands.

Operating from a huge, new station in central London, the 400-metre-long trains would carry 1,100 passengers in a project which could cost as much as £60 billion.

The station would be big enough to handle 14, and eventually 18 trains an hour, with 20,000 passengers travelling in and out every 60 minutes

The report, from the High Speed Two (HS2) company, will also present options for a high-speed line, or lines, north of Birmingham up to Scotland

If accepted by the Government, the first part of the line - from London to the West Midlands - could be up and running by 2025, with work starting on it in 2017

Talking about the report, Lord Adonis said: ''This is an important report which will shape the future of high-speed rail in this country. HSR has real potential to regenerate and reinvigorate.

''Our high-speed network lags behind that of many of our European neighbours and doesn't connect any of our major cities, but this report could change that.

''I am excited about the possibilities that HSR has to transform transport in this country for the better - providing environmental benefits, encouraging investment and boosting business and jobs.

''Scrutiny of the report will begin immediately and we will announce how we plan to take high-speed rail forward by the end of March - making 2010 the year of HSR in the UK.''

Comments - 0

Sd

## 2010

**20100311**

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/8561286.stm>

Plans for a new high-speed rail network, featuring 250mph trains, have been announced by Transport Secretary Lord Adonis.

The government is recommending a route for a new line between London and Birmingham with a future extension to northern England and Scotland

The public will be consulted on the proposed route, with work unlikely to start until 2017 at the earliest.

Network Rail said high-speed rail "can drive economic growth and boost jobs".

"Subject to this consultation, the London terminus for the high-speed line would be Euston, the Birmingham city centre station would be at Curzon Street, and there would be interchange stations with Crossrail west of Paddington and near Birmingham airport." –

Lord Adonis said the project would create 10,000 jobs and yield £2 in benefits for every £1 spent.

He said the first 120 miles between London and the West Midlands would cost between £15.8bn and £17.4bn.



The main opposition parties are also committed, in principle, to the need for a high-speed rail network

However, reaching the necessary political consensus for a particular route may prove to be difficult ahead of the general election

Shadow transport secretary Theresa Villiers said the Conservatives were not prepared to "blindly accept" the route proposed by ministers.

She added that if the Conservatives are elected to power, they would start work on the project in 2015 - two years earlier than the government's plan

Scotland's Transport Minister Stewart Stevenson said developing high speed rail to Scotland "is central to the economic case for high-speed rail in the UK".

Network Rail chief executive Iain Coucher said high-speed rail was "a vital part of a modern, dynamic economy".

He also said that it would "take cars and lorries off the road, cut domestic flights and release capacity on the existing rail network, transforming services even for those communities not served directly by a high-speed line.

"It is the low-carbon, sustainable transport of the future."

Michael Roberts, chief executive of the Association of Train Operating Companies (Atoc), said: "The commitment that all three parties have shown to HSR [high-speed rail] is a vote of confidence in the industry, and will help place train travel at the heart of a successful low-carbon economy.

"However, development of HSR in the UK has been left in the slow lane because of our fragmented, privatised system which puts short-term profits first and long-term, strategic planning a very poor second."

Patrick Begg, director for the National Trust's Thames and Solent region, said the proposed route could cause "serious and significant impacts on the landscape" of the Chilterns. –

"Like many people, we're yet to be convinced that the overall business case for HS2 - the high-speed line - stacks up environmentally, financially and socially."

He added: "The ability to turn up and travel remains a key attraction of Britain's railway. This new line, with fast frequent services could, with attractive fares, start to revolutionise intercity rail travel."

Comments - 0

**20100311**

<https://www.aboutmyarea.co.uk/Northamptonshire/Towcester/NN12/News/Local-News/157445-HS2-High-Speed-Rail-Link-To-Pass-Near-Brackley-In-South-Northants>

As you can see from the picture above the proposed route runs very close to Brackley and at first sight it looks like they have forgotten to bridge the A43

The Government today published its Command Paper response to the HS2 report, and in so doing set out the next stages of work for HS2 Ltd. As part of that next stage, Government has asked that the company now take forward further development of its recommendations for High Speed Two – a new line between London and the West Midlands – so that a full public consultation can be held in the Autumn.

High speed rail has enormous potential to benefit the UK, but the project will ever get going without public support – which is why it is so important that we now prepare thoroughly for a full public consultation that gives everybody the chance to state their views and make their voice heard, particularly those who may be directly affected by the line. That process of open engagement and dialogue will ultimately be as crucial to the success of High Speed Two as world-class engineering and construction

Having considered the HS2 report, the Government has today published its response, the Command Paper High Speed Rail. The response sets out a proposed strategy for a British high speed rail network. Alongside this response, the Government has also published HS2 Ltd’s report and supporting documents, including detailed maps

comments – 2

* pettifogger - Given the amount of disruption that HS2 will cause to the region, it is difficult to comprehend why there is no stop on the line between London and Birmingham. HS1 has three between London and the entrance to Eurotunnel, at Stratford, Gravesend and Ashford. I spent today thinking about where the station could be placed without a new road and infrastructure being required and yet the answer was close to my doorstep - Brackley. It has quick links to the M1 & M40, Silverstone on the doorstep and is close to what is destined to be the 10th largest city in the UK within 20 years. The politicians and planners need to wake up before there is yet another missed opportunity.
* Totally agree with pettifrogger we should be campaining to get a station at Brackley not moaning about the new line. When will the NIMBY's wake up to the opportunities HS2 offers to the region and towns like Brackley

**20100312**

<https://londonist.com/2010/03/hs2_has_terminal_consequences_aroun>

View the complete Mega Euston mapAs we remember saying, on the subject of where to fit a eight platform 400 meter long railway station in NW1, "the practical options are going to involve a trade-off between cost and what you can demolish with the minimum of fuss.

Well, it is March, and all has been revealed by Secretary of State for Train Geeks, Lord Adonis, and as we reported yesterday the 'winner' is good old Euston.HS2 Ltd's proposals are out and the promise of a 50 minute trip to Birmingham (and, more importantly, a 50 minute trip back to town) moves one step closer.

Euston will grow and become a 24 platform mega station (having settled on ten platforms for HS2), spreading out of it's current site to the south and west. So farewell ugly Network Rail buildings, The Ibis, St James' Gardens, the Cottage Hotel, The Bree Louise Pub and most of Cardington Street (you can take our tour round the condemned streets on Google Maps above).

Reading these detail packed pages you can almost imagine yourself in 2027 - standing in the great hall of a new Euston; a web of shiny, air-conditioned, carbon neutral, step-free transport connections reaching out in every direction...Alas, this report may join the sizable pile of similar documents in the National Archive's basement, as the vital consensus on High Speed 2 from all parties has failed to

The Conservative's policy calls for an 'Inverse S' serving Scotland and the North East via a two runway Heathrow, Birmingham and Leeds. With a timetable stretching out into the 2030s this project is going to need an agreement between Labour and the Conservatives, who welcomed the plans by calling them "a betrayal", "lacking in ambition" and unable to grasp "basic truths".

Strong basis for consensus then...Nevertheless, all parties agree with a London to Birmingham line being part of the HS2 - how about we just get on with this and then argue about the rest in 2027?

Comments – 2

* There is mention of the Euston Arch... Sir Terry Farrell in his bit on Euston Station says "I support the return of a reconstructed Euston Arch at the station's front door." Here's hoping...!
* Map marker links are broken here. And the text formatting seems to be lacking newlines

**20100315**

<https://www.bucksfreepress.co.uk/news/5061521.woman-stunned-by-plans-to-bulldoze-her-frith-hill-home-for-high-speed-trains/>

A TEARFUL resident whose home and workplace could be bulldozed to make way for a 250mph train line was in shock after the route was announced by the Government.

The 49-year-old said after Thursday's announcement: “This is completely devastating for me, it's unbelievable. I've put my life into this place and it's everything to me."

Transport minister Lord Adonis said the service – which would not stop in Bucks – would be a massive boost to the economy and get people off aeroplanes. Work could start in 2019 for a 2026 opening.

Thousands who live near the route would feel the effects, but there was outrage from other residents whose home or land actually sits on the proposed route.

Malcolm Bristow, 69, lives on King's Lane, near South Heath and the planned route goes through his fields. He said: “Hopefully I'll be dead and gone if it ever happens – I could always throw myself in front of it I suppose. “Let's get our priorities in order, the country is bust as it is and this is absolutely crazy. This Adonis bloke is going to get strung up - the route should go along the existing Chiltern railway track. His wife Liz, 67, said she 'thought it was a wind up' –

Next door neighbour John Perrin, 72, would also be forced to sell fields and said: “I'm just gutted and it will be horrifying if it happens. It would ruin the farm and our land won't be worth anything.” His wife Dyane, 68, said she was 'disgusted' by the plans and added: “We don't need High Speed rail and we can't even catch it here anyway.” –

“I'm not against High Speed rail but in general I think the time that will be saved on this route isn't worth it.”

Comments – 13

* well it may never happen just like the third runway, dont move mrs owen-thomas, they cant just bulldoze your house fight it! –
* Don't move, you say? A chance would be a fine thing with THAT hanging over the property! It's called a blight - ask the people in Kent and surroundings, and the people in Sipson.
* Poor woman, and all this free advertising won't even begin to compensate for something that might never happen.
* Don't worry, Caroline Owen-Thomas . It will not happen the way the politicians say it will , as it stands at the moment. They never do what they say they'll do, except when it comes to sending our people to war and getting them killed. That's the only guaranteed area, where the politicians always do what they say they'll do. Regards –
* Bravo sir. –
* And there was me thinking we lived in a democracy! What is the point in working yourself silly to build up a business when the government can come along and make a compulsory purchase of your property if you just happen to be in their way! It's a disgrace. Come on you people of Buckinghamshire, let's fight to keep our countryside!
* No problem here - all that 's needed is a respectful request to move the line slightly away from this property & job done! At 250 mph a sharp 'S' bend should be no problem for these latest trains (not made in Britain). Good luck!
* Hear hear! How dare this woman be upset because her livelihood is threatened. I am with you Wanda - I am fed up with the bleating of so called progressionists accusing people of being NIMBY's. What the hell is wrong with being a NIMBY anyway. An Englishman's ( or woman's) home is their castle. We have fought for centuries to keep invaders out of our island. Now it seems our own government is the one doing the invading. And yes it is wrong to destroy countryside. homes and liveihoods.
* cant the rail line just use the ground floor and she can use upstairs Im sure a couple of lintels wont over burden the budget.Compromise all round
* Your solution is not practical because 'Lintels' would be not fit for purpose stated. T-beams or girders would be more appropriate and would flex with the expected regular vibrations from a 250mph train passing underneat
* Good spot JB.I was only considering 60 mph! I get little things like that wrong so often lately. You do however remind me of when my wife flexed as a 250mph trains vibrations passed underneath!!!
* i wonder what the planners were thinking or how they felt as they drew the redline through someone's house. i'd love to sit in on one of those meetings.

**20100621**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10363332>

High-speed London to Folkestone rail link up for sale

The 68-mile (109km) London to Folkestone high speed rail link has been put up for sale by the government.

Eurostar trains to Paris and Brussels and Southeastern's Japanese-built Javelin trains operate on the track

The sale, likely to bring in around £1.5bn, could open it up to more operators, possibly from overseas. The route, known as HS1, cost £5bn to build and is currently run by London and Continental Railways under the control of the Department for Transport

The successful bidder will become the owner of HS1 Ltd, with a 30-year concession to run the line and stations.

Launching the sale at St Pancras, Transport Secretary Philip Hammond said: "HS1 is a national success story and a world-class railway operating to international standards. –

"The money generated by this sale will make an early significant contribution to the crucial task of reducing the public sector debt."

Following the sale, the performance of HS1 Ltd will be independently regulated by the Office of Rail Regulation to safeguard passengers' interests. The Transport Secretary restated the government's aim to link HS1 to HS2, the north-south high-speed line the government hopes to start in 2015

Comments - 0

**20100813**

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/property/article-1302820/A-London-Birmingham-rail-link-destroy-swathes-countryside-hundreds-homes-So-worth-it.html>

Just imagine waking up one morning to find that the price of your house has plummeted to a ­fraction of its worth. The house is exactly as it was when you went to bed the previous evening; nothing has changed apart from the price — which has slumped by as much as 50 per cent. This is exactly the position my 82-year-old mother found herself in earlier this year when the Labour government announced that the proposed £30 billion high-speed rail link between London and Birmingham would cut through a stretch of land 200 yards from her house in the village of Chipping Warden, Oxfordshire. Apart from the potential loss that will be incurred, there is the fact that many of those affected have put a lifetime into restoring properties, lovingly nurtured gardens and spent thousands upgrading and renovating their primary asset.

My parents bought their house in 1986 for £145,000; this time last year it was worth around £800,000. Not a bad return, but a lot of love, care and attention has gone into it

She rang and, breaking it to me gently, said: ‘the Government are proposing to put a rail track through the back garden. It is a crazy idea. Why do we need it? How many people want to move from London to Birmingham and Birmingham back to London, cutting 35 minutes off their journey.

She is still baffled by the thinking and mindset of the new Government which seems intent on steaming ahead with the venture.

Conspiracy theorists have suggested that the route of the proposed rail line ploughed through rock-solid Tory constituencies on purpose given that the constituents were unlikely to vote Labour anyway.

Immediately following the March announcement, property prices in the area crashed. Buyers suddenly pulled out and pending transactions were cancelled. There are a surprising number of these instances in the UK

The problem arises if you live close enough to an project to affect the value of your property, but not near enough to be compulsorily purchased by the Government.

In the case of the high-speed rail link, if the proposals are implemented, it will mean around 14 high-speed trains an hour thundering through Chipping Warden.

One house in my mother’s village that was on the market for £450,000 before the March announcement has just been sold for below the renewed asking price of £285,000.

Nicholas Rudge, a director of Savills in Banbury, says: ‘Nobody knows what the level of compensation is going to be. There will be criteria like light and noise pollution.

But if you are outside of the compulsory purchase zone, you have a massive headache because the ­farther you are away from the infrastructure project, the less compensation you are likely to receive, even though the price of your ­property may well have plummeted and you have an asset that is worth an awful lot less than it was at the beginning of the year.’

Peter Bourke, a partner at Wilsons solicitors in Salisbury, who has been advising my mother, says: ‘Government development schemes often bring about uncertainty and anxiety for local residents and the HS2 scheme is no exception.

The route has not been finalised and there are other options. It would be a foolhardy government that upset so many of its Tory-voting constituents and there is a real possibility that alternatives will be considered.

Then again, maybe the intended purchaser knows something that others do not. Even if the route is diverted, it is just going to create another set of problems for another group of residents.

And with Eurotunnel and the rail link to the Continent unable to make money, there must be very real concern as to the viability of the project.

After all, does it really matter that we can cut 35 minutes off the journey time from London to Birmingham when the project will leave such devastation in its wake?

Comments – 9

* The proposed HS2 route will devastate vast areas of precious unspoiled countryside in the midlands. If the scheme is to go ahead why not route the line alongside existing transport corridors such as the M40 so as to reduce environmental impact. The entire case for a HS2 seems unjustified to me since it will involve huge expenditure in a time of other spending cuts to produce a slightly shorter journey time to London. Ticket prices will be very high and hardly any traffic will be removed from roads since there will be no stops en-route. Why not use the money to improve and extent existing rail links to remove overcrowding on the roads and rail networks.
* The HS2 scheme is a total nonsense. Please can we regain some sanity in this country and spend our money on schools and healthcare where it is really needed. –
* I support the concept of high speed rail but not this project. This crowded little island of ours does not need a hyper-speed train service whisking a few high-fare passengers between London & Birmingham a few minutes faster. What matters is door-to-door journey times. Far better to get the most out of the huge investment already made upgrading the West Coast Main Line, and spending money on better local services to link more communities with the express services. The impact on this lovely county would be enormous, and cannot be justified by the case presented by HS2 Limited. The green belt between Kenilworth and Coventry and the nearby village of Burton Green would be damaged irreperably.
* bleating article, big deal! house worth £800,000 at present a minor drop blamed on the noise, could well just be the falling market People getting to and from birmingham deserve better links to London, what century are we living in for goodness sake. I assume she and her neighbours werent so upset when the M40 was built
* SHOULD THIS BE HAPPENING AT ALL? The business case is to spend £25.5 billion on an extra fast train route between Birmingham and London. The forecast by HS2 Ltd is that it will only genererate £13.5 billion in revenues, based on a projection - how reliable? - 75 years into the future. This is the best case that HS2 Ltd can come up with i.e. a BEST CASE LOSS of £12 billion. So passengers, the peole who will benefit, who are not prepared to pay the costs of travelling at 250mph themselves, should, accoring to the DfT be subsidised by the taxpayer in order to make this happen. And to generate £3.6 billion of "wider economic benefits". These are difficult times, but how can anyone seriously consider this a priority for public subsidy? It is disgraceful how the DfT chooses to spin this project "£2 benefit for every £1 invested", when their own figures show that the plan - yes the AIM - is to start a project that will make a minimum £12 billion loss, paid for by taxpayers
* We definitely need to improve the rail network in the interests of the environment and UK competiveness, but it is not clear why we might want this particular scheme or anything like it. This proposal is modelled on a souped up version of the French TGV. France is a country with very different geography to the UK. In fact actual point to point journey times and the effective frequency of service from Midlands towns are set to suffer if this proposal goes ahead. We need a national debate on how to improve rail transport network so that the whole country benefits, as well as the environment. This high cost, albeit glamorous, proposal will not benefit either the nation or the environment. It needs a rethink.
* I doubt that many people question the need to improve our transport infrastructure but there is an increasing body of people who seriously question the business case, wider economic impacts and environmental case for the current HS2 proposals. HS2 appears to be predicated on a need to increase West Coast Mail Line capacity; that can be achieved by up to c.60% by reducing the number of (underutilised) first class carriages and replacing them with standard class, fitting incab electronic signalling and increasing existing main line platform length to accomodate say 2 extra carriages. Result: an approximate 60% increase in passenger capacity on existing trains capable of running at 140mph (defined by the EU as 'high speed' when on an existing track) and all this for just a few billion pounds not the £17.4bn initial cost of HS2 or more likely full cost of £30bn. When could this be done? The answer is - immediately. Let's stop this HS2 madness now.
* "Conspiracy theorists have suggested that the route of the proposed rail line ploughed through rock-solid Tory constituencies on purpose given that the constituents were unlikely to vote Labour anyway." It's high speed rail. They go in straight lines. I challenge anybody to draw a straight line between London and Birmingham that doesn't go through 'rock sold Tory constituencies
* This is a huge issue for many villages and towns along the route, including the one where I live. Apart from the disastrous environmental impact of such a huge state run infrastructure project smashing through our beautiful countryside, I have to question the economic rationale of starving Britain's schools, our existing railway network and our national defences of capital investment whilst we pay for a white elephant that will reduce train times between London and Birmingham by 35minutes. There is an alternative route that runs alongside the M40 that would cost less and result in less communities being impacted. Surely £30billion could be better invested. Will this be David Cameron's Millennium Dome?

**20100819**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/business-11028412/residents-quiz-minister-over-high-speed-rail-link-route>

High Speed 2 is destined to cut journey times between London and Birmingham to just 45 minutes

The BBC's Transport Correspondent Richard Scott has been to visit three residents who are concerned about the line

Caroline Owen-Thomas would have her home and business demolished to make way for the line. Bill Hall would be around 400 metres from the line, but wants to sell to release funds to pay for his disabled wife's care. Hilary Wharf is heading up HS2 Action Alliance which is opposed to the line.

**20100903**

<https://www.building.co.uk/communities/maglev-vs-high-speed-rail-should-we-change-trains/5004975.article>

The billions we will spend on HS2 will get us from London to Birmingham 28 minutes faster than the present system does. After Birmingham, the trains will travel on old lines

**20100910**

<https://www.aboutmyarea.co.uk/Northamptonshire/Towcester/NN12/News/Local-News/174691-HS2-Gets-A-Tweak-Around-Brackley>



A supplementary report has been produced on the High Speed Rail Route Two (HS2) route through South Northants and particularly around Brackley.

The new route claims less intrusion and would move the route eastwards (towards Towcster) away from Mixbury and pass into a deep cutting north of Turweston

The document claims that noise and visual effects would be reduced for Mixbury, Turweston, Backley and Greatworth

<https://www.aboutmyarea.co.uk/doclib/295_tdj2ajnqqv_hs2update_sept10.pdf>

comments - 0

**20101001**

<https://www.bucksherald.co.uk/news/quainton-manor-facing-greatest-threat-since-civil-war-1-1575312>

High speed rail is the greatest threat to Christopher Prideaux's family home since the fallout from the English Civil War. But he is determined to protect Doddershall Park and the wider countryside from the proposals – although unlike his illustrious ancestors, at least he won't face a trip to the Tower of London for taking his government to task.

Under the plans, the line would sit only 350 metres away from Mr Prideaux's beautiful 500 year-old Grade II\* manor in Quainton

It would also take up around 40 acres of his vast estate, much of which is used for farming, and destroy a lovely arch-way cottage which greets visitors to Doddershall.

The 73 year old is angry at the way the coalition Government appears to be pressing ahead with the plans despite concern over its 30bn price tag and the damage it will do to the environment

"Why has this government picked up this plan without due diligence?" he asks.

Previously, the biggest threat to Doddershall Park came when Charles II, whose father was executed during the Civil War, took to the throne and was unhappy with Mr Prideaux's forefathers. "They tried to sit on the fence but got caught out in the end and had to pay a huge fine to Charles II," he said. "If he'd refused, the place would probably have been burnt down."

Hammond says HS2 is environmentally sound. But HS2 itself says it doesn't know whether it is better than carbon neutral and ignores the effects of construction.

And he warned: "This house has been here for 500 years. "This neighbourhood would be divided as badly as it was during the Civil War."

Comments - 0

**20101029**

<https://www.theconstructionindex.co.uk/news/view/mva-and-mott-macdonald-to-supply-high-speed-rail-forecasts>

Consultants MVA and Mott MacDonald have been appointed to provide demand forecasting and modelling advice to support the extension of High Speed Rail to Leeds and Manchester.

Provide advice on the long-term strategy for High Speed Rail beyond Leeds and Manchester to ensure that the route to these cities is consistent with the long term strategy;

Mott MacDonald assistant project director Russ Cunningham said: “Mott MacDonald is delighted to be helping to plan HS2 beyond Birmingham. This project is set to re-shape the UK’s travel patterns. Our demand forecasting and economic appraisal capabilities have given us a unique opportunity to be part of this exciting project and we look forward to working with MVA, HS2 Ltd and DfT Rail to assess the true potential of high-speed rail in Britain

Comments - 0

**20101114**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/road-and-rail-transport/8131013/Middle-England-on-the-march-as-revolt-over-250mph-rail-link-grows.html>

But her rural idyll will be shattered if the Government's proposal to build a £17 billion high-speed rail link goes ahead

Tens of thousands of other people living on or near a line stretching through some of Britain's finest countryside from London to Birmingham will suffer a similar fate

The trains will thunder along at speeds up to 250 miles per hour less than 800 yards from Mrs Free's house, near Great Missenden, bringing noise, light pollution and wrecking the valley's natural beauty

Before that there will be seven years of dust, noise and lorries while the railway is built. "It would be impossible to stay here," she says. "The area would be destroyed."

The project has provoked anger from people all along the route. Since it was announced by the Labour Government in March nearly 60 action groups have been set up to oppose the plans.

The protesters are a well-informed, articulate, middle class lobby determined to fight the project

The "preferred" route runs through Conservative heartlands, and local MPs, including ministers and whips are opposed to the project but under pressure to toe the party line. The speaker of the House, John Bercow, also opposes the plans

One senior Tory MP told The Sunday Telegraph: "This is a huge, expensive vanity project that makes no sense at all."

But they say that, after looking at the project in detail, they have found that the economic and environmental cases for the new route simply do not stack up

The project goes out for consultation early next year and, if approved, a bill will be presented to Parliament in 2013. Construction is expected to start in 2015 at the earliest but the London-Birmingham leg would not be completed before 2025. Two more branches, to Manchester and Leeds, would follow at a total cost of over £30bn.

Supporters said that HS2, as the scheme is called, would bring thousands of construction jobs and economic benefits to the regions. But opponents said the non-stopping high-speed trains would benefit London rather than the provinces. Geoffrey Robinson, the Labour MP for Coventry South, said Coventry would become a "backwater".

The Sunday Telegraph visited four key places on the route and found residents angry and determined to fight the project.

Peter Healey, 46, who runs a horticultural nursery in Northamptonshire which, along with his home, will be obliterated by the railway line, said: "If they think the protests over the Newbury bypass were bad, they ain't seen nothing yet. It will be World War III. "I have spent nearly 20 years building up my business and I will do everything I can to stop it going ahead. Plenty of others will do the same."

Mrs Free, 77, said: "I will lie down in front of the bulldozers. They cannot wreck such a beautiful part of England. It is not just about my house and my view but about many other people and what the Government is doing to this country."

A few miles from Mrs Free's cottage, Adam Thomas, 46, and his partner Agnes Fletcher, 43, face losing the converted barn that they have lovingly renovated and turned into their dream home. They have also spent "a fortune" adapting the house for Mr Thomas who is in a wheelchair after a motorcycle accident left him paralysed from the chest down when he was 17.

Down in the valley overlooked by Mrs Free's house the line will run through a 500-acre arable and livestock farm that the family of Peter Bunce, 53, and his brother Kevin, 38, have owned for three generations. A 60ft high viaduct will be built a few hundred yards from Mr Bunce's house

The project has already blighted many homes and split families.

* In Greatworth, Northamptonshire, Simon and Nicki Shinkins were ready to move to Germany after Mr Shinkins landed a job as a Formula 1 production engineer.
* But the Government announced the high-speed rail scheme just days after they put their five-bedroom house on the market in March.
* "It put everybody off," Mr Shinkins said. "Who wants to buy a house that will have high-speed trains thundering along 500 yards away?" The couple had one offer, in June – for £70,000 below the asking price of £339,995.
* Mr Shinkins has started his new job and rents a flat in Greding, Germany, coming home to see his wife and two children, aged 13 and 12, whenever he can.
* "It's hard," his wife says. "A lot of the time I'm like a single mother. We just want to start our new life in Germany, but we are in limbo."

Peter Jones, of the Primrose Hill action group, said: "We need proper tests to be carried out to find out about the effects of noise and vibrations."

Opponents of HS2 (HS1 is the Channel tunnel link) argue that there are cheaper, more efficient alternatives. Adding carriages to trains and lengthening platforms would ease overcrowding, and upgrading existing trains and tracks would allow trains to run at speeds up to 180mph, they say. Trains at this speed could also run along new tracks which could be built along existing railways or motorways and minimise damage to the environment.

Mike Geddes, 67, an honorary professor of public policy at the University of Warwick, whose house in Offchurch village is just a few hundred yards from the route, said: "This rail link and the 250mph trains are economically unnecessary and environmentally destructive. "The cost is enormous at a time when public finances are under severe strain and the business plan is based on over-optimistic forecasts of passengers. "The project does nothing to tackle the immediate problem of overcrowding on trains because it will not be completed for another 15 years."

The committee has called Stop HS2, a campaign group, to give oral evidence to its Transport and the economy inquiry at the end of November.

Andrea Leadsom, the Conservative MP for South Northants, said: “I am absolutely against this route. I am in favour of improving the transport infrastructure but we should do it using the existing transport corridors. “We don’t need 250mph trains in this country. It’s not like France or Spain where they have to cover longer distances.”

Hilary Wharf, of the HS2Action Alliance umbrella group, said: "HS2 isn't green, the business case is flawed, and curing the north-south divide is pure fantasy."

She said: "Government is trying to ignore the low-cost, risk-free, alternatives that fully meet future capacity needs."

Sir Rod Eddington gave warning of this "vanity" in a report on Britain's transport policy written for ministers in 2006.

* "The risk is that transport policy can become the pursuit of icons," he said.
* Such "grands projects" develop "real momentum, driven by strong lobbying" and can become "difficult – and unpopular – to stop, even when the benefit:cost equation does not stack up, or the environmental and landscape impacts are unacceptable."

"The approach taken to the development of some very high-speed rail line options has been the opposite of the approach advocated in this study. Alternative options do not appear to have been fully explored."

Philip Hammond, the transport secretary, said: “High-speed rail will be an unbeatable option for inter-urban travel, with none of the hassle of short-haul flying. Even I could not contemplate driving from London to Birmingham in 49 minutes. He added: “I am determined that we will do everything we practically can to mitigate the noise and visual impacts of the proposed line.”

Comments - 0

**20101211**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/road-and-rail-transport/8194406/Philip-Hammond-high-speed-rail-will-be-a-pleasant-surprise-for-many.html>

Meetings were scrapped and a carefully planned diary ripped up as the country slithered to a halt. Welcome to the job of Transport Secretary.

Britain's arctic interlude has diverted the Transport Secretary from the other big item in his in-tray, proposals for a high speed line which would see trains hurtling through the Chilterns at 250 mph

The final route - at least as far as the West Midlands - is due to be announced within the next few days

"There is a hard core who are absolutely implacably opposed", he said. "Quite frankly I am not going to shift those."

Others opponents, however, are being fed what Mr Hammond regards as misinformation. "People whose homes are a mile away when the line is in a cutting, saying this is going to be devastating, when they are not going to know it is there," he added.

“One of the areas we are getting the most flak from is where the line is going past in a deep cutting. It’s difficult to know what to say to people…but just wait and see. Evidence from HS1 is that once it's in, people’s views change, it doesn’t have the impact they thought it would have."

For a start the trains will be newer and quieter than the existing rolling stock used on Eurostar.

But some oppose the line on purely aesthetic grounds, arguing that the new line will be a scar on the landscape of rural Buckinghamshire, despoiling an area of outstanding natural beauty. “Have you looked at the route? It runs along the A413. Great Missenden is beautiful, but it doesn't go through Great Missenden. "Between Great Missenden and the HS2 route are the A413, the Chiltern Railway and a line of pylons. So this is not some Constable country.

"It’s following an existing transport corridor as closely as possible, but I am not going to say there are no landscapes that will be impacted because clearly there are," Mr Hammond said. “My view is that anyone who is genuinely open-minded about this is going to be pleasantly surprised by the truth. I’m not downplaying the impact, clearly if you live right next to the line or it is going opposite your house on a viaduct it will have a significant impact."

“On the line of the route there will be compulsory purchase orders as usual. So any properties that will be needed to be taken down or are uninhabitable will be bought," Mr Hammond said.

When the first high speed line was built through Kent, compensation was limited to those were subject to compulsory purchase orders. "What we are talking about here is going wider, I think this is unprecedented, paying compensation to people who do not have their properties taken, but who will suffer a significant diminution in value."

Final details still have to be worked out including whether compensation will be paid to people who stay put in their homes or be limited to families who find their houses are worth a lot less when they come to sell them.

But Mr Hammond's determination to push through the project is undiminished. It is a vital ingredient of a transport strategy which will have a dramatic impact on Britain's aviation policy

For a start, Birmingham Airport will be less than 40 minutes from the heart of London, bringing it closer to the capital - in Mr Hammond's words - than Stansted and Luton. – connect other airport near the city

Flying between British cities will be consigned to history along with short hops to many destinations in western Europe and Heathrow will operate rather differently in the years to come.

But one thing is certain. The Government may want to maintain Heathrow as a global hub. But it is not getting a third runway. That idea, Mr Hammond said, is: "Dead. Dead as a Norwegian parrot.”

Comments - 0

**20101218**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/road-and-rail-transport/8212095/High-speed-line-noise-will-affect-50000-people.html>

More than 50,000 people will suffer a “noticeable noise increase” from the Government’s controversial high-speed rail line, according to official figures obtained by The Sunday Telegraph.

A further 130,000 people in London and the Chilterns could also “experience vibration” from tunnels underneath or near their homes.

Entire streets, most of a park and several blocks of a council estate in the capital are expected to be demolished under the plans, due to be confirmed by Philip Hammond, the Transport Secretary, tomorrow

However, Mr Hammond will also announce what the Government calls “substantial” alterations to about half of the route in some rural areas after a wave of protest by shire Conservatives.

Mr Hammond is expected to tell MPs that he has “recognised the local impact” of the original plans after walking part of the route and meeting many concerned locals. However, the broad path of the line remains unchanged and will still cut through many areas of outstanding natural beauty, including the Chilterns and swathes of rural Buckinghamshire and Warwickshire.

Although most attention has focused on the line’s impact in rural areas, where hundreds of homes will be lost, by far the largest number of people directly affected are in London. Euston station, the route’s proposed terminus, will be extended several hundred feet to the west, swallowing up at least 20 homes, 25 businesses employing hundreds of people, and two thirds of St James’s Gardens, a park next to the station

Frank Dobson, the local Labour MP, described the proposal as “devastating” and said he was “fundamentally opposed” to it

“Most of those worst affected by this line are not rich people in the Chilterns. They are ordinary people in inner London. We are talking about hundreds of council homes going when the waiting list in London is already 800,000.”

Ray Puddifoot, the leader of Hillingdon council, said: “We don’t think it will bring any benefits — environmentally, economically or socially. It will only bring adverse effects.”

The slides from the HS2 technical seminar say that properties above the tunnel and as far as 100 metres away from it “could experience vibration” if mitigating measures are not used

“People are very worried. Not everyone in Primrose Hill is a multi-millionaire. There’s a great risk that people will think of the residents as 'nimbys’.

“We’ll all admit to some nimbyism, but we’re fighting it on the basis that it’s a flawed scheme as a whole. The case has not been made for the route and the evidence has not been produced. I’d like to see taxpayers’ money spent more intelligently.”

Roger Low, of the Park Village Residents’ Association, said: “It is exceptionally difficult to find out what HS2’s plans are. You email them and they just send back spam. You call them and they just respond with a script from their press release.”

The 109-mile line aims to cut the journey time between London and Birmingham to 49 minutes with trains reaching speeds of 225mph through some of Britain’s most beautiful countryside.

Ministers are braced for major new protests during the six-month consultation period which will begin in February.

They insist that the line is necessary to aid a business-led recovery

**20101223**

<https://www.aboutmyarea.co.uk/Northamptonshire/Towcester/NN12/News/Local-News/183775-Local-MP-Andrea-Leadsom-Quizzes-Prime-Minister-Over-HS2-Consultation>

Andrea Leadsom MP for South Northamptonshire quizzed The Prime Minister, David Cameron on High Speed Rail during the last Prime Minister’s Question time in 2010.

Andrea was lucky enough to receive a slot to question to The Prime Minster and she used it to ask him if he was “aware of the concern of many people at reports in the press that he plans to support High Speed rail regardless of next year's consultation? Will he spread a bit of Christmas cheer by reassuring my constituents that he will keep an open mind and that he will not be railroading through a railroad?”

David Cameron, The Prime Minster then assured her that he understood the peoples’ concerns and that it would be a “proper consultation”. He went on to say, “I do believe that high-speed rail has a really effective role to play in bringing our country closer together and spreading economic benefit throughout all our country.”

Andrea Leadsom MP says: “I am delighted to have both Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Transport’s confirmation that this will be a thorough consultation and will take into account the concerns of my constituents. For my own part, whilst I agree that we that desperately need an improved transport infrastructure to support economic growth, I think that this project, with its vast costs and devastating impact on communities, is not the right one.

Comments – 1

* <http://www.birminghampost.net/news/2010/12/24/rail-industry-consultant-dismisses-high-speed-link-benefits-as-a-myth-65233-27881792/>
  + http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/politics/8213277/Is-this-another-high-speed-train-crash.html

sd

## 2011

**20110101**

<https://earthtechling.com/2011/01/britain-shifts-high-speed-rail-route/>

Facing trouble in its own ranks in Parliament, Britain’s coalition government is tweaking the plan for a new high-speed rail line that would link London – and, by extension, Europe – to England’s Midlands. Transport Secretary Philip Hammond offered a revised route for High Speed 2 (HS2) that differs from the one left behind by the previous government for 65 out of its 127 miles. It would, he said in a statement, mitigate impact on homes and the countryside.

Key changes in his attempt to quell the opposition included moving the line away from several villages, as well as incorporating “green” bridges and tunnels that would “reduce its visual impact and avoid severance of public rights of way.”

Comments - 0

**20110124**

<https://www.railnews.co.uk/news/2011/01/24-study-begins-on-reopening-welsh.html>

Network Rail warns of ‘tough’ Welsh reopening plan

Comments –

* In my opinion the reopening of a small and quite insignificant line through a sparsely populated region is more exciting than the entire HS2 project. Perhaps its success (and I am quite certain that its reinstatement will be a success) may set a precedent for further such reopening schemes across the rest of the country, which will be of huge benefit to everyone
* The Spa Valley Railway spent £300,000 reinstating the 5-mile line between Tunbridge Wells and Eridge, which gives some idea about how much these things should cost. In any event, the total amount should be less than £3 million, i.e. less than 0.01% of what is being wasted on HS2, and for a line which will reconnect a community to the railway, rather than duplicate an existing line as HS2 does.
* This project/feasibility study will provide some valuable background information relevant to the HS2 debate. Anti-HS2 campaigners continually claim that the enormous HS2 budget would be better spent on reversing many of the Beeching era rail closures and/or upgrading existing classic lines. Of course this strategy might sound appealing (even populist) but these matters are never as simple/straightforward as they seem. The projected cost/benefit analysis for Gaerwen Junction to Amlwch will make interesting reading because if the data can be extrapolated on to a National model it will give us a good idea of just how effective (or not), in terms of value for money, reallocation of HS2's projected budget might be.

**20110128**

<https://www.bucksherald.co.uk/news/homes-approved-but-will-anybody-want-to-live-there-1-2353986>

CONTROVERSIAL plans for nearly 100 new homes in Calvert have been given the thumbs up – even though HS2 trains could soon thunder within metres

But critics say developers will struggle to sell the 98 homes once they are built

Mrs Phipps claimed the noise would be ‘excessive’, and said many people in Calvert feel ‘shell shocked’, with the possibility of HS2, an incinerator, a train maintenance depot and East-West Rail all looming

The plans will include two shops, car parking, roads and sewers, and the main entrance to the site will be on Brickhill Road

After the decision, Mrs Phipps said: “Nobody in our area can sell their houses as it is. “Some places have had for sale signs up for months. “We’re very blighted anyway, they won’t be able to sell them.”

Comments - 0

**20110219**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-12514335>

High-speed rail campaigners gather for national meeting. Hundreds of campaigners against the planned high-speed rail line (HS2) are staging a national convention ahead of government consultation.

More than 500 people are at Stoneleigh Park in Warwickshire for the event organised by protest group Stop HS2.

Chancellor George Osborne said last month that 8,000 jobs would be created as part of the plans.

Speaking to BBC News, former transport secretary Lord Adonis, who introduced the plans last year when the previous Labour government was in power, said campaigners' suggestions it would be better to invest in the West Coast mainline instead were not valid. "I'm afraid none of those objections are valid, though of course I completely understand why those people who live on the line of the route are objecting," he said. "It always happens when you have infrastructure projects, that those who live near where they're being proposed object vigorously and, of course, what they do is to try and draw in wider arguments. "But virtually the whole of the developed world is now going ahead with high speed rail because it's the green solution to providing fast, high capacity connections between cities."

But Lizzy Williams, chairman of the Stop HS2 organisation, said the route would only benefit London and there was no economic or environmental case for it. "The business case (for HS2) does not promise economic growth that will benefit the country," she said. "It is London who will be the winner overall. "What about Wales, what about the South West, what about the rural economies? "It relies on laughable passenger forecasts and takes no account of the changing world we live in."

A £50m compensation fund has also been set up by the government for home-owners and firms "severely" affected by the route.

Rail enthusiast and pop mogul Pete Waterman, who is in favour of the plans, told BBC News it would free up other trains and passengers would see a cut in ticket prices as first class passengers switched to the faster trains. He said he felt campaigners were being very clever about side-stepping the "not in my backyard argument". "They're doing everything to not make that sort of statement," he said. "They're going on about economics (and) the environment but really, with railways you can make as much a game for it as against it.

In December, Transport Secretary Philip Hammond said 50% of the preferred route published in March had been amended following protests about its impact on homes and the countryside.

Jerry Marshall, chairman of the federation of action groups against the plans, said the route goes through his home but decided he would support the plans if they were in the national interest. "As a businessman, I spent a couple of days going through the business case and I was shocked at what I found," he said. "There's a lot of wool being pulled over our eyes and the case does not stack up. "If Phillip Hammond took this to Dragon's Den, he would be eaten alive." The meeting at Stoneleigh has been discussing the arguments for and against the plans and hearing from guest speakers, organisers said.

Comments - 0

**20110223**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-12557717>

HS2 'will bring Birmingham Airport closer to London'

Birmingham Airport says the proposed new high-speed rail link between the city and London could be a solution to runway capacity problems in the South.

Airport bosses said it will be quicker to get to London from Birmingham than from London Stansted if it is approved.

Chris Crean, from environmental campaign group Friends of the Earth, said it was important that full analysis work be done to see if HS2 would be a green form of transport. He said: "The really important issue about the aviation sector is that it does not pay the full cost for the pollution that it causes."

But a spokesman for Stansted said people from the Midlands already had direct rail access to the airport. He said: "Stansted already has a direct rail link to central London taking just 45 minutes, which is up and running with new trains coming this year.

John Morris, of Birmingham Airport, said the airport had the capacity for another nine million passengers and added that the South East's runways were "over heating".

Comments - 0

**20110223**

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1348571/Britains-largest-wild-pear-tree-axed-250-years-high-speed-rail-link.html>

It has survived numerous storms and the ravages of time over more than two centuries.

But Britain’s oldest and largest wild pear tree could now fall – to make way for a controversial high-speed rail link. The tree, which is 250 years old and measures more than 12ft around the trunk, stands in the way of the proposed HS2 train line between London and Birmingham.

Environmental campaigners are furious that the site, near Cubbington Wood on the outskirts of Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, could be flattened. The Tree Register, an organisation which catalogues rare trees across Britain, has now been given 'National Champion' status.

Planning inspectors will now have to take the new status into consideration - which could potentially derail the Government's proposed route through Warwickshire

Steven Falk, senior keeper of natural history at Warwickshire Museum who sits on the Tree Register, said: 'The tree is exceptionally rare. 'I was called in to assess it and took pictures and measured its trunk, which is the real indication of how large and old a tree is.

'It is huge and we were able to estimate it to be around 200 to 250 years old. Wild pear trees are very rare, there are only two others in the whole of the county

He said: 'The tree is slap bang in the middle of the proposed route. There is no way it would survive it was moved.' Members of the Cubbington Action Group against HS2 are now appealing to the Government to revise their plans to save the tree.

'It stands right in the centre of the route of HS2 with a group of rare wild service trees which flourish in the corner of the nearby wood.

'If HS2 goes ahead as planned much of the wood will be lost. This is ancient woodland that predates 1600. 'It's impossible to estimate how much of the wood would survive.'

Peter Delow, 62, a retired electrical engineer, lives close to the proposed high speed rail line and insisted: 'This not NIMBY-ism. It is about protecting a vital piece of heritage which has survived more than two centuries.

'We will use this information about the pear tree as evidence the rail line should not be built here.'

The proposed route for HS2 has been finalised and a public consultation process will start next month. If approved, it would see as many as 18 trains an hour travelling at up to 250mph through countryside in the Chilterns, Buckinghamshire and Warwickshire.

Natural England, a quango which advises the Government on environmental issues, said the tree was not protected by law

'If the train was slowed down to 186mph - the same as trains on the continent - then the track be curved to avoid these areas.

An HS2 Ltd spokeswoman said: ‘We are investigating whether the tree is affected by the proposed route. If it is, we are at an early stage of design, and in the future we would look at whether or not it could be avoided or accommodated within the scheme.’

Comments- 37

* Well it makes a change from the Great Crested Newt which is meant to be highly endangered yet manages to appear on demand whenever a major planning scheme is announced. Have to laugh at the pompous NIMBYs though who somehow think they OWN the countryside and the views, and lets be honest, that middle part of England around the Chilterns and up to the Midlands isn't really that special or pretty. - L. G., Berkshire, 20/1/2 Rubbish! The Chilterns are rightly designated an AONB. Why is it when anyone in the UK declares an interest in protecting something worth keeping against something not worth having the NIMBY cliche is wheeled out. Face it, the only thing worth keeping in the UK now is the landscape, the rest is a disaster.
* A project that will bring jobs and investment to most of the country for generations to come. - Paul Browne, Warwickshire, 19/1/2011 14:41 Beside the point that the tree is part of Wrwickshire History. f the project did go ahead you can bet your bottom £30 billion that the jobs would be given to cheap labour i.e. the mass of migrants that we are already having to support......
* We're told the Country is in so much debt that we should tighten our belts!!!!!and they want to put a faster line in that's going to cost £30 BILLION when it's not needed or wanted, well they have obviously got there priority's right.....NOT....We don't need another line that's going to cost billions and ruin the contry side of a beautiful part of warwickshire.....No No No
* build it somewhere else!
* Well it makes a change from the Great Crested Newt which is meant to be highly endangered yet manages to appear on demand whenever a major planning scheme is announced. Have to laugh at the pompous NIMBYs though who somehow think they OWN the countryside and the views, and lets be honest, that middle part of England around the Chilterns and up to the Midlands isn't really that special or pretty. The high speed line will take up a tiny sliver of land, smaller that the land used to build say the M40 (but the NIMBYs didn't mind that) and the total surface area of land given over to roads, rail, factories and housing is miniscule when compared with the entire UK's surface area. It's about time NIMBYs grew up and noticed that most of the rest of the world is striding leap years ahead of pathetic little United Kingdom. In another 50 years the UK will be begging for internal mass development of its land when the world realises it doesn't need the UK for anything.
* I would like to know the truth of what is behind wanting to put this rail line in when there are already trains running from London to Birmingham. The Business Case does not stack up........ as usual lies for someone's benefit and we need to know whose and why??
* Why faster trains? What are people going to do with the extra fifteen minutes, probably spend it waiting for their connection. Chill out, slow down and respect nature. It was there before us humans
* All that expense All that upheaval All that countryside blighted All for a saving of 20 minutes.
* My question is why would you want to get to Birmingham 20 min earlier anyway? Or really, why do you want to get there ?
* Idiots leave the tree alone!
* This is typical of the tactics used by tree huggers to try and derail every transport project that they can. They have probably scoured the route looking for something symbolic that can be used to cause the whole project to drag on for years and here we go again. I remember that the M3 link down to Southampton was frustratingly delayed for years over some claptrap over rare butterflies and moths that probably now live quite happily in the high banks and fields either side. As for the tree, it isn't even edible and no doubt few people gave it a second glance until the tree huggers found it
* The pear tree, beautiful as it is, isn't really the issue here. The fact remains that a high speed rail link costing 30 million to reduce a journey time between London and Birmingham by all of 20 minutes is just not good value for money. Surely in these days of economic austerity there are better uses for the British taxpayers hard earned money.
* There's no need for this rail line, it will destroy vast amounts of the Chiltern's area of outstanding natural beauty and will cost billions of pounds which this country can't afford. No one ever said they don't want to go to Birmingham by train because it takes 20 minutes too long to get there, they're more likely to say the fare is too high, and there's no way traveling by high speed train will be cheaper than the existing train!
* Its only a flipping Tree why is this news chop it down and plant more along the side of the rail line then you will have loads to report on
* The Tree was there first so leave it alone, put a preservation order on it and it should be saved !
* There are already trains running from London to Birmingham! Can't they just improve what they have already.
* Given the feats of engineering required to construct the new high speed line, I'm sure moving a tree a few feet won't pose a problem.
* No-one in Warwickshire wants this railway link. It is of no benefit to anyone except those living in London and will cost over 34 billion pounds which the government hasn't got. As a taxpayer I want my money better spent. Afterall aren't my taxes funding these fraudsters's expenses etc? Our land and culture is being eroded and this is one more nail in the coffin. There will soon be no green belt just hundreds of acres of concrete housing the millions of people pouring into the country from abroad
* Lets just hope it all does NOT go pearshaped
* I don't know anybody who wants this ridiculous railway line. All it will do is ruin yet more of the British countryside ( and of course enable EUSSR "peace keeping" troups easy acces to GB). The tree, however, is English and beautifull to behold and should remain at all costs
* slap a preservation order on it now
* Oh for goodness sake STOP destroying this fair land... I've had enough... Someone give me some handcuffs... P.S I will require regular donations of chicken and beer... Don't bother with the dressing gown and fishing rod
* This reminds me of a family member who dropped, and smashed, a piece of old corckery which was a heirloom. Her comment was: "It doesn't matter, it was old anyway". The same strange logic applies here
* Save this pearport.We dont need trains.
* Scrap this stupid high speed rail link now. It will only save a few minutes in time, but at what cost and is it worth it ?. Spend the money on extra carriages, or would that be to simple an idea?
* Pear tree? I can only see one
* Railway lunacy. Dedicated separate bus lanes have 4x the capacity at 1/2 the cost. We've been fed pro rail propaganda since Thomas the Tank Engine. Rail is also less safe, if you fall out of a train it's not counted as a rail death, nor if you're run over by a train
* What do we need ANOTHER rail link to London for? For some un known reason, the authorities want transport to be FASTER AND FASTER. WHY? The government tells us we must cut back on spending, yet they still go ahead with these crazy schemes. How is it that money can be found for the most in-efficient, money grabbing wasteful set of incompetents (apart from the government) this country has ever kown. LEAVE THE TREE WHERE IT IS. It is of more use that a rail link of dubious advantage.
* Its about time this awful idea by the government was being brought to the attention of the general public. I have two friends who will lose not only a 90 year old family business because they will lose their land, but also their home. This should be in the general publics interest to get this stopped! Whereby I am said that this tree will be gone, I am more upset of all the people who will be affected by this - did you know the government plans to spend between £17 and 30 BILLION on this!?!? Bet you didn't as its not being publicised.
* At the end of the day its just a pear tree, Tesco`s is still selling Pears. Get a life.
* IF there weren't underhand plans afoot to link the whole of Britain with Europe under the EU's grandiose schemes to slice us up into departments, then we wouldn't need high-speed anything. And if only in order to save 15 minutes on a journey time - who are all these people rushing about so frantically? We have a beautiful country; we should preserve every last scrap before we sink under the weight of concrete. Personally, I'd like to see us all go back to horse and cart and shop locally. We'd be a damn sight happier.
* Nice bit of firewood.
* So after they have chopped down this tree and stripped vast areas of countryside of its vegetation, I doubt very much whether there will be the cash to complete the project. And if it is completed, I doubt if anyone will be able to afford to use it
* Some people might think 'its only a tree', but couldn't they just move the track instead...
* I think there are more important issues to consider than one pear tree! The fact is the railways are in dire need of extra capacity, so are the airports and roads. I'd prefer a high speed railway to more people flying domestically or extra lanes on the M1 or M40...and who knows how many trees will be cut down for them?
* Big deal, one pear tree, so what if its 250 years old? There are millions of trees in the UK as old or older. These toff NIMBY's are really getting desperate if they think one pear tree should alter the course of the most important infrastructural project in the last 100 years. A project that will bring jobs and investment to most of the country for generations to come.

**20110225**

<https://www.bicesteradvertiser.net/news/8876190.first-payout-for-hs2-route/>

THE first Oxfordshire homeowner affected by a proposed 250mph high-speed train route has been awarded compensation.

But the lawyer who helped broker the payout criticised the way compensation awards are granted to owners of blighted properties on or near the route, which passes near four north Oxfordshire villages; Finmere, Mixbury, Newton Purcell, and Goddington.

“No consultation is permitted and applications are either accepted or rejected. “I would expect there to be some rights for applicants to negotiate, but applications are simply decided behind closed doors.”

However, HST spokesman Abi Hedderwick said: “If their application is rejected we always tell applicants which criteria their application failed on and set out the reasons. They can reapply to the scheme if there is a material change in their circumstances or they are able to provide new evidence that may be relevant.”

l According to the chairman of protest group Stop HS2, the high speed-rail line is a “nonsense scheme driven by greed”. Chairman Lizzy Williams, speaking at a convention, said there was no economic or environmental case for the development, which she claimed would only benefit London.

comments – 1

* £17.5 billion to cut journey times by 11minutes... they will never make that money back as this train will only be used by the rich and I bet it runs less than half full

**20110227**

<https://www.christianwolmar.co.uk/2011/02/hs2-oopposition-not-just-nimby/>

Last weekend more than 500 protesters gathered to galvanise opposition against the proposal, which goes out to consultation this week. That’s just the start. Celebrities are being rounded up, huge sums are being raised and people up and down the line are voicing their anger.

Chiltern residents are right to oppose HS2, as it’s called, but they cannot win by relying on Nimby arguments alone.

Comments -?

**20110228**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-12591464>

The route would cut journey times to about 50 minutes, with work due to begin in 2015 if the plan is approved.

Opponents argue that the £17bn scheme will be a waste of money and that updating the existing West Coast mainline would be a better investment. But Transport Secretary Philip Hammond said the high-speed line (HS2) would mean a £44bn boost for the UK economy.

Outlining the case for HS2 - which is planned to be extended to Manchester and Leeds and will cost a total of £32bn - at a conference in Birmingham, he said high-speed rail offered a "once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform the way we travel in the 21st Century".

"Countries across Europe and Asia are already pressing ahead with ambitious plans for high speed rail, while some of our key rail arteries are getting ever closer to capacity. "We cannot afford to be left behind - investing in high-speed rail now is vital to the prosperity of future generations," he said.

Shadow transport secretary Maria Eagle said a national high-speed network "had the potential to bring our major cities closer together, boosting investment and economic growth in the north of England". But she added: "The Tory-led government is only planning to take powers to construct the line as far as Birmingham which casts real doubt on their long-term commitment to delivering HSR in the north. "They should think again and ensure the whole route is included in the forthcoming legislation."

The project - introduced by Labour and continued by the coalition government - has proved highly controversial, with many living along the proposed route complaining that it will damage the environment

Groups campaigning against the scheme are due demonstrate their disapproval on Monday. At 1800 GMT, Stop HS2 group will light a chain of beacons at beauty spots through which HS2 is scheduled to pass.

Opponents include not only residents' groups and local councils but some Tory MPs, while the rail industry and businesses are in favour of the line.

Earlier, Mr Hammond said: "Of course we will do everything we can to mitigate the impacts on areas like the Chilterns but projects like this have to be decided on the basis of the national interest and the overall net benefits it will bring to Britain."

Last week almost 70 business leaders, including CBI director general John Cridland and former British Airways chief executive Willie Walsh, gave their backing for HS2.

Network Rail said HS2 would be "a hugely significant enhancement to the national rail network", while Michael Roberts, chief executive of the Association of Train Operating Companies, said a new HSR line was "key if we are to meet the transport challenges that will face the country over the coming decades".

But Lizzy Williams, chairman of the Stop HS2 group, called the project "a complete waste of taxpayers' money when we can least afford it"

Ralph Smyth, from the Campaign to Protect Rural England, described the consultation process as "a complete train wreck".

He said the consultation amounted to "a single route option, which the government has already made up its mind to favour" and the country needed a "fair, open and informed debate about HSR".

It is envisaged that 14 trains or more an hour will run on the HS2 high-speed rail project, each with up to 1,100 seats.

If the plans go ahead, the government expected the line to the West Midlands to be completed by 2026 and the legs to Manchester and Leeds finished in 2032-2033.

High-speed rail uses more energy and is not a low carbon solution either. It will not shift people from air travel

It is simply not good enough to upgrade working lines - after the West Coast main line £9bn upgrade, the line will still be exhausted by 2024.We will be at critical capacity in 30 years time, so we need to start building the infrastructure for tomorrow today.

Comments – 1

* The sooner we build it, the better. There's always negativity around expanding motorways and railways, with the inevitable people in the area saying 'Not in my back yard', but when it's up and running, it becomes the lifeblood of our nation. 40 years ago, there was outrage at the motorway, 100 years ago, it was the railways. Imagine us with neither today!

**20110228**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-12596619>

How loud will the new high-speed train be?

Powerful trains have long barrelled down tracks blowing their horns. But faster lines mean louder trains.

It is thought that around 4,860 homes in England will experience extra noise as a result of the proposed train line, according to a study by the Department for Transport. An estimated 10 properties will suffer from high noise levels and another 150 will need noise insulation.

The government is yet to indicate the volume level, but according to the Telegraph, the Department for Transport has hired engineering firm Arup to demonstrate the noise to concerned members of the public. A simulation of the train's noise when it passes through various points can be heard through headphones at a series of roadshows.

The simulated sound has been created by using a recording of the 217mph high-speed trains in France and then adjusting the sound to take into account Britain's potentially even faster trains. The government believes 250mph trains could be available by 2020

Despite an absence of official numbers, the chairwoman of the Stop HS2 group, Lizzy Williams, estimates at 50m from the track, the noise from the trains will be "between 95 and 97 decibels every two minutes if the line runs at capacity".

But speed isn't the only determinant of train noise. How bothersome the noise is depends on the pitch and the quality of the sound, says Royal Academy of Engineering network rail research professor Roderick Smith.

"A freight train on a poorly maintained track will create a lot more noise for a longer time," he explains. In Germany, residents have long been used to hearing high-speed Deutsche Bahn trains. "We don't see very many complaints when it comes to the noise of the high speed lines, but we see a number or complaints about the noise of the freight transport lines," a spokesman says.

At 25m from the track the 85-decibel noise of their 155mph high-speed train is mitigated by noise reduction measures mandated by law

But there is already speculation about the tactics the government might employ to reduce the potential noise pollution. "You can build big earth ramparts and you can also put brown picket fences that are about 5m high," says Mr Douglas. An even better option is planting trees, which look more natural and also absorb carbon dioxide, says Prof Smith.

"Broadly speaking these trains are no worse than the noise from a highway and generally more acceptable in that the noise is not continuous, whereas the noise from a highway is a constant buzz throughout the day and often throughout the night as well.

"I'm not saying these trains are completely soundless and won't cause some sort of disruption, but it can be managed and it can be managed rather easily."

Comments - 0

**20110306**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/road-and-rail-transport/8364407/High-speed-rail-running-rapidly-right-off-the-rails.html>

The Birmingham-London supertrain is being proclaimed as the totem of a new golden age in British transport. Already, however, it looks a safe bet that the reality will fail to match the rhetoric

The very subtitle of the consultation paper was The Fast Track to Prosperity. And down at the launch event, few claims were too large. The new line, said Mr Hammond, "could transform Britain's competitiveness as profoundly as the coming of the railways in the 19th century". It would "reshape Britain's economic geography", delivering "massive improvements in journey times" and "unquantifiable strategic benefits." Pretty much the only thing the Transport Secretary didn't promise was that high-speed rail would help find Shergar.

The services to be slowed and cut fall into three groups.

* The first are the existing fast trains from London to the West Midlands and North West, which will be "recast with reduced frequency".
* The annexes to the HS2 prospectus, published last year, state that the current 120 fast trains a day between London and Birmingham on the existing line (60 in each direction) will be reduced to about 40. Passengers to Birmingham will at least have a high-speed alternative, albeit at premium fares. But travellers to other destinations on the current line will not.
* Coventry, for instance, will lose two-thirds of its fast trains to London and those that remain will be slowed down by 10 minutes. The existing Manchester and Liverpool services will be cut too, by about 50 trains. Stoke-on-Trent will lose half its London service, which will also be slower. Wolverhampton, Tamworth, Nuneaton and several other places will suffer a similar fate.

The idea is to improve the connectivity of the new route – but this alone will slow down the London-bound rail services of around a fifth of the country, including the whole of the Thames Valley, western England and South Wales. About 500 trains a day currently run in and out of Paddington, carrying more than 29 million passengers a year.

The biggest journey speed-up will, of course, be from Birmingham to London. The consultation document published last week says that high-speed rail will do this in 49 minutes, against what it claims is the existing journey time of 1 hour 24 minutes – a claimed saving of 35 minutes. In fact, however, the fastest journey on the existing line is 1 hour 12 minutes. So the true saving is 23 minutes, not 35. And HS2 will not serve New Street, the current main station in the heart of Birmingham city centre. It will dump you at a new-build terminus on the edge of the centre, 10 to 15 minutes' walk away. That brings the total time saved down to an almost neglible 10 minutes or so.

Sadly, the prospectus admits, HS2 trains – unlike the current Virgin Pendolinos – will not tilt. So when they get on to the curvy, conventional line, they will travel slower than the trains we have now.

The HS2 journey time from Manchester to London will, therefore, be 1 hour 40 minutes – just 18 minutes quicker than the fastest existing train. The journey time from Liverpool will be 1 hour 50 – a mere 11 minutes faster than the quickest current service.

And as for the claim that HS2 will create thousands of regional jobs, the small print of the documents concedes that 73 per cent of the "regenerative benefit" jobs created will actually be… in London.

Mr Hammond may have made up his mind, but more and more others are jumping off the train.

Comments - 0

**20110418**

<https://www.ft.com/content/250adc1a-69f2-11e0-89db-00144feab49a>

‘Nimbys’ begin struggle over High Speed 2

The protesters, who include a handful of ministers, have been cast as nimbys by supporters, who include scores of large business leaders.

“It is a worry when a very small group of people from a tiny slither of one of the wealthiest areas in the country seek to thwart a major infrastructure project that would be of huge benefit to the whole country and that was a manifesto promise of all three main parties,” he said.

Opponents are trying to shed their “nimby” label by making a wider critique of the economic and environmental case for what Labour’s Stephen Pound has described as a “great, glittering scheme”. They are urging ministers to consider alternatives more closely.

“MPs along the line have risen up in arms about the impact; initially their concerns were construed as nimbyism, but when you look at the costs and the holes in the green argument it doesn’t make sense,” he told the Financial Times. “This is potentially extremely toxic politically.”

Andrea Leadsom, MP for South Northamptonshire, said the proposals were “eye-wateringly expensive” and did not represent value for money at £1,000 for each family in Britain. She said the regional regeneration case was undermined by figures showing that up to 70 per cent of immediate jobs from the project would go to London

Philip Hammond, transport secretary, has promised millions in compensation to homeowners affected by the line. He has also taken steps to reduce noise pollution from the 250mph trains that will travel the route

“The clear majority view that this is a project that will benefit the UK economy and we can’t afford to be left behind France, Spain, Germany, Denmark. It delivers significant benefits to the UK economy.”

Comments - 0

**20110421**

<https://www.expressandstar.com/sport/2011/04/21/ed-mcmahons-challenge-is-to-build/>

McMahon doesn't rush to get his horses into spring action, but the first big winner is already on the board.

McMahon's high hopes for a successful season help to distract him from the dark cloud permanently hanging over his yard - the threat to the very existence of Horsley Brook. Its 170 pristine Staffordshire acres lie right in the path of the proposed high-speed rail link and if it goes ahead, Horsley Brook will be finished. Fears for the future are never far from McMahon's mind. He said: "We have spent 17 years building this place to what it is now. This land is perfect for training horses. It's well drained and we have all sorts of terrain. "We're centrally located for the motorway network. HS2 will pretty much split us in half - right through the middle of the gallops. We wouldn't be able to use the other side. "You can't take racehorses over a bridge across a high-speed railway." There are purpose-built racing yards for sale in areas like Lambourn, Newmarket and Middleham - wouldn't a move away be just as good? But McMahon rejects that as a solution.

Comments - 0

**20110628**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-13943014>

Critics of high-speed rail are 'well-off nimbys'

Many opponents of a planned high-speed rail link between London and Birmingham are well-off "nimbys", one of the project's leading supporters has said. David Begg said many of those living on the proposed route were "economically privileged" while poorer people further afield would benefit from the scheme.

Professor David Begg, the director of the campaign group Yes to high-speed rail, told the Transport Select Committee that he could understood why there was local opposition to the £32bn project.

"I think it was a good campaign," he said. "Nimbyism is a big barrier to infrastructure development in this country.

"We have strong local opposition to schemes which can outweigh the national interest. There is a very vociferous 'No' campaign to HS2 which is extremely well-funded. They have come up with a lot of bogus arguments."

"Nimby" - an acronym of "Not In My Backyard" - is a derogatory term used to describe people who oppose development for self-centred reasons.

Critics, such as the Taxpayer's Alliance, say HS2 is a "vanity project" that will bring minimal financial benefits, its fares will be unaffordable for many, and will leave many towns along its route with a worse train service as a result.

Comments - 0

**20110717**

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/259308/Save-our-school-from-the-blight-of-HS2-trains-convent-pleads>

The Maria Fidelis Convent School is the only school in the path of High Speed Two, the Government’s £32billion project between London to Birmingham and later to Manchester and Leeds. While businesses and homes affected by HS2 have been promised compensation, there is currently no provision to compensate schools.

The north London Catholic school is currently on a split site with pupils already having to trek through Euston railway station to get from one side to the other. Plans for the HS2 mega-terminus at Euston will see the site on North Gower Street lose part of its grounds, leaving the school with the prospect of either carrying on surrounded by construction work or moving completely to its Phoenix Road site, the other side of the present station.

“It would be quite unacceptable and we cannot see any parents wanting their children to go through that. The worst case scenario is that the school would have to close. “We do not have a large group of vociferous parents who know how to lobby Ministers, it is an inner city school

The Department of Transport has bought 40 properties under HS2’s “exceptional hardship” scheme and is considering the purchase of 60 more. Last night the DfT said the Euston proposals would not affect the school buildings. HS2 Ltd would work with the local council to minimise the impact of construction work. The plan would lead to regeneration in the Euston area that would help create more than 1,000 jobs, and open up east-west routes across the site for the first time in decades.

Comments - 0

**20110728**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/road-and-rail-transport/8668412/HS2-the-fast-track-fix-for-bridging-the-North-South-divide.html>

Britain’s economic geography will be transformed when high-speed rail is rolled out.

Our country has been divided for too long. The economic gulf that separates North and South is a monument to wasted potential and missed opportunities. And it has cost all of Britain dear – in lost jobs, lost growth and lost prosperity.

Successive governments – of all persuasions – have tried and failed to tackle the problem that divides our country. The Coalition’s priority, in the face of a globalising economy, is to do everything it can to ensure that businesses can take root, and to help people find stable, long-term employment. But we have chosen a different track from our predecessors, with a strategy to help balance growth across the country that is more effective than decades of regional policy. High-speed rail is a crucial centrepiece of that strategy.

The rail network that we are proposing from London to Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds would slash journey times and improve connectivity in a way unmatched since the building of motorways in the 1960s and 1970s.

Goals of the project

* HS2 would enable the cities of the Midlands and the North to benefit more directly from the economic strength of London, the South East and the world beyond.
* It would allow businesses to exploit new markets, access new customers and attract investment.
* It would create opportunities for millions of people with improved access to jobs and services.
* By plugging our regions more strongly into the national economy – and therefore the global marketplace – HS2 would close the widening north-south divide in economic growth rates.

It is absurd that the rail journey from Birmingham to Leeds takes as long as the train from London to Brussels. The new network offers the chance to put that right, to redraw our economic geography.

Of course, we know that tackling a divide that has lasted for generations is no easy task. And the challenge is not just economic: it is also political. Most opponents of HS2 live in the South East, with the proposed route cutting through some traditional Conservative heartlands. Meanwhile, many MPs – of all parties – representing the North and the Midlands have declared strong support for the scheme.

But this Government was elected to make difficult decisions in the long-term national interest, however tough our political going gets. Indeed, the Coalition was formed for precisely that reason. And if we are to build a modern economy fit for the future, we need to look to the next 40 years, not just the next four.

And that is why I am urging people and businesses across the country to embrace the once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform our rail network and support our proposals. That way, we can build a railway, and an economy, fit for the 21st century.

Comments – 0

**20110913**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-14904610>

Trains are a rich man's toy, says transport secretary

British railways are a "rich man's toy", Transport Secretary Philip Hammond has told MPs.

He was asked by Labour MP Julie Hilling whether HS2 would become a "rich person's toy" unavailable to "people of low or moderate means". She said: "Can you assure people that actually, it's going to be a railway for everybody, and what will happen about regulating fare prices, etc?" Mr Hammond replied: "Uncomfortable fact number one is that the railway is already relatively a rich man's toy - the whole railway.

"People who use the railway on average have significantly higher incomes than the population as a whole - simple fact."

"Is the railway expensive? Yes it is. Is that because we have too high costs in our railway? Yes it is and the government is determined that with the rail companies and Network Rail we will tackle excessive costs in the railway and get the costs of running our railway down so it becomes more affordable for taxpayers and fare payers alike."

"Far from being simply 'a rich man's toy' trains are also vital for many of those on more moderate incomes who need to get to work, and the government will price many off the railways if it carries on with its plan to increases rail fares at three per cent above inflation over the next few years."

Shadow Transport Secretary Maria Eagle said: "The real reason that our railway is becoming a rich man's toy is Philip Hammond's decision to allow rail fares to rocket by an average of 8% every year.

"The average price paid for a single journey comes in at around £5 and the sale of cheap advance tickets has doubled in the last few years, with almost a million sold every week. Virgin Trains, which runs services on the West Coast mainline, told the BBC there was a "wider range of value fares than ever before" on their services.

Comments – 494 - take only the one’s of HS2

* HS2 is a complete waste of taxpayer's money. It's unnecessary, making the train journey slightly shorter for rich business people. Why not spend the money replacing more useful standard track, torn up by previous governments, to take some traffic off the roads and improve rural transport? Then nationalise the railways as we 're still paying for it anyway.
* The 'ripple down effect' is an old Tory idea: look after the rich, and then their wealth will spread throughout society. And it does work except that the ripples never reach the very poor. Mr Hammond's factory worker may very well benefit indirectly from HS2 as Mr Hammond points out. But the unemployed single mum does not.
* If money is short then rather than spending it on rich boys toys, it should be invested it in railways for the rest of us. In Europe, every other nation seems to have more track capacity. Between London and Birmingham it goes down to one line both ways, that is mad. 2 HS2 lines on a different route is not a joined up solution. The railways need the right investment, not HS2.
* The trouble with HS2 is that its not been sold properly, the ignorant outsider would only see billions spent on shaving 10-15 mins off a Brummies morning commute to London. But it's more than that, by building a new line you are moving passengers off the existing line. This should free up more capacity on the existing which should improve existing services. I can't understand all the negativity?!
* Chiltern has launched an incredibly fast service from Birmingham to London proving that HS2 is a non-starter. Yes the fares have gone up but it's cheaper than two people driving and parking in London. The car tax should be put in to the railways to get cars off the roads and reduce pollution - and the stress of driving which is so unproductive. Just think how much work you can do on a train!
* Planning and HS2, 2 reasons why I will be voting for the green party next time
* Why has the BBC removed this part of the initial report - "If you are a factory worker from Manchester you might never get on HS2 but you will certainly be benefiting from it, if the sales director of your company is routinely hopping on it to meet customers, to jet round the world from Heathrow in a way that brings in orders to keep you employed." - "Phillip Hammond"
* The case for HS2 is flawed to say the least. Billions spent, countryside ruined to save tens of minutes off a journey from Birmingham to London. The business people who are deemed to need this, mostly use the time on the train to work un-disturbed on their laptops. With wifi on West-Coast services, they can make the journey-time really count, and the supposed benefits are illusory.
* I'm really amazed at some of the comments I've read on here. HS2 is not about cutting 25 mins off the Birmingham-London time. It's about connecting the Midlands with Europe and creating a rival for airtravel and the high levels of pollution it causes. It's not a commuter service, thats why there's no intermediate stops! Network Rail do not run passenger trains either.
* The HS2 project is financially and environmentally flawed. The forecast passenger numbers are unrealistic in an increasingly digital age. The country cannot afford this indulgent, progligate, un-necessary, white elephant, vanity project. We should be investing in projects that yield quicker benefits for ordinary hard working people.
* The great fallacy of HS2 is that it will somehow provide some benefit to those whose locals have been destroyed by it. There are no stops between London and Birmingham planned, just charge through what was the Chilterns to arrive 10 minutes earlier than you would have done by getting on the Euston to Birmingham train already in place.
* Don't think he actually said that. He simply said that trains are largely used by people of above average wealth, in response to a question as to whether HS2 would be a 'rich man's toy'. He's quite right, as any regular user will attest. The only reasonable fares are very off-peak and bought in advance. Some lines don't have any cheap fares - e.g. London to Cambridge at £20 each way.
* BTW, HS2 would use the same electricity in one run in one direction as an average family home uses over three months. Never mind the building costs
* Did Mr Hammond give the first blow to HS2? This does not look like an own goal, more like the first positive admission that he will have to reluctantly renounce to this stupid plan (but he would not say that immediately). Sounds more positive than it seems. Let's see how it goes
* The factory worker can get the bus home to his bird with the fake tan and a Sky+ box. What remarkable rubbish.
* The proposed HS2 network is going to cost many Billions, in truth this will provide very little benefit for the vast majority of people. What about improving our current rail infrastructure? We're going to spend this money during a period when we cannot afford to police our streets or look after our old. It really is madness, this should not be a priority.
* Why does Philip Hammond think that his hypothetical MD from Manchester would jump on the HS2 train to go to Heathrow when he could and probably would use Manchester airport? HS2 is just an ego-trip project and is unaffordable given the state of public finances
* HS2 will not create jobs in the North West. Previous research has shown that a better local service between Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Newcastle etc would be a far better use of far less money. The HS2 business case is weak even before more realistic assumptions are built into it.
* Try looking at this web site - really very interesting [www.betterthanhs2.org](http://www.betterthanhs2.org)
* #121 - "Mr Hammond's factory worker may very well benefit indirectly from HS2 as Mr Hammond points out. But the unemployed single mum does not." What drivel. A single mum can benefit if the advent of HS2 means the whole economy is boosted! What drivel. When economies are boosted, prices go up and the single mums lose out again!
* HS2 is nothing but a vanity project. It's no use saving 20 mins on a Manchester to London trip, when e.g. the poor sod in Blackburn has to waste 90 mins travelling to Manchester first. Better to improve all rail lines to West Coast standard first. Also the 'sales director' should be jetting round the world from Manchester Airport, not wasting time on a train to the overrated Heathrow.
* The cover of HS2 is blown. It's a rich man's toy. It's time for us taxpayers to take an interest in this thing. There is nothing worthwhile in it for the vast majority of us. We must stop it altogether.
* It's a sad do when politicians are resorted to threatening you with the possibility of unemployment if HS2 isn't implemented
* Fares are rising because of the reduced subsidies so that tax payers who don't travel by train aren't penalised and yet they are willing to spend an obscene amount of 30 billion on HS2 that only a minority rich people can afford or use
* HS2 is needed, such a pity most of the old Great central was ripped apart, it was built to cater for future continental Traffic that would eventually come along, but politcians look at the next 5 years not the next 50 years, had it been kept open(even to min standards) then HS2 uograde would have relatively easy, hs2 rich mans toy will eliminate lots of internal aircraft commuter traffic !!
* Slicks-n-Wings says that we should be reusing tracks torn up by previous governments, much of the HS2 route is along what was once the great central railway - torn up by a previous government!
* HS2 is a farce costing vast amounts and only adding to the economies at its ends as of course it does not stop in between.
* Rail fares are rising to pay for HS2 which will be too expensive for most to use just like HS1 to kent- it doesn't make any sense
* Hammond will spend 33 billion at todays estimate on the HS2, the railway for the rich.Money we have not got and it will not benefit those living along the proposed line.It will benefit business and banking,shareholders, investors,many of whom will be foreign, and who are usually Tory supporters.Hammond is safeguarding his and his colleagues' re-election
* David Cameron take note. You are looking like imbeciles. Allocate a fraction of the cost of HS2 into improving rail services for the majority of the UK population.
* So HS2 is going to cost the country billions, and decimate the countryside between Birmingham and London, so that a few rich people can get richer. Hmmm.... not sure this is a "ripple effect" that I like. Whatever happened to democracy?
* Wasn't the plan to improve and expand railway use in order to reduce private car use?Doesn't the costs for rail travel now and for the future actually expose that as a myth now?HS2 will be priced out of the range of ordinary commuters.For a transport minister to say train use is for the rich only is despicable and if he isn't prepared to sort it he should resign.
* With regards to HS2, its highly likely it will be subject to sabotage during its construction due to the sheer number of people it will affect (the majority of whom will never use or benefit from it)
* After all it doesn't take much to render a small area unsafe for humans

**20110613**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/road-and-rail-transport/8572502/HS2-high-speed-rail-consultant-sacked-after-cretin-row-caught-on-video.html>

A high speed rail consultant employed to promote the benefits of a proposed multi-billion pound train line linking the south with the north was sacked after calling a campaigner a “cretin”, during a row caught on video.

But after Dr Thornton argued that he was within his rights the consultant, who works with an events management company employed by HS2 Ltd, called him a “cretin” in the ensuing argument.

Since the clip has gone viral on the internet, the company has announced the woman was sacked from future UK-wide road show events that operated by the government-funded company HS2 Ltd, which is tasked with delivering the high-speed line.

“I think this lady has been (made a) scapegoat for very visibly enforcing HS2 Ltd’s policy of not allowing photos to be taken and being totally transparent,” he said.

He added: “These events are not a consultation because they do not present any of the negative features.”

The road shows have become the latest battleground in the increasingly bitter fight between protesters and HS2 supporters over the merits of the 250mph route.

It provides maps, interactive information screens and a sound booth to create the noise of the 250mph trains. Staff working on the shows, have been instructed to “engage visitors on a wide range of issues”.

The Daily Telegraph reported earlier this year that every family in the country would be forced to pay more than a thousand pounds for the Government’s proposed high speed rail line linking London with the north of England and Scotland.

The scheme would eventually cost £32 billion, and allow passengers to reach Manchester and Leeds in 75 minutes.

It is anticipated that the first stage of the line, which would make it possible to get to Birmingham from Euston in 47 minutes, will begin operation in 2026. It will cost taxpayers about £17 billion and would cut journey times by half an hour to 49 minutes - or around £500 million for each minute saved.

The proposed Y-shaped route will see trains speeding through countryside in Staffordshire, Cheshire, Warwickshire, Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire - with one branch skirting Cannock Chase, which is officially designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Miranda Carter, HS2 Ltd director of consultation, defended the decision, arguing it was “company policy” not to allow “close-up” photos of staff at events.

“We’re here to provide clear and transparent information to members of the public.”

Comments - 0

**20110807**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/uk/walk-of-the-month-the-chilterns-2333092.html>

We can all envy France and Germany their high-speed rail networks, while China has also recently got in on the act. But what about the countryside, the woodlands, the nature reserves, and the footpaths that the route will go through? In its desire for HS2 to achieve speeds of 250mph, the Government has proposed a direct route from London to Birmingham and Staffordshire that goes more or less arrow-straight through the Chilterns. As a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Chilterns have some formidable defenders who won't let HS2 proceed without a fight.

This route was suggested by Keith Hoffmeister of the Chiltern Society, which, along with groups such as the Ramblers Association, is heavily involved in the opposition to HS2 in its present form. "We knew we'd get the Nimby argument thrown at us," says Mr Hoffmeister. "Then the Government said it was all about 21st-century rail travel, so we were labelled Luddites. When we saw the planned route we all thought 'oh crikey', it's going through an area I love. When you're standing in some of the ancient woodlands that are going to be felled, you feel quite upset."

It became apparent why opposition to HS2 in its current form is so strident: apart from the Ridgeway, much of this walk is on local paths, little used by visitors but popular with local people. They may be worried about property prices but they are also genuinely concerned for the impact on their rural backyard.

Comments - 0

**20110928**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-15093368>

Birmingham's Eastside regeneration 10 years on

But more recently plans for high speed rail (HS2) have given the Eastside regeneration project a major boost. Although some projects have been halted while the HS2 plans await approval, Birmingham architect Glenn Howells is already looking forward to having an international station on Eastside. He said: "We're talking about a hundred acre site with potentially three or four million square feet of development all of which now can plug into HS2. Where else can you get that chance?"

Comments - 0

**20111005**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/road-and-rail-transport/8806401/Rare-bat-could-endanger-high-speed-rail-plans-warns-Government-adviser.html>

Earlier this year the plight of the Bechstein’s bats was highlighted by campaigners opposed to the project after a colony was discovered at Finemere Wood, near Aylesbury, Bucks

It (natural england) urged HS2 to carry out detailed surveys on the impact on the bats, which are protected under European environmental laws

Matt Jackson, head of Conservation Policy at the Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust, said Philip Hammond, the Transport Secretary, had to take the bats into account when deciding on whether the project should go ahead. “The legal advice highlights the need for the Secretary of State to be certain that the HS2 development will not have a significant effect on the bats before he is able to make a decision whether or not to proceed with HS2.”

If HS2 is taken forward we will work with Natural England, the North Bucks Bat Group and the Bat Conservation Trust to establish if there would be any impact and take the necessary avoidance measures. We would also explore whether HS2 could improve local woodland management to the benefit of the species."

Comments - 0

**20111108**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-15619461>

The MPs also said what should have been a serious and factually-based debate had "too often been reduced to name-calling and caricature", and they demanded the government "desist from disparaging opponents of HS2 as nimbys".

The Countryside Alliance welcomed the committee's emphasis on the environmental impact of HS2. "We hope that this recommendation extinguishes, once and for all, any charges of nimbyism directed at people who wish to see our most-cherished landscape preserved for future generations," added Alice Barnard, chief executive.

**20111113**

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2060575/Home-owners-booted-make-room-rail-link-Buckinghamshire.html>

Fury for home owners booted out to make room for a high-speed rail link...but minister behind it halted a similar project in his own back yard

MP Philip Hammond prevented line passing through his constituency

The last few lines read: ‘In this area of beauty  /  So natural and stunning  /  The sad news for you is  /   The train is coming.’

One of the obstacles standing in the way of so-called progress is Chiltern Cottage itself, where Geoffrey Sheraton, 55, who penned the verse, and his partner Phillipa Devon, 53, have lived happily — and very peacefully — for the past decade.

Written on the plan in black letters, they subsequently discovered, were the sinister words ‘Permanent Land Required’, with an arrow pointing at Chiltern Cottage. No official letter to warn them. No explanation. No apology. Nothing.

When the Mail contacted the Department for Transport, a spokesman insisted 172,000 letters were sent in March to all residential and commercial properties within a kilometre of the proposed line informing owners about the consultation process.

‘This was one of the largest consultations ever undertaken by a government with over 30 events along the line of route attended by tens of thousands of people,’ he said.

What cannot be disputed is the fact that the day before the draft document was published, Chiltern Cottage could have sold for around £700,000. The following morning, its value had plummeted.

Adam Thomas’s converted barn at Cudsdens Court will barely be habitable because the track will pass within feet of the hedge at the bottom of the back garden. This, in a part of the world where, not so long ago, putting a hanging basket in the wrong place would have brought a jobsworth and his clipboard to your doorstep straight from the Town Hall

But in the wake of the transport committee report, who would bet against the £34  billion project being given the go-ahead when the Government announces its decision on December 14?

It would take seven years to build the railway; seven years of dust, noise and lorries and an encampment bigger than the Dale Farm travellers’ site in Essex to cater for the army of construction workers.



This, apparently, will help to ‘re-balance’ the economy by reducing the north-south divide.

However, the fastest journey (on the 07.30 from Birmingham New Street to Euston) actually takes 1hr 12min, so the saving will be just 23 minutes, not 35. Moreover, HS2 will not serve New Street station in the heart of Birmingham city centre. Passengers will be dumped at a new terminus on the edge of the centre, ten to 15 minutes walk away, thus shrinking the total journey time saved to an almost negligible ten minutes.



Another rages: ‘I cannot understand why HS2 is even being considered, given the strength of feeling against it, the disruption it would cause to so many lives, the irreparable damage to so much countryside and the money it would cost at a time of recession.’

At the last count, there were around 60 anti-HS2 groups in these Tory heartlands, many co-ordinated by the aptly named AGAHST (Action Groups Against High Speed Two).

So what might life be like in a post-HS2 Buckinghamshire? We found out when we met Adam Thomas. Shortly after calling on him, an unbearable din filled his lounge. Four minutes later it happened again, then again after another four-minute interval. The awful noise was coming from a CD. It was, in fact, a recording of the sound a high-speed train makes.

‘We will no longer be able to live here,’ says Adam, 47, who faces losing the converted barn he and wife Agnes, 43, have lovingly restored and turned into a dream home for themselves and their two-year-old daughter, Cara. They have also spent a small fortune adapting the barn because Adam is in a wheelchair after a motorcycle accident left him paralysed when he was 17. Their beautiful home should now be worth £500,000. An estate agent told him he would put it on the market for £425,000 but not to expect offers above £375,000.

He has sent two emails and five letters (including one by recorded delivery) to Philip Hammond, until recently the Transport Secretary (he was reshuffled to Defence a few weeks ago), but has not even been afforded the courtesy of a reply.

‘This is devastating for me,’ says Caroline, 50. ‘Those who live or work on the proposed route are now described as “blights” by the promoters of the line [a company, which was appointed by the Government, called HS2]. ‘I was told that if the go-ahead is given, work will begin to clear the “blights”. I have spent 18 years building up my business. It’s everything to me. I am certainly not a blight.’

But 83-year-old Susan, who lives here with her husband, Robin, a retired antiques dealer, isn’t just worried about her home. The lane nearby, it transpires, would be widened to carry lorries moving tonnes of soil if HS2 is approved. Oak and beech trees lining the lane would be cut down. ‘It will ruin the area,’ she says. ‘There’s no benefit to local people. The train won’t stop here. There is a perfectly good station at Great Missenden.

In 2001, the former Transport Secretary, who has been the driving force behind HS2, spoke out against Central Railways’ plans for a freight line passing through his constituency. ‘A major threat has been posed to hundreds of households in my constituency along the length of the proposed route of the railway line,’ he said.

Comments – 49

* Disgusting twee farmhouse ! They should never been allowed to build it.
* THere are already train lines from birmingham to london. They don't desperately need another one. And besides they wont be completed till 2030s so whats the point? Government is making cuts, rising tuition fees and slowing spending and yet it is splashing out on £33bn on a line it doesn't need. Insanity? No. The tories are making the poor poorer and this project is for the rich people to enjoy a nice commute. This country would be alright economically wise if it didn't waste the money on this train line and got all the tax dodgers like vodafone.
* With modern technology why cannot this go underground for that part of the journey, and the cost of a ticket surly it’s cheaper to fly, some company could fly you for that price and in half the time
* This is a joke. Right? 200 quid. ~It'll never pay it's way. And who is paying The Compensation, pray tell? Surely not The Tax Payers, again. No, no, that will come out of the non existent Profits. Okay, stop worrying. I predict that it won't happen. PS. What fool sent this one in?
* What a sad state of affairs , we actually expect govornment ministers to be up to no good ! The only time we are shocked is when one of them does something right ! What a bunch of self serving creeps our politicians are !
* Hammond nas devastated tha rail induustry , now he wants to demolish people,s property ,and all for a saving of 15 minutes , so as far as I am concerned Hmmond and his conspiritors are nothing but traitors –
* This rail link will destroy more peoples lives than it will benefit. House prices all along the HS2 route have plummeted so people who want to move to a similar size property further away will be unable to. The government need to work much much harder on improving existing public transport instead of building a wildly expensive folly.
* These people really need a Facebook page or something to get the word out. I am sure any right minded person would be on their side and help them fight this atrocious decision
* This misses the point that the proposed HS2 rail link is just not required and has never been shown to be financially justified. So much destruction to save 15 minutes on a journey during which these high powered businessmen will be working on their computers anyway, and in an age where most communication is, and will increasingly be, electronic.
* why don't they just improve on the rail lines we already have instead of causing so much misery to home owners. Near to me a home for physically and menttally ill people will be pulled down along with an old peoples home and a council run golf course, it's just madness especially when the government can ill afford it.
* What a beautiful house... such a shame it has to be knocked dow, Wouldnt it be a listed building.???
* "A saving of 35 minutes" So peoples homes will go, billions of pounds will be spent to save a few minutes but ruin perfectly good countryside. As for Philip Hammond, you are the very worst sort of two faced nimby and I am not surprised you were 'not available'. You are a very poor excuse for a human being indeed sir. This constant quest for 'speed' and 'savings' is becoming quite pathetic - not unlike those trying to push this scheme through.
* Laurent, Knysna, 12/11/2011 05:54 Tunnels cannot be used, the reason is the trains would be required to slow before entering then build up speed again, thus negating the time savings. Personally I think the whole HS2 is rubbish, as the details above show, new terminus outside BH, the time savings are pointless. Would it not make more sense to have HS2 head to Manchester or liverpool, afterall this is more 'The north' than BH which is more 'Midlands'..... Silly politicians... Just remember this people when it comes to voting , your 'trusty' trio of parties are hardly 'trustwhorthy' when it comes to converting promises to action..
* We were appalled when the Chinese demolished houses to make way for their Olympic Stadium, so why is it now ok to do it here for a rail link. lt will reduce journey times for a few by a fraction, but l bet there are a few fat cats who are set to make an absolute fortune by building this waste of time.
* So £50 will get me a round trip to Paris on High speed rail ......... yet it will be £200 to go from Birmingham to London................ This could only ever happen in Britain. Who the hell will ever use it, who will ever think that 35 mins saved is that important. With prices predicted like these it will be a complete white elephant and never get used.
* These owners must have full compensation if they lose their homes. If not, it will be a clear case of the government aiding and abetting the stealing property AND ignoring any human rights. QUESTION: Have those proposing this "property confiscation" been to Zimbabwe and learned a thing or two from Mugabe?????

**20111205**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-16036788/hs2-will-create-jobs-and-protect-environment>

This could result in a new tunnel being built in the Chilterns.

Dan Large of the Campaign for High Speed Rail says the plans will create hundreds of thousand of jobs and the environment would be protected.

**20111209**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/8944051/David-Cameron-high-speed-trains-crucial-to-make-Britain-world-beating.html>

High speed trains linking the London to the North are vital for the economy if Britain is to remain a “world-beating country”, David Cameron has claimed.

Plans for a new £32 billion link between London and Birmingham have been opposed by a number of Conservative MPs, who are concerned the current route will cut through their rural constituencies. However, the Government this week said it would consider sending the trains through tunnels under the Chilterns at a cost of £500 million, which would help to quell a potential backbench rebellion.

Mr Cameron said yesterday new train lines would “shrink the size of our country” to make sure it remains competitive for businesses.

“I profoundly believe if you look around at what things that actually made a difference to our regions and to our cities and ask yourself what’s really helped drive economic growth I think the answer always comes back it’s those big transport schemes,” he said. “My argument would be not can we afford HS2, but can we afford not to build high speed rail.”

“If we want to be a world-beating country with world-beating businesses I think it is the right answer to be looking at high speed rail,” he said, during an event for DHL Express workers in Hounslow.

The Government will take a final decision on whether to give the green light to the HS2 project in mid-January.

Comments - 0

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## 2012

**20120108**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/telegraph-view/9000211/The-case-for-HS2-is-still-to-be-made.html>

The total cost is estimated to be £32 billion. But we can be sure that the actual cost will be much higher. Almost every major infrastructure project financed by government over the past 40 years has gone over budget, often costing taxpayers at least twice the “absolute maximum” that politicians had confidently predicted. That is why it is so important that, before work starts, it is clear that the expenditure will be worth it – not just in its own terms, but when all the alternative uses for the money are also considered.

Holland’s experience with building a link similar to HS2 has been disastrous: passengers there have not been willing to pay the extra it costs to buy a ticket, and Dutch taxpayers now have to pour yet more money into a white elephant that few people use.

We do not say that this will happen with HS2 in Britain. We only argue that the economic case for building it has not yet been made. The Government must produce convincing figures that show taxpayers will receive value for money, before we see billions of scarce public funds disappear into the scheme

Comments - 0

**20120110**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-16494354>

HS2: High-speed rail go-ahead prompts mixed reaction

The British Chambers of Commerce said the plan would be welcomed by "businesses up and down the country".

BBC transport correspondent Richard Westcott says opponents are seriously considering legal action to halt HS2.

Transport Secretary Justine Greening said she had agreed to a new "railway revolution in Britain". "A modern and reliable and fast service between our major cities and international gateways befitting the 21st Century will transform the way we travel and promote Britain's economic and social prosperity," she said in a statement to the House of Commons.

Ms Greening said there would be extra tunnelling along the 140-mile (225km) first phase in an attempt to offset environmental concerns.

That will be followed by a second phase of the Y-shaped route reaching Manchester and Leeds by about 2033.

A consultation on the second phase will begin in early 2014, with a final route chosen by the end of that year.

A parliamentary vote on the scheme is not likely until 2013 or 2014, but the government would win any vote as the line is backed by the opposition Labour party, which first proposed the project before it was ousted from power.

But shadow transport secretary Maria Eagle said she wanted to see a commitment now for the second phase of the line. "While I welcome the commitment given today to the whole HS2 scheme, there will be disappointment that the government's announcement has stopped short of a commitment to legislate for the entire route to Manchester and Leeds in this Parliament," she said.

Stop HS2 campaign co-ordinator Joe Rukin said: "There is no business case, no environmental case and there is no money to pay for it.

Craig Bennett, director of policy and campaigns at Friends of the Earth, said: "We need to revolutionise travel away from roads and planes, but pumping £32bn into high-speed travel for the wealthy few while ordinary commuters suffer is not the answer.

"High-speed rail has a role to play in developing a greener, faster transport system, but current plans won't do enough to cut emissions overall - ministers should prioritise spending on improving local train and bus services instead."

But John Longworth, director general of the British Chambers of Commerce, said: "Britain cannot continue to 'make do and mend' when it comes to its substandard infrastructure. "Fundamentally, our global competitiveness is at stake."

Stephen Joseph, chief executive of Campaign for Better Transport, said: "We're pleased to see the government investing in rail, rather than roads and aviation, and acting on some of the local environmental concerns surrounding HS2."

Travelling at speeds of up to 250mph, passengers will be able to commute from Birmingham to London in 49 minutes, reducing the journey time by almost half from one hour and 24 minutes.

A Birmingham to Leeds journey will be reduced from two hours to 57 minutes and a Manchester to London journey from two hours and eight minutes to one hour and eight minutes.

The government estimates that the project could eventually result in 9 million road journeys and 4.5 million journeys by plane instead being taken by train every year.

There had been almost 55,000 responses to the consultation process on the project, which clearly "generates strong feelings, both in favour and against the scheme", Ms Greening said earlier. She has pledged to write to "all the people" directly affected by HS2.

The planned route encroaches on green-belt land in a number of areas, including around London and Birmingham.

The Campaign to Protect Rural England argues plans for new out-of-town parkway stations would have a "devastating" effect on green belt and that the economic benefits would be a fraction of those that would be achieved from town centre stations.

County wildlife trusts are concerned the proposed route will pose a threat to wildlife. They estimate more than 150 nature sites could be affected, including 10 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Four nature reserves will be directly impacted, they say. They are Finemere Wood Nature Reserve and the Calvert Jubilee Nature Reserve, managed by the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust, Broadwater Lake Nature Reserve, managed by Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, and Park Hall Nature Reserve, managed by the Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country.

The government has said that extra tunnelling and route amendments mean that the impact of more than half the route will now be mitigated. However, the wildlife trusts say this could actually make the damage to wildlife worse.

However, in November, the Commons Transport Committee said a case for routing HS2 via Heathrow had not been set out clearly and needed further analysis.

Labour, which supports HS2, has suggested the first phase main route should actually travel via Heathrow, creating a hub at the airport and thus making it easier for travellers from south-west England to get on fast trains to the north. It would also protect the most sensitive parts of the Chilterns, the party says

The government was due to make an announcement on HS2 in December, but delayed it to incorporate miles of extra tunnelling to try to appease opponents. It has added 7.5 miles of tunnelling and 3.5 miles of deep cuttings along the 13 miles of proposed line through the Chilterns AONB.

The Campaign to Protect Rural England has said additional tunnelling would be "essential" if HS2 is to be built through the area.

A number of Conservative MPs have expressed concerns about the rail link, which passes through Tory heartlands. Welsh Secretary Cheryl Gillan has been one of the most vocal Conservative critics and says she is prepared to resign over the project that cuts through her Chesham and Amersham constituency.

Last year, a study from The TaxPayers' Alliance said passengers would face slower and less-frequent services if the scheme went ahead. Creating the London to Birmingham HS2 would mean Euston station in London "becoming a building site for seven years", it said. – construction issues

The government has said its revised route halves the number of homes affected.

Changes to the plans, she said, meant that "more than half the route will now be mitigated by tunnel or cutting", including:

* A longer tunnel through the Chiltern Hills from Little Missenden, Buckinghamshire, to the M25
* A new 2.75-mile (4km) tunnel to avoid impacts on communities in Ruislip, north-west London
* A longer covered cutting, known as a green tunnel, past Chipping Warden and Aston le Walls in Northamptonshire
* A curve in the route to avoid heritage sites around Edgcote, Northants
* Longer green tunnels at Wendover and South Heath, Bucks

A green tunnel is where a line is built in a deep cutting and covered with a "roof" which is planted with grass to disguise the line and make it blend in with environment. It can help maintain local access, minimise noise and visual impact.

Comments - 0

**20120110**

<https://www.channel4.com/news/hs2-whats-in-it-for-you>

‘It has to be done’

* Indeed, John Longworth, director-general of the British Chambers of Commerce, warned on Tuesday: “Fundamentally, our global competitiveness is at stake.”
* When you think of almost every other developed country – Japan, Spain, Germany, Italy, China – they have all been going down this route of high speed rail. This country is amazingly conservative. It’s the founder of the railways but nowadays anything new is regarded with the deepest suspicion. “We are, in terms of infrastructure, one of the poorest developed countries in the world because successive governments have under spent on infrastructure.” - Adam Raphael, a director of the Yes campaign for high speed rail
* He said that people affected by the route have a legitimate grievance, but believes it can be worked around – as happened in France.

“When the TGV was going south in France, there was bitter resistance. Parts, like in Britain, were beautiful and protected and lots of people lived alongside. But they did it, and they compensated people properly – which I think is crucial – and they consulted and in the end they got the lines through. It’s not easy, but the idea of not doing it is utter madness. Do we want to live in the 19th century?”

Professor Mike Geddes has done a lot of research around HS2 – and is in the “no” camp. “In France, the classic rail network was much less efficient than ours so high speed rail added something – although its classic rail network has continued to decline. We say here we could improve the classic network more cheaply and easily,” he told Channel 4 News. He believes that the government and Network Rail have still not looked properly at the capacity argument, despite a number of studies – and he is also concerned that the project could take up all the money available, leaving other parts of the UK network to fall into decline.

As Professor Geddes argument suggests, at the centre of the HS2 debate is money. The government estimates that it will cost £32.7bn, but believes that the benefit cost ratio (taking into account wider economic benefits) is between £1.80-£2.50 for every £1 spent.

“The areas around the stations are liable to benefit – but there will be very little for other parts of the country. For example, I live near Coventry. Coventry is not only getting fewer trains to London, it is also liable to lose investment to Birmingham,” he said.

Using the French example again, Professor Geddes said unemployment in Lille, one of the key TGV stations, has continued to rise despite HS2. He accepts there has been some growth in the town as a result of the TGV but also suggested that much of this comes from regeneration and investment put into the centre of Lille that is not all TGV-led. –

Professor John Steven Toms, head of the York Management School at the University of York, signed a letter supporting HS2, sent to the Financial Times last year. However, he told Channel 4 News he understands some of the complaints levelled at the project – but maintains that any investment is better than none.

Mr Raphael told Channel 4 News: “Do you want people to travel? If yes, they must be allowed to do so. And how will you do so? Put them in the air, on the road? Compared to road journeys HS2 is a great deal more environmentally friendly. High speed rail can shift huge numbers of people – in Japan their high speed trains run every four minutes at peak hours.”

However, environmental groups generally do not believe that HS2 delivers. Friends of the Earth director of policy and campaigns Craig Bennett said: “We need to revolutionise travel away from roads and planes – but pumping £32 billion into high-speed travel for the wealthy few while ordinary commuters suffer is not the answer. “High-speed rail has a role to play in developing a greener, faster transport system, but current plans won’t do enough to cut emissions overall.”

Plus in a few months the government can’t avoid announcing the route up to Manchester and Leeds and it doesn’t take much to see – there are 70 opposition groups now and then there will be another 70 making life even more difficult.

Comments - 0

**20120110**

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/high-speed-rail-link-hs2-approved-171558>

The controversial £32 billion HS2 high-speed rail project will be given the green light by the Government today.

Britain's new high speed railway was given the go-ahead by the government today, with more tunnels added to the £32 billion project to prevent a backlash in Tory heartlands.

The case for the 250mph route to Birmingham by 2026 and then to Leeds and Manchester by 2033 was overwhelming due to overcrowding on the existing West Coast Main Line. It was also declared essential for the economy. HS2 will carry 26,000 passengers an hour.

Transport Secretary Justine Greening said it was an historic day as nothing so big had been planned since the heyday of the Victorian railway pioneers and the route would slash journey times between our major cities.

She said the route would help close the North-South divide by boosting economic activity between Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham and London and in the first phase alone would create 40,000 jobs

At present values it will generate benefits of up to £47 billion and fares would bring in up to £34 billion over a 60-year period.

And heading off critics within her own party, she said the government had taken on board the strong feelings from some 54,909 responses from individuals and firms and amended the project to lessen its impact on the countryside

She said: "I have decided Britain should embark upon the most significant transport infrastructure project since the building of the motorways by supporting the development and delivery of a new national high speed rail network.

“A new high speed rail network will provide Britain with the additional train seats, connections and speed to stay ahead of the congestion challenge and help create jobs, growth and prosperity for the entire country.”

Business, union leaders and civic leaders in the cities on the route warmly welcomed the announcement, but critics claimed HS2 will cost every householder in Britain £1,700 and will never pay for itself. Jerry Marshall, chairman of the AGHAST (action groups against high speed rail) said: “It is a disaster waiting to happen.”

But Ms Greening said of the 13 miles of the line through the Chilterns, an area of outstanding natural beauty, all but 1.2 miles of it would be in tunnels or cuttings. New measures announced by Ms Greening include a 1.4-mile tunnel near Amersham in Buckinghamshire. There will also be a new 2.75-mile tunnel in Ruislip in north west London

Ms Greening said HS2 would be more attractive to those currently flying or driving and hoped to shift 4.5 million journeys by air to high speed rail as Edinburgh and Glasgow would be just 3.5 hours from London.

“The changes mean that more than half the route will now be mitigated by tunnel or cutting and there will also be a reduction in the impacts on people and communities, ancient woodlands and important heritage sites.”

Comments – 0

**20120110**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/road-and-rail-transport/9004721/High-speed-rail-just-1.2-miles-of-railway-in-Chilterns-will-be-above-ground.html>

Just 1.2 miles of the new High Speed Rail line in the Chilterns will be above ground in an attempt to lessen the visual impact of the controversial project.

Direct train services linking Birmingham to Paris in just over three hours will be possible from the middle of the next decade after the Government confirmed it will press ahead with plans for a high speed rail network.

The decision to include a direct link between the existing high speed line from London to the Channel Tunnel and the new route up to Birmingham was the biggest surprise in the announcement by Justine Greening, the Transport Secretary

At the same time she moved to soothe critics of the controversial scheme, which would see trains hurtling through the countryside at speeds of up to 250 mph, by announcing a series of new tunnels which are designed to minimise the scheme's environmental impact

Other moves to appease critics, including several Tory ministers whose constituencies lie on the route, include an enhanced compensation scheme. The Department for Transport has also agreed to buy and lease back homes which are affected by the route

The full network, with branch lines up to Manchester and Leeds will have a price tag of £32.7 billion. Ultimately the network could extend into Scotland, with the Edinburgh administration saying it will fund the line north of the border.

"This is not in any way a vanity project, this is a key and vital investment in Britain's future," she said.

"At a time of national austerity with rising unemployment and a massive deficit how can spending more than £32 billion on line be justified."

In addition, the Government favours a direct rail link between HS2 and the London to Channel Tunnel HS1 high-speed route. This link would run in a tunnel from Old Oak Common to the North London Line and then use existing infrastructure to reach the HS1 line north of St Pancras station in London.

The Government believes that the whole HS2 project will generate economic benefits of almost £44 billion over a 60-year period.

“We can't afford £32 billion for this project right now. The business case is fundamentally flawed and the Government has vastly inflated the benefits of HSR to the regional economy while hiding the true costs of the project."

"After the Government made such political capital out of opposing a third runway at Heathrow, one can only assume it is forging ahead in the face of such criticism as a way of saving face.

More than 100,000 people have signed a petition against the rail link over fears it will affect property prices, cause excessive noise and cost too much.

**20120110**

<https://www.theguardian.com/money/2012/jan/10/hs2-house-prices-high-speed-rail>

More than 65% of the responses to HS2 consultation mentioned property. Here's what the go-ahead could mean for your house

The high-speed rail link will cut journey times by 30 minutes between London and Birmingham, and is the first part of a scheme which will eventually see trains running at speeds of up to 225mph to Manchester and Leeds.

The government says that out of 55,000 responses to a consultation on the plans, 36,036 (more than 65%) mentioned property.

At some point you will have to move out to make way for construction work on the link to begin. The government will serve compulsory purchase orders (CPOs) on affected properties, but it says it will be "2015 at the earliest" before they are needed.

Even when it does serve a CPO you may not have to move out straightaway – it is working on a sale-and-rent-back scheme which would allow homeowners to sort out the CPO then remain in their property as tenants, paying the market rate until construction begins. – government buys the property and gives it for rent to the owner

The government has said it is looking at ways to streamline this process for affected homeowners and will make an announcement on it later this year. In the meantime it is still running the voluntary exceptional hardship scheme which has helped some homeowners who have struggled to sell their properties because of uncertainty over where the link would run

However, Chris Hartshorn, principal surveyor at Coventry-based firm Elizabeth Davenport, says the one case he has seen go through the exceptional hardship scheme successfully had resulted in the homeowner getting a fair price for their property.

More than 11,800 respondents to the government's consultation mentioned concerns about noise. The government says 60 homes will experience noise levels sufficiently high to qualify for statutory noise insulation, and about 3,100 properties will "experience a noticeable increase in noise". The good news is that the law allows homeowners to claim for any loss of value on their property resulting from noise, vibration or artificial lighting caused by the operation of the line, but this can only be claimed once the railway has been open for a year. In the meantime, del Mar suggests some homeowners near the track could see 10%-15% wiped off the value of their land.

"The crux of this was the uncertainty for buyers and sellers – in a sense you could say the whole area was blighted," says Catherine McAllister, a buying agent for Stacks Property Search which operates across Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire and East Oxfordshire. "Now people can be confident to make an informed decision."

Comments - 0

**20120110**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-16477005>

Mixbury is a small village with about 80 houses and most residents have an opinion on the controversial HS2 scheme.

Villager Claire Targonski said: "It won't deliver anything locally in terms of new stations or business, so it's not going to improve the economy for this particular area."

Many of Mixbury's residents commute by car or use Bicester North train station which is 10 miles from the village. A bus service through the village was recently scrapped because not many people were using it.

Mrs Targonski added: "We choose to live in the countryside because it's quiet and peaceful and to have the HS2 cutting through seems a peculiar thing to do.

But while Ms Beveridge had her concerns about HS2, noise was not one of them. She said: "We have tremendous noise from the A road already. The prevailing wind blows from that direction so it blows the noise towards us.

"The noise level, pollution, wildlife - everything will be affected by it."

"It's not us that's going to suffer," said Richard Beaumont, another local. "It's our children". It will be 14 years before the 225mph trains take their first passengers. By then Claire Targonski's baby son will be ready to take a trip. "I wouldn't hedge your bets... unless he moves to Birmingham or London he isn't going to be able to use it," she said.

Comments - 0

**20120110**

<https://www.aboutmyarea.co.uk/Northamptonshire/Towcester/NN12/News/Local-News/213730-MP-Andrea-Leadsom-Comments-On-HS2-Approval>

South Northamponshire MP Andrea Leadsom early response regarding HS2 following the announcement that HS2 is to go ahead this morning. ‘Many of those that have written to me have questioned why Network Rail has critiqued the alternatives to HS2 when they were clearly in favour of HS2 from the beginning.’ ‘I strongly support the need for better transport infrastructure but I still believe the existing HS2 project is not the right project and is not good value for taxpayers.’

Comment - 0

**20120110**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-16467903>

Indeed, the project has cross-party support and is backed by some of the country's most senior economists and business leaders, as well as by many MPs and by union leaders such as RMT head Bob Crow and Len McCluskey, general secretary of Unite.

Network Rail, which owns and operates the UK's rail infrastructure, has also thrown its weight behind the project, having dismissed alternative proposals to upgrade the existing railways as too costly and disruptive.

However, fed up of being portrayed as Nimbys ("Not in my back yard"), the locals along the proposed railway line have tended to focus less on the impact on their own rural lifestyles. Instead, they highlight other - arguably rather more objective - reasons why it should not go ahead.

The Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), which is arguably the most vocal think tank opposed to HS2, predicts that costs will be greater while the economic benefits will be lower than the government has forecast.

The benefit cost ratio (including wider economic benefits) for HS2 is £1.80-2.50 benefits for every £1 spent on the cost of the project. "The BCR has been revised downwards slightly due to the current economic climate but remains convincing," says the government.

Comments - 0

**20120111**

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2084959/HS2-Tory-shires-furious-high-speed-rail-link-gets-ahead.html>

Ministers were accused of throwing millions at heartland constituencies to head off the immediate threat of resignations and backbench rebellions, and a potential future backlash at the ballot box

She dropped her threat to quit last night – but may yet face a challenge from an independent at the next election – after Miss Greening confirmed plans to put the line in a one-and-a-half-mile tunnel through her Buckinghamshire constituency.

Miss Greening said the scheme would mean more seats, better connections, new jobs, and growth and prosperity for the entire country.

But Miss Greening claimed the overall impact of changes to the 140-mile route – more than half of which will now be in tunnels and cuttings – would be to reduce the cost by about £250million

Several other ministers, including Attorney General Dominic Grieve, Europe Minister David Lidington and Cabinet Office Minister Nick Hurd, are also under intense pressure from their constituents to oppose the plans.

Julian Lewis said it was ‘perverse’ to spend so much money on a single rail line at a time of spending cuts in areas such as defence

Wycombe MP Steve Baker said: ‘What we are doing here is using the power of the State to direct scarce capital into a project that would not be financially viable in the private sector.

‘We should expect the country to get poorer as a result – it is a costly white elephant.’

Grassroots opposition groups along the line of the route have already threatened legal action to try to frustrate the Government’s plans. Yesterday they vowed to step up their opposition.

‘HS2 will cost every household in Britain £1,700 and, based on Government figures, will never pay for itself.’

Miss Greening announced plans for an unprecedented compensation scheme for homeowners whose properties are destroyed or blighted by the scheme.

Owners will even have the option to sell their home to the State and rent it back on favourable terms, while those living above tunnels will be given permanent indemnity against subsidence.

More than 400 homes will have to be demolished and thousands more will be affected by increased train noise. It will also involve a complete revamp of Euston Station, the line’s London terminus.

The first phase of the scheme will cost £16.4billion, although no construction contracts will be awarded until after the next election.

Labour said it backed plans for a high-speed rail network, but had concerns about the route and likely ticket prices. Miss Eagle said there was a danger the new network would become a ‘rich man’s toy’.

The HS2 rail link will carve straight through its rolling hills, bringing with it a noisy and muddy construction phase and then the prospect of many 250mph trains passing through every hour. – people living nearby has twin scare

He spoke of feeling ‘shock and horror’, adding: ‘I cannot believe the Government is planning to spend £130million per mile on a single railway that will only benefit a tiny number of people when so many are struggling. It will destroy great tracts of irreplacable English countryside and all for nothing.’

Alex Sheffield, 43, who lives in a 500-year-old flint-fronted farmhouse with her husband and three children, still does not know if the line will go right through her kitchen or pass through her beautifully landscaped back garden. She said: ‘The consultation process was a joke – despite 90 per cent opposition it still goes ahead – and local feeling is running very high.’

David Cameron should be careful next time he visits Chequers, just down the road. The 10,000 or so villagers of Great Missenden are ready for a fight.

**20120112**

<https://www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/news/9465493.hs2-will-benefit-swindon-insists-minister/>

THE £32bn high-speed rail network from London to the Mid-lands will also benefit passengers in Swindon, the Government has insisted.

The rewards would be felt on the Great Western line – delivering a new interchange in West London and easing pressure of overcrowding, Transport Secretary Justine Greening said.

However, the announcement appeared to kill off the proposal for an interchange at Heathrow Airport, which would deliver Swindon rail passengers directly into Britain's busiest airport.

Late last year, a committee of MPs urged the department for transport to come clean over that £500m scheme, criticising ‘a series of nods and winks in the press’ as unacceptable

This is not just about high-speed rail, but about taking pressure off existing lines

“The benefits of HS2 will be felt far more broadly than just in the cities with direct services.”

William Dartmouth, a UKIP Euro-MP for the South West, criticised the plan. He said: “This project will cost taxpayers in the South West almost £110m and will have absolutely no benefits whatsoever for local people.

“The whole project is a sop to the big parties marginal seats in the West Midlands. They have either forgotten, or don't care about the needs of people in the South West.”

Comments – 11

* Maybe I missed the point, but the benefits were what exactly? The whole project does seem like a lot of money over a long time with little predictable return on investment.
* Reporters have forgotten the approval of electrification of routes through and beyond swindon allowing the new HS trains as well as the already HS 125s. We will still be years behind countries folk believe to be 3rd world countries who have romped ahead.
* When you look at the cost of building and the projected income there is a massive deficit over a period of 25 years and even on official figures which are disputed, income will only exceed costs after 60 years.
* 30billions of taxpayers money being spent and this governement has not yet understood that a succesful high speed network must integrate with other systems like airports. I believe that this is a deliberate act on the part of this administration in order to make this line the preserve of the rich, famous, powerful. I do not think that as it is HS2 will benefit to Swindon since travellers will have to travel to the London to connect with a London flight or Birmingham bound HST. To the contrary, I think that HS2 will put extra pressure on the existing lines to deliver more passengers wanting to use HST
* I won't be able to afford to travel by then anyway. Currently pay £450 month ticket to Reading
* Bob - Having discussed the intended rail projects in great detail with many interested parties over the last few days--once again your figures are very distorted. Firstly suitable lines have been identified for electrification. That is not in itself overly expensive as a recent article on this site showed. Swindon is central to the success of that. Other routes are planned that conform to the requirements of the new trains as many were upgraded when HS175s were planned. Fuel costs will decrease and due to the power increase the trains can haul far more carriages many of which meet the higher spec. Most costs will rise in any event and that is all around the world and central to the success is having adequate supplies of electricity and ending the folly of buying power from europe which is expensive and nuclear power will be at the forefront of resources. Being alarmist and failing to see savings and advantages--you really have no idea as to the hard work many are putting into this to reduce the reliance on fossil fuels and produce more jobs and ease of travel
* Off you go again Walter, the figures are official government figures. But I guess their experts aren't as knowledgeable as yours. However I did point out they have been disputed, as in the costs could be significantly higher, and thus less beneficial. Ye Gods man is there no end to your pomposity, not to mention fantasy
* There you go Walter to separate number crunching reports: <http://fullfact.org/factchecks/high_speed_two_train_costs-3227> <http://www.transport-watch.co.uk/hs2-reports.htm>

**20120112**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leeds-16492669>

Lille hint for high-speed Leeds?

It was no accident that the new line went through Lille, it fought hard to get the train to visit and planned a new station in the middle of the city. The new TGV station, Lille Europe, not only connected the city to London, Brussels and Paris but has revitalised the businesses in the district around the station.

Ms Mills said the experience in France had shown that cities with a TGV station in the centre, rather than the edge of town, had found it "easier to build" the economic benefits as well as the transport benefits.

"Lille was a long time planning and had reserved a location for a transport hub and the city has grown around it," she said. The new station was built near to the original station and the rest of the site used for offices, hotels and a retail centre.

One resident of the city said the line had changed the fate, and the face, of the city.

Comments – 0

**20120112**

<http://www.china.org.cn/business/2012-01/12/content_24390985.htm>

Several Chinese rail companies expressed interests in bidding for the British high-speed rail project worth £32.7 billion (US$50.1 billion), South China Morning Post reported Wednesday.

China Railway Group and China South Locomotive & Rolling Stock Corporation Limited are two potential suitors of the project by High Speed Two Ltd. (HS2), the oversight company set up by the British government. China South Locomotive's Thomas Wong said one of his company's objectives was to "expand our overseas market."

Comments - 0

**20120114**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/road-and-rail-transport/9015543/Cabinet-minister-Cheryl-Gillan-sells-home-near-route-of-HS2.html>

A Cabinet minister sold her home close to the proposed High Speed 2 rail link just two months before the Government gave the go-ahead to the controversial project.

Mrs Gillan had been one of the leading opponents to HS2 on the Tories’ benches and had previously threatened to resign if the project was given the green light. However, after the government signalled its intention to press ahead with the scheme last Tuesday, Gillian emphasised the “good progress” that has been made in mitigating the effects of the new rail route in her constituency with longer tunnels.

This weekend banners and posters have appeared in her constituency that read: “Cheryl, you let us down. Go now.”

As opposition to HS2 grew last year Mrs Gillan warned that “many” properties would be blighted by HS2 “for a long period of time”.

It is possible that Mrs Gillan would have obtained a significantly lower price for her Amersham home after Justine Greening, the transport secretary, gave the go-ahead for HS2 last Tuesday. The 2010 ministerial code stipulates that “minister must ensure that no conflict arises, or could reasonably be perceived to arise, between their public duties and their private interests, financial or otherwise”.

Comments - 0

**20120114**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/road-and-rail-transport/9015127/High-speed-rail-Boris-Johnson-says-that-HS2-is-not-right-and-doesnt-work-properly.html>

High-speed rail: Boris Johnson says that HS2 is 'not right' and 'doesn’t work properly'

The Mayor of London says that the Government’s controversial £34 billion high-speed rail line,is "not right", “doesn’t work properly” and the fight against it will go on.

Speaking to The Sunday Telegraph, Mr Johnson said: “I am not viscerally hostile. I am a passionate supporter of HS2 in principle, but it has to be right for London. And there are important aspects of HS2 which are not right.

Mr Johnson's words will delight residents in London, the Chilterns and south Midlands facing blight from the new line, as well as a much wider group who believe the project is a waste of money. But they are a major blow to ministers, who hoped they had quelled much of the political opposition to the scheme.

As mayor, Mr Johnson can veto any planning application in London. Though this power is unlikely to apply to HS2 itself – which will be built under its own special parliamentary bill, bypassing the normal planning process – he could still cause significant problems and delays for preparatory work if he remains dissatisfied with the project. Though more attention has been given to potential victims in the shires, the largest number of people losing their homes are in the capital.

“Let nobody in Birmingham think this will boost the Birmingham economy,” he said. “They are going to have to get used to being the northernmost suburb of London. I’m still in favour of high-speed rail, but not on this route. Why not use the existing pollution corridor [the M1 or M40] rather than raping some of the loveliest countryside in England?

Lord Jones’s (former head of the CBI and trade minister, Lord Digby Jones) opposition is highly significant because less than a year ago he signed a letter strongly supporting HS2 and saying it would “give the economy a much-needed boost, particularly in the North and Midlands".

New figures given by the Government now show, however, that the predicted benefits of HS2 have fallen sharply to levels defined by the Department for Transport itself as “low value for money”. Analysis of the figures by The Sunday Telegraph suggests that even this is a significant exaggeration.

Giving the go-ahead for HS2 last week, the Transport Secretary, Justine Greening, announced an extra nine miles of tunnel or “green tunnel”, a form of cutting with a light layer of soil on top. This appears, for now, to have silenced a number of Tory MPs along the route, including the Welsh Secretary, Cheryl Gillan, who had promised to resign. However, it has not reduced local opposition to the scheme and does not appear to have satisfied Mr Johnson

HS2 opponents are now understood to be preparing at least three co-ordinated legal actions against the Government.

* One will claim that ministers failed to perform the required environmental assessment before giving approval,
* another that they failed to properly consider the alternatives to HS2, and
* a third that the Government’s four-month consultation exercise was a sham geared to a predetermined outcome. Documents published last week reveal that 91 per cent of those consulted opposed the scheme.

comments - 0

**20120114**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/columnists/christopherbooker/9015342/The-continent-is-the-final-destination-for-HS2.html>

The London to Birmingham high-speed rail link is part of a Europe-wide scheme dreamed up Jacques Delors back in 1993

There is a tantalising mystery at the heart of the immense row over the Government’s proposed new HS2 railway line. Every conceivable argument – commercial, economic and environmental – seems to be against what has been called “the worst waste of public money for generations”. The scheme makes no practical sense at all. And yet our Government seems determined to railroad it through regardless.

The elephant in the room here was hinted at in a brief paragraph of last week’s statement by Justine Greening, the Transport Secretary. She said that the new line would “provide a direct link to the Continent”, forming the foundation for “a potentially wider high-speed network in years to come”

As we know, the high-speed trains from Birmingham will not stop at St Pancras, where the HS1 line to Paris begins. They will either stop at Euston or, as the ministry confirmed to me, will continue, via the North London line and the Channel Tunnel, direct to the Continent.

The hidden story behind this project goes back to 1993, when Jacques Delors was busy with two gargantuan schemes for the integration of Europe. One was to give it a single currency. The other, just as ambitious, was his plan for Trans-European Networks (TENs), designed to integrate all Europe’s transport and communications systems. These would not be funded directly by the EU; instead, the member states would construct their own bits according to an overall plan. Part of the grand design was a Europe-wide network of high-speed trains, sections of which have now been built by several countries, including the Netherlands. As Andrew Gilligan revealed in last week’s Sunday Telegraph, the Dutch line has been a commercial disaster, running 85 per cent empty and needing a £250 million bailout by taxpayers.

Whenever a new line is built, under EU directive 96/48, it must connect “interoperably” with the rest of the network. This is why those trains from Birmingham and the North will have to connect directly with the continent. No doubt, since one can fly from Birmingham to Paris in under an hour, such trains will prove as financially disastrous as their Dutch equivalent – but nothing in the grand design is based on practical calculations. HS2 is a political project, inspired by Delors’ dream of an integrated Europe. And that is why our politicians and officials, under its spell, press on with it, regardless of common sense.

Comments - 0

**20120116**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-16578416>

Labour has criticised Welsh Secretary Cheryl Gillan for selling her home close to the planned High Speed 2 rail route.

The sale went through two months before the UK government approved the project.

Her spokesman said the house had been on the market since June 2010 and went for 20% under the original price

It is about 500 yards from the route of the London to Birmingham section of HS2, which was given the green light last week by Transport Secretary Justine Greening.

Mrs Gillan has previously threatened to resign over HS2 with opponents in her Chesham and Amersham constituency saying it will blight the area.

Last week she said "good progress" had been made in mitigating the impact of the new line with tunnels.

Shadow Cabinet Office minister Jon Trickett wrote to Prime Minister David Cameron urging him to investigate whether there had been any breach of the ministerial code, which conflict between public duty and private interests.

**20120116**

<https://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/news/the-chron-looks-at-what-it-will-mean-to-northamptonshire-if-the-hs2-is-created-1-3423516>

THE term NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) has been frequently thrust at those fighting the Government’s controversial high speed rail plans.

But much as campaigners have countered that their concerns are of a national nature - quoting the cost and business case amongst others - no matter what the arguments for and against the line are, if HS2 goes ahead, how will it affect our ‘back yard’?

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE’S last known population of a nationally scarce butterfly will be among the casualties of the new HS2 route, wildlife experts have warned

A spokeswomen for the Trust said: “Helmdon disused railway SSSI will be directly affected by the route and is made up of chalk grassland, scrub and hedgerows. “The steep sides of the railway cuttings provide an important microclimate home to many species of wildflower and butterfly. “It is home to Northamptonshire’s last known population of the nationally scarce Small Butterfly. The sheltered site provides an abundant source of the butterfly’s sole food plant the kidney vetch.”

Brian Eversham, chief executive of the Wildlife Trust added: “The mitigation measures announced focus on the noise and visual impact of HS2. “Amendments to the route running through Northamptonshire announced will not reduce the damaging impact on wildlife.”

Nikki Williams, head of campaigning at the Woodland Trust said: “The confirmed route will destroy and irrevocably damage ancient woodland. “This is the UK’s richest wildlife habitat and we only have a tiny fraction of it left - just two per cent of our land area. “Once destroyed, the centuries old soils and unique mix of species cannot be recreated by planting new trees.

“It’s important to make the point that this is not just about the area of ancient woodland to be lost. “Damage is as much about fragmentation of a habitat. Noise and vibration associated with high speed rail is shown consistently in studies to have a huge negative impact on wildlife, so slicing a small corner off a wood, such as that of Halse Copse, will impact on the wildlife in the rest of the wood affecting its ecological integrity and sustainability.”

‘IN some ways the issue has brought the village closer together, as there’s been this sort of ‘our backs are against the wall’ situation, but there is also a higher level of depression and a lot less smiles,” says Nigel Galletly, chairman of Chipping Warden and Edgcote.

The original HS2 route was set to go straight through the village primary school playing ground, it has now moved to the edge of the village.

The biggest issue is that no one has been able to sell a house for two years. “Some people have lost their jobs and they are unable to move to find new ones.”

“I think the latest route is more sensible in terms of the impact on villages but they still will be affected; burying it will also create more environmental damage and we don’t want that either.

Mr Clarke, who has been based on the Manor Farm site for 46 years, said: “It was always my dream to create this course, but it will just be destroyed.”

Nigel Taylor, who together with his wife Ann, runs an eventing centre at Washbrook Farm, in Aston-le-Walls, fosters similar fears. “If it goes on a viaduct or not, it makes no difference it will still go straight through my land and speeding trains and horses do not mix.

Rachel Halvorsen, has an organic farm near Brackley which has been in her family for generations, also set to be sliced by the route. “There is not much of an argument it will benefit the country, but it will not benefit this county,” she said.

“The line will go through the field where Colin Firth made his debut... it just won’t exist anymore,” says Lizzy Williams, from Culworth, who has campaigned relentlessly against the plans, including walking the entire HS2 route.

“In recent years the development of battlefield archaeology has proved that these sites can contain a wealth of valuable archaeological evidence.

“The revised route now takes the alignment beyond the known location of the historic battlefield of Edgcote Moor. It also moves the line away from Edgcote House and reduces the impact on the setting and direct grounds of the house.”

The chosen route represents the best balance between costs, benefits and sustainability impacts. The route through Lower Thorpe has been chosen as we need to keep the line as straight as possible to achieve the necessary speeds, while avoiding larger settlements in the area such as Thorpe Mandeville. HS2 Ltd will be contacting people directly affected by the plans to discuss the particular circumstances regarding their property.”

“There is a strong demand for faster and more-frequent trains between Northampton and London. Meeting this demand would be impossible in the future unless HS2 is built as the West Coast Main Line will be full by the middle of the next decade. The new line could lead to the number of typical daily direct trains to London Euston from Northampton increasing from 35 up to 51. Train services between towns in the region would also be increased. It also frees up capacity for more freight traffic on the WCML, to support the growing rail-linked distribution centres such as the Daventry International Rail Freight Terminal site at Crick.”

Comments - 0

**20120120**

<https://earthtechling.com/2012/01/uk-high-speed-rail-hs2-gets-go-ahead/>

London to Manchester in less time than it takes for United to play Arsenal? Birmingham to London quicker than it takes enjoy a pint and an order of fish and chips down the way at the Queen’s Head pub? Birmingham to Leeds in the time it takes to enjoy a pot of tea? It could all happen – and via train, no less – now that the U.K. government has given the go-ahead to a national high speed rail network called HS2.

The new network will also connect with the existing West Coast and East Coast main lines to serve passengers beyond the HS2 network in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Newcastle, Durham, York, Darlington, Liverpool, Preston, Wigan and Lancaster

These are not just any trains. The HS2 bullets will be up to a quarter of a mile long with 1,100 seats.

According to Transport Secretary Justine Greening, the project will generate economic benefits of close to $73 billion (US) and fare revenues of close to 53 billion pounds over a 60-year period. The network will also ease the nation’s growing congestion troubles, transferring in the neighborhood of 9 million auto journeys and close to 4.5 million air journeys to the rail network per year.

Comments - 0

**20120123**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/property/cities/9023250/My-love-affair-with-Birmingham.html>

We know about London, but what about the city that will be at the other end of HS2? There’s more to Birmingham than curry and canals, says proud Brummie Derek Bishton.

When the announcement was made two weeks ago, one of the first comments I heard was: “I suppose that means we’ll be overrun with escaping Brummies.” Ho ho. So that’s Cameron’s plan: spend £35 billion of public money for Brummies to burrow under the Chilterns in a modern version of The Great Escape.

Their reactions to the capital of the Midlands are the same as Queen Victoria’s. When passing through the region by train, she asked for the blinds to be drawn.

Those friends who see HS2 simply as a way of getting me to work faster on a Monday morning have missed the point. Time saving is important, but the real benefit for the West Midlands will be the huge increase in capacity that HS2 promises. Existing services are already overcrowded. By 2024, every route into the city – by road as well as rail – will be gridlocked.

If traffic between major cities is switched onto HS2, we can free up capacity on our existing lines. This means more regional services can run, as well as freight. The economic benefits will be enormous. Some estimates suggest it will lead to an increase in Birmingham’s economic output of £1.5 billion a year, and create more than 20,000 new jobs. And the environmental benefits of getting traffic off our roads are obvious

There is a 20-year “Big City Plan” to improve Birmingham

Comments - 0

**20120127**

<https://theecologist.org/2012/jan/27/hs2-can-uk-fast-track-better-rail-system>

Some criticised its proposed budget of £32.7bn, costing taxpayers roughly £1,000 per family. Others were thrilled by the prospect of saving about an hour on their commutes. The one thing everyone can seem to agree upon is that the public transport system needs to change. Whether it’s high ticket prices, increased carbon emissions, slow travel times, or crowded cars, a solution is needed.

The Department for Transport recognises that intercity rail lines are congested and in need of relief. But critics say HS2 should be part of a long-term plan, not a short-term solution to a problem that needs immediate attention.

‘One of the concerns we have is it’s almost like the government is developing high speed rail as a proxy for having a long-term transport strategy,’ says Richard Hebditch, from Campaign for Better Transport.

The government’s current plan is to channel money being used for the Crossrail engineering project, which will connect 37 rail stations across Greater London, into High Speed 2 when Crossrail is completed. The argument is that this will ensure money isn’t taken away from other infrastructure projects, when scheduled construction begins in 2017.

Like Hebditch, Rupert Fausset, from Forum for the Future, believes High Speed 2 could be a success if it is approached in the right way. 'I’d like to see High Speed 2 as part of a strategy for low-carbon transport,’ he says. ‘So don’t think about just one rail line. Don’t even think about just the rail system. Think about, and plan, the whole system together, and we don’t really have a great tradition of doing that.'

'If there is anything that doesn’t work about this, it’s that it’s about the culture of more,’ he says. ‘It’s more travel; it’s faster travel. More, more, more. When the direction we really need to be going in for true sustainability across the overall global system is, in the developed countries, to be levelling off and not grabbing for more, and not trying to move further and faster.'

HS2 is being heavily championed as a greener substitute for air travel, with advocates saying faster rail service will cut down on short flights to northern cities like Manchester and Edinburgh. This, in turn, will reduce carbon emissions. But opponents say discontinued local flights will simply be replaced by intercontinental flights

What’s more while the government is pushing rail as a green option, it is also drawing up plans for a controversial international airport on the Thames Estuary

Mayor Boris Johnson reiterated the need for an alternative to Heathrow this month. ‘Passenger demand for London’s airports is forecast to increase from 140 million passengers a year in 2010 to 400 million passengers a year by 2050,’ he says. ‘Yet the UK lacks a clear long term vision for how to respond.’

The Government has gone out of its way to make HS2 as palatable as possible, offering extra incentives for affected homeowners, while extending tunnels and cuttings to minimise effects on Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, such as the Chilterns. But for many, high speed rail will never be appealing.

Opponents say HS2 is not worth the amount of time saved for commuters, about an hour on journeys to Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds, according to the DfT. Action group STOP HS2, says the rail line will have devastating impacts on rural villages and the environment, will increase carbon emissions and will mostly benefit London.

Action group member Rae Sloan has lived in the Berkshire village of Twyford for about 30 years. HS2 will cut through the countryside near her village. ‘The volume of it will be horrendous,’ she says. ‘One train every 2-4 minutes is equally obscene. When you look at the larger picture it is just absolutely ridiculous.’

It is true that simply fiddling with existing lines isn’t enough, Hebditch (Richard Hebditch, from Campaign for Better Transport.) says. New lines are needed to truly alleviate congestion and increase capacity. This will not only allow more room for commuters, but also for freight.

Ralph Smyth, from Campaign to Protect Rural England, supports the principle of a new high speed rail line. But says he worries the polarised debate has turned the focus towards whether high speed rail is right or wrong, when attention should really be paid to the policy and design choices that determine how sustainable it is.

‘If you think where we need to be in 50 years and try to work backwards, for example working out how our transport system needs to change if we are to move beyond oil, then it’s difficult to argue that a new high capacity railway line should not be part of the solution,’ he says. ‘The question is would the Government’s proposals fit with that?’

Comments - 0

**20120127**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/road-and-rail-transport/9042266/Country-diary-HS2-or-more-car-chaos.html>

Most opponents of HS2 who read the noble gentleman's argument were probably more embarrassed than gratified by his support. According to Lord Astor, the HS2 project is supported by "Northern Labour MPs who relish the thought of the beauty of the Chilterns being destroyed". "I admit I am biased …" he concludes, "in favour of the countryside. I have walked and ridden over the Chilterns all my life." (In case you are beginning to think he should get out more, he does own a 20,000-acre estate on the island of Jura in the Hebrides, where he goes to kill deer.)

The Chilterns are listed as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which might explain why HS2 is costing way more than it needs to do, because the current scheme requires that nearly all of the track that passes through the Chilterns go underground. Travellers on HS2 will not be allowed to see the countryside that so gladdens the heart of his Lordship.

Putting the train line in a tunnel is not enough for the spoiled darlings who are now whingeing that there must be egress from the tunnel at 2-kilometer intervals with access to roads. When people are so difficult to please it's pointless to try. Only a hundred thousand people live in the Chilterns, and many of them spend most of their time elsewhere, so they could be ignored. Scrap the tunnel, Ms Greening, if you dare, and save the rest of us a few hardwon billions

Indeed the Chilterns are framed by motorways as it is: the M40 to the west, and the hideous M1, snicking between Dunstable and Luton to the east. The M40 Chiltern Environmental Group is now campaigning to reduce the environmental impact of the M40, either by resurfacing the carriageways with noise-reducing compounds, or erecting noise barriers, or slowing traffic down, or limiting the number of heavy goods vehicles, or turning off the lighting, or all of the above. No one seems to have thought of simply removing as much of the motorway traffic as possible onto rail.

The number of mammals killed on British roads is so staggering that we have stopped counting. Nearly half are rabbits, but the rest are creatures that are becoming rarer with every year that passes, hedgehogs, badgers, otters, weasels.

Trains seem to kill far fewer creatures, perhaps because the animals can hear them coming, certainly because there are far fewer trains and far fewer tracks than there are cars and roads. That is one of the points of HS2: fewer cars on the roads. An end to motorway building. This is the Big Idea. The business case for HS2 is not the point.

Comments - 0

**20120201**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-16844211>

Landowners along the route of the new HS2 high-speed rail line will be offered an initial £1,000 payment to allow surveyors access to their land.

The National Farmers' Union (NFU) and the Country Land and Business Association (CLA) said they had negotiated the voluntary agreement.

The money will come from HS2 Ltd, the government-owned company running the project.

"This agreement is a positive first step in making sure that the government sticks to its promises on compensation and mitigation," he said.

The CLA said that on top of the £1,000 payment, HS2 Ltd has agreed to make additional payments if further environmental surveys are required and will pay for any damage done or losses caused

Alison Munro, chief executive of HS2 Ltd, said: "We hope to develop close working partnerships with those affected by the new line and this licensing arrangement is an important step in that direction."

Comments - 0

**20120203**

<https://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/mortgageshome/article-2095905/New-high-speed-link-boost-Birminghams-future-housing-market.html>

Cutting a minute off a commuter train journey to London adds £1,300 to the price of the average terrace home, and, according to Savills, increases the price of a detached property by £2,250 for every minute saved.

Another clue to HS2’s success could lie in what’s happened with High Speed 1, the railway linking St Pancras with the Channel Tunnel, which provides a faster service between London and Kent. The journey to Ashford was cut from 84 minutes to 37 minutes, and prices are reported to have increased by 12 to 14 per cent in a year. But Yolande Barnes, of Savills, says: ‘Unlike HS1, which linked to international destinations and took in established commuter destinations en route, HS2 will simply link city to city.’

Whether it can tempt investors to the West Midlands might just depend on the cost of train tickets

Comments – 1

* There's still time to make a profit from the high speed train route. Estate agents tell me that house prices in Gravesend are poised to soar skywards and that large houses there are expected to triple in value in the next 18 months.

**20120210**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-16982768>

Farmers' hopes for HS2 'fair deal'

"If I wake up on my farm in 15 years' time and I see a train flying past every seven minutes, I don't want to feel I've been ripped off," said Robert Lockhart, whose family has been farming on land on the Staffordshire/Warwickshire border since 1938

Three generations before him, Mr Lockhart's family moved to the land - between Drayton Bassett and Middleton - after their farm in Castle Bromwich was taken off them to build the Spitfire factory. Now, history is almost repeating itself

The 58-year-old farmer who grows cereal and potato crops, said he just wanted to get a "fair deal" if the rail line was to go ahead.

He continued: "In our area in particular, around Lichfield, we've had the Birmingham northern relief road, the A5... We've got a bitter experience of compulsory purchase and not being treated very favourably, so we're very much against it."

"It affects farmers so much more than others," said Tom Bradley, the former NFU chairman for central Warwickshire. "You can have the line through your farm, it can cut you in half, it can leave a part the other side of the railway, which is totally unfarmable."

"It's a shame for our land and other people's land because it's going through a country where an economic depression is happening," Andrew said.

"We just don't have the money to fund this sort of movement in technology for England compared to the HS2 rail links in France and Japan, for example."

Comments - 0

**20120219**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/road-and-rail-transport/9090727/High-speed-rail-link-at-risk-of-derailment-because-of-225mph-trains.html>

Secret research has been ordered into the safety of the Government's controversial HS2 rail scheme amid warnings that the high speeds proposed could cause catastrophic track failures and derailments.

HS2 claims it will be able to run up to 18 trains an hour – one every three minutes 20 seconds

Professor Peter Woodward, one of the world's leading experts on the geo-engineering of railways, said that high-speed running created "new problems" in track which "may threaten the stability and safety of the train". In papers lodged with the Government's Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), Prof Woodward warned that speeds as high as those proposed by HS2 could trigger "significant amplification of train-track vibrations" causing "rapid deterioration of the track, ballast and sub-ballast, including possible derailment and ground failure".

Trains will travel at 225mph, rising to 250mph within a few years.

Most high-speed lines, including Britain's existing Eurostar, run no faster than 186mph and the world's current fastest rail-based trains, France's TGV Est, travel at 200mph.

Some trains on the new Chinese high-speed network used to run at 220mph, but were reduced to 186mph last year on safety grounds

Professor Woodward, who is professor of railway geo-technical engineering at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, and a colleague, Prof Mike Forde of Edinburgh University, have now been awarded almost £500,000 by the Government to investigate the issue.

Emails released under the Freedom of Information Act show that Andy Went, HS2's head of track, now a senior engineer at Network Rail responsible for HS2, is closely involved in the research.

HS2, Professor Woodward and academics at Southampton University are also set to obtain Government funding for a further and larger but secret research project on the same subject.

HS2's involvement in the Edinburgh and Southampton projects calls into question Prof McNaughton's assurance to MPs on the Transport Select Committee that a 225mph service can run safely on current forms of track.

"What matters is when you cross the [speed] barrier," he said. "If you do that, ground vibrations can increase twenty, thirty times."

"The most straightforward way to improve the situation is just to make the ground stiffer – by injection of concrete, or by piling," he said. "But the best or cheapest measure you can do is just to reduce the speed."

However, HS2 needs to run at 225mph if it is to meet its ambitious business case and capacity claims.

Running at the industry standard of 186mph would cut the £34 billion scheme's already shrinking benefit-cost ratio by 15 per cent.

A spokesman for HS2 said: "It is nonsense to suggest that we would design a railway that did not take into account the effects of Rayleigh waves. "We are designing HS2 so that there is no possibility that Rayleigh waves would lead to any problems such as derailment. "We will continue to work closely with and support leading researchers such as Prof Woodward to develop and design safe and efficient high speed train operations in the UK."

Comments - 0

**20120227**

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2106984/The-2-6billion-HS2-rail-pipe-plan-pump-water-North-drought-hit-South.html>

A Utility company has drawn up plans for a £2.6billion pipeline to send water from the North to the drought-hit South. United Utilities has revealed plans to pump 66million gallons a day in a pipe alongside the proposed high-speed rail route from London to Birmingham.

The firm, which says the controversial HS2 project is an opportunity to help the parched South, will present its plans to MPs next month for consideration.

United, Britain’s biggest stock market-listed water company, claims it would cost £7million a mile to install the 6ft 6in diameter steel pipe.

Russ Houlden, chief financial officer at United Utilities, said: ‘There is more water available in the North than the South, and this issue will become more acute as climate change impacts hit us over the next 50 years

'A North-South pipeline could be built to address that. Typically, the objections to such an idea have been build cost, operational cost, planning difficulties and environmental impact.'

Comments – 63

* Interesting to note that the prestige part of this plan, the Hi speed rail link, runs from London to Birmingham, and the more mundane water pipe is to run from Birmingham to London.

**20120310**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-17314545>

Scots offer to send water to aid drought-hit England

London's Mayor, Boris Johnson says water could be exported to the south of England via a series of canals. But Scottish Infrastructure Minister, Alex Neil, has suggested harnessing it to work to build the High Speed Rail system (HS2).

Mr Neil, has a more modern solution: "High Speed Rail may provide opportunities for joint working on the necessary infrastructure," he said. "Our Hydro Nation agenda is ambitious and offers huge opportunities in this area. That means helping out others where possible, and I am willing to make that happen, if the UK Government is too." However, his proposal may hit the buffers as the Westminster government's plans for HS2 see it running only between London and Birmingham. To ensure water pipes laid alongside could carry surplus Scottish water would mean extending the railway to Scotland - something the SNP want, but which the UK coalition government has so far resisted.

Comments - 0

**20120322**

<http://www.rail.co.uk/rail-news/2012/cargo-carrying-tgv-makes-first-visit-to-the-station/>

London will join the network in 2017 after a bespoke depot has been built and by then, Cologne and Bordeaux will also have their own terminals. The 25 special cargo carrying trains are designed to be loaded or unloaded in just 30 minutes. These are being procured at the moment and will be able to operate across Europe and on the UK’s High Speed network.

So, once HS2 is opened, we will see yellow TGVs in action from the Channel Tunnel to the north removing many lorries from our overcrowded motorways and cargo flights from our airports.

Comments – 0

**20120326**

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2120035/New-city-Midlands-rail-link-green-belt-land-cope-population-growth.html>

A new city could be built in the Midlands alongside the controversial High Speed 2 rail line as part of a drive to tackle the country’s housing shortage. The transport project’s chief engineer said up to 100,000 homes could be built on green belt land.

He said there could also be a ‘second Docklands’ to the west of London, and called for an expansion of Birmingham Airport. Joe Rukin, the co-ordinator of the Stop HS2 campaign, said: ‘We have always suspected that HS2 is really a developers’ charter.

Comments - 207

**20120402**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/9181888/Councils-launch-bid-to-block-high-speed-rail.html>

Councils opposed to plans to run a high speed rail line from London to Birmingham have fired the latest salvo in their campaign to block the scheme

In all 15 local authorities are seeking a Judicial Review of the £33 billion project which would see trains travelling at speeds of up to 250mph through the Chilterns, Warwickshire and Northamptonshire

The scheme is not only being opposed by councils in the rural Tory heartlands, but also two London authorities: Labour-controlled Camden and Conservative-run Hillingdon on the outskirts of the capital.

The councils also claim the Government has failed to consider the impact of the line on London’s tube network.

They say the decision was taken without considering the full environmental impact of the route which will not only run through an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty but also endanger a number of animal habitats including a colony of rare Bechstein’s bats.

According to papers submitted by the councils, the route will also be in breach of two EU wildlife and conservation directives

“They effectively excluded over half those affected by the proposal from participating in the consultation and in practice ignored the views of over 50,000 people and businesses who did respond.

A Department for Transport spokesman defended the scheme. "HS2 is a project that will deliver jobs and prosperity across the entire country,” he said.

“Network Rail predict that the West Coast Main Line will be full by the mid 2020s, and have concluded that building a new line is the best option – with HS2 delivering four pounds of benefit for every additional pound spent compared to a new conventional-speed line

"The line of route between London and the West Midlands has been continually improved to mitigate the impact on those living near it and the environment. “We believe we have struck the right balance between the reasonable concerns of people living on or near the line, who will be offered a package of compensation measures, the environment and the need to keep Britain moving."

Comments - 0

**20120406**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/road-and-rail-transport/9189588/HS2-50000-bodies-to-be-exhumed-for-high-speed-rail-link.html>

Up to 50,000 bodies will need to be exhumed to make way for the new high speed rail line from London to Birmingham, it has emerged.

Historians estimate that 50,000 bodies have been buried in the public gardens over the past 300 years although only a few dozen headstones remain

Among those buried include John Leverton, founding father of the family-run undertaker’s business that was responsible for the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales.

The gardens were purchased through an Act of Parliament in 1788 as an additional burial ground for St James’s Piccadilly church cemetery.

The government also wants demolish hundreds of council homes and dozens of buildings in the area to create a new gateway to Euston in what has been billed as the “largest development ever seen in London”

On Thursday night, a HS2 spokesman said it was “really too early” to say how the project would deal with the graves.

Comments - 0

**20120407**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/road-and-rail-transport/9192391/HS2-sparks-a-jobs-boom-for-a-quango.html>

Ministers always said their controversial HS2 rail project would trigger a jobs boom and it certainly has for the Whitehall quango overseeing the £32bn scheme.

HS2 Limited has more than doubled its headcount in just three months, with an array of positions offerings “exceptional benefits packages” at the taxpayer’s expense. It plans to hire 100 more staff by the end of the summer

The publicity team will include a “proactive press officer” and “digital social media advisor”, responsible for managing the rail route’s reputation on Twitter, Facebook and other websites

Campaigners trying to block the new rail route, which will initially run between London and Birmingham, described many of the new positions as a “gross” waste of taxpayers’ money

HS2 limited is currently recruiting for “stakeholder and consultation managers” in London and Birmingham, paid up to £50,000.

HS2 Limited has also recently advertised for an undisclosed number of “community forums managers”, each paid up to £60,000

Hilary Wharf, a director of HS2 Action Alliance, one of the groups opposing the next work, said: “The government has also ready held a consultation into HS2 and it was a farce. People were excluded from meetings. People were tightly controlled so they could not speak freely about this terrible plan

And even if it doesn’t many of these stakeholder engagement jobs are largely about ticking boxes – the Government has already decided what it wants to do.”

**20120410**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-17614354>

Birmingham was heavily bombed during World War II and when it rose from the ashes swathed in concrete, its reputation as a grey, grim metropolis was sealed.

But he looks back at Birmingham with fondness and enthusiasm, saying "how could he not be" happy at the way the Big City Plan (BCP) is progressing, with a new £189m library looking "absolutely fantastic" and set to open in 2013 and the £598m revamp of New Street railway station under way.

"In the United Kingdom, Birmingham is the second largest metropolitan area and it's hugely significant to the regional economy which is economically the size of Norway," he said.

"I think that was what the city really needed - it had been a long period of time since the city had any degree of swagger and really 'we're going to take the world on' self-belief," Mr Dutton said. "And I think what the Big City Plan was about was some chutzpah - it was about an audacious response to where Birmingham was at the start of a new century."

But creating landmarks and transport links was just part of the story. "It was really important to get behind projects that will make an economic difference but ultimately the important thing is creating jobs. It is jobs, jobs, job," he said. "So people look at these big projects and, behind all that, the spirit of the Big City Plan is improving quality of life and the only way you can do that is getting more people into work and into better paid jobs."

Eastside is where the city will be linked to London by the £17bn High Speed Two (HS2) rail link and Mr Round said this had impacted on some projects because land was needed for HS2

Comments – 0

**20120413**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-17701795>

HS2 route in Digbeth could mean 'bodies are exhumed'

Bodies from an old burial ground in Birmingham might have to be exhumed as part of plans for the government's high-speed rail network.

A statement from HS2 said it would "keep disruption to a minimum". There are 25 gravestones on the site which was last used as a burial ground in the late 1800s and is currently used as a recreational space. Mr Hodder, Birmingham City Council's planning archaeologist, said: "The remains would have to be removed and archaeologists would have to contact any living relatives, it would be similar to what happened when the Bull Ring was built."

The statement from HS2 said: "We are very aware of the need to do all that we can to reduce the environmental impact to the area. "As part of our work on designing the new station we are meeting with the council, community representatives and other interested parties to examine how to keep disruption to sites such as the historic Park Street burial ground to a minimum.

Comments - 0

**20120416**

<https://londonist.com/2012/04/a-modest-proposal-to-improve-crossrail>

Then north to Euston, for that important HS2 link, with another stop 150 meters later for St Pancras (HS1 for Paris).

This small additional investment now will be welcomed by all Londoners in years to come. Some journey times will be a touch longer, but without changing trains there really isn’t a better way of doing it.

Comments – 0

**20120509**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/industry/9254728/Queens-Speech-2012-Business-accuses-Coalition-of-ditching-growth-agenda.html>

Ed Cox of the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR): “The government have used HS2 as their big policy to boost economic growth and the fact that there was no mention of it in the Queen’s Speech today raises some big questions about the government’s growth plans." He added: “This is the third time the government has delayed its plans to connect London and Birmingham via a high speed line for fear of alienating voters in the Chilterns who don’t want the line to ‘rip up’ the countryside.”

Comments – 0

**20120518**

<https://www.buckinghamtoday.co.uk/news/hs2-blights-home-sales-in-twyford-1-3853983>

HOUSE sales in Twyford have been especially blighted by the government’s HS2 high-speed rail plans, according to a local estate agent

This is despite mitigation measures announced in January, which moved the planned route for the line so it will now be about 150m from the closest home, rather than the 70m originally planned.

He said: “One particular property, as soon as we mention HS2, they then say they don’t want to view it. The fear of the unknown is worse than the certainty.

Comments - 0

**20120519**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/9277440/Treasury-delays-put-HS2-plan-in-jeopardy.html>

The Government’s plan for the High Speed 2 rail project has been put in “jeopardy” by the Treasury’s reluctance to approve key spending, the directors of the scheme have warned.

So serious has the dispute between George Osborne’s department and HS2 Limited become that officials in charge of the proposed rail line say there is a “major risk” that the hybrid Bill to introduce the scheme will not be laid before Parliament by the end of next year, the deadline set by ministers.

HS2’s directors have said they will send a “formal written representation” to Justine Greening, the Transport Secretary, concerning “the delays imposed by government decision-making processes”.

It had been thought that the Chancellor was supportive of HS2. Last year he said the £33 billion scheme would “change the economic geography of Britain” and that the plans were “very impressive”. Since then the official cost benefit analysis has twice cut the expected economic benefits of the line, which will run between London and the North

Last weekend The Sunday Telegraph disclosed that the project had a “red amber” rating from the Cabinet Office’s Major Project Authority, signifying “major risks or issues in a number of key areas”. Campaigners want the report explaining this status to be made public, but officials say it is protected from freedom of information rules for two years

A spokesman for HS2 last night said that a large amount of work remained, but that “much had been done” since the board made its bleak assessment at the end of February. He declined to explain why the Treasury would not approve HS2 spending or whether the project’s schedule remained “in jeopardy”. The Treasury would only say that it was “fully committed” to HS2

Penny Gaines, the chairman of Stop HS2, a campaign group, said: “We have consistently said that there is no business, economic or environmental case for HS2. Research has suggested that HS2 would cost each family in this country at least £1,000. We know that the Government’s own Major Projects Authority has grave doubts about the scheme.

“We have long suspected that the Treasury would oppose HS2 because there is simply no money for such a scheme, and that’s what these revelations show.”

“Delays in recruitment would also present a serious risk to the project.”

The HS2 spokesman added: “It remains our aim to deposit the hybrid Bill by the end of 2013.”

**20120528**

<https://www.theengineer.co.uk/andrew-mcnaughton-technical-director-hs2/>

For a start, he explained, it isn’t a line, and it isn’t a link between London and Birmingham. ‘HS2 is a network in the making,’ he said. ‘It’s a Y-shaped network made in two stages, and it’s as much about connectivity in the north as it is about capacity in the south.

Currently, the parliamentary bill for the construction of the first phase of HS2 is making progress and is expected to receive royal assent by 2015.

There will then be around two years of procurement, planning approvals and contracts, with construction starting in 2017.

McNaughton is convinced that HS2 is the best way to solve Britain’s rail problems. ‘These cities are growing; the population is growing. Demand for rail will increase,’ he said. ‘The West Coast Mainline will be at capacity by 2025. HS2 provides not only double the capacity for inter-city travel, it frees up the existing lines for commuter growth into the big cities, so we can provide fast trains to all these intermediate places that at the moment have a poor stopping service.’

But won’t trains be faster than that by 2026? - Possibly, but there are two factors there. The first is that with the distances we’re talking about, going faster doesn’t do much to journey times, but it pushes up the energy you use; energy increases with the square of the speed. We optimised between speed, energy use and impact – the faster you go, the straighter the track has to be – and we settled on 225mph for our business case, but it’s possible to engineer the line with very little extra impact for 250mph.

Comments - 20

**20120610**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/road-and-rail-transport/9321412/Benefits-of-HS2-were-exaggerated-secret-report-reveals.html>

The Sunday Telegraph has learned that even as they promoted the supposed benefits of the controversial high-speed line, civil servants were sitting on a secret 170-page report which revealed those benefits to be grossly exaggerated.

One senior official at the DfT explicitly told colleagues that the research "could not be used" because it would spoil the case for HS2, according to Colin Allen, a local resident who has sought the document’s release under the Freedom of Information Act. “I was absolutely horrified that they were covering this up,” he said.

The cornerstone of the new line's business case is a claim that the first phase, from London to Birmingham, will generate benefits worth £23 billion, more than the £17 billion cost of building it.

The Prime Minister, David Cameron, claimed that the line would have a “transformative” effect on the economy.

The then transport secretary, Philip Hammond, said it would “reshape Britain’s economic geography” and “transform Britain’s competitiveness as profoundly as the coming of the railways in the 19th century.”

But the internal DfT report, “Productive use of travel time and the valuation of travel time savings for business travellers,” says that most of these supposed gains are illusory.

With laptops, wi-fi and smartphones now making long-distance train carriages an extension of the office, the actual amount of extra work produced by HS2 may be almost nil, the researchers find.

It also found that most business travellers would not do any extra work off the train in the time that they had "saved" through a faster journey.

The Department of Transport claims the study does not show the full picture and says its own analysis of the benefits is more robust. Transport Minister Theresa Villiers said: “HS2 is a project that will deliver jobs and prosperity across the entire country by connecting the south with our great northern cities.

The suppressed research says that the actual value of time saved should be calculated as £22 an hour or even less, cutting the benefits of HS2 by £8 billion and rendering it uneconomic

The reports were written in June and December 2009 but were never published. One is still marked "confidential".

Mr Allen said: "I attended a one-day technical seminar on the HS2 business case within the DfT at which these reports were discussed. During the discussion, a senior DfT economist told us most passengers had said they would just use the time saved to get up later, or spend more time with their families. He said we couldn't use that in the business case."

The revelations are the latest body-blow to HS2's viability, which has already almost halved in the last two years

* In 2010, the benefit to cost ratio of the London-Birmingham project was claimed as 2.9 – meaning that for every £1 of taxpayer funding there would be £2.90 of benefit. By January this year, it had been downgraded to 1.7 and in April it was downgraded again, to 1.5.
* If the benefits are recalculated using the recommendations in the suppressed reports, the benefit-cost ratio drops still further, to just 0.9, meaning that the project actually loses 10p for every £1 spent on it.

According to the DfT itself, any scheme with a benefit-cost ratio of less than 1.5 is officially deemed "low value for money," not to be proceeded with.

Any scheme with a ratio of less than 1 is "poor value" and should never be proceeded with. Philip Hammond, the then transport secretary, told MPs last year that he would need to "seriously review the viability" of HS2 if its benefit-cost ratio dropped below 1.5.

As revealed last month, the project has also been graded "red-amber" by the Government's own Major Projects Agency, signifying "major risks or issues in a number of key areas."

Last week, the former Labour Transport Secretary, Lord Adonis, who began HS2, attacked the "endless dither and delay" which could mean that the necessary legislation "won't pass in this parliament."

Ministers say that the project, which will eventually reach Manchester and Leeds at a cost of at least £34 billion, will "rebalance" Britain's economy and relieve potential future overcrowding on the existing West Coast main line.

But opponents say HS2, which will almost certainly charge premium fares, will be a "railway for the rich" and the priority should be lines which are overcrowded already, such as the commuter services round London and other cities.

Jerry Marshall, chairman of Action Groups Against HS2, said: "On the Government's own admission, HS2 has reached a brick wall. No government with common sense could possibly continue.

"It's only a matter of time before it dies, though every week of delay means more good money thrown after bad and less time to implement the better and more affordable alternatives."

Another paper, claimed models used by the DFT to predict the benefits were based on the 1960s and were 'not appropriate to the 21st century.

Comments - 0

**20120614**

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/londoners-diary/olympic-storm-greets-syrian-showjumper-7851214.html>

According to today’s Spectator, the HS2 high-speed rail project to the Midlands has been quietly dropped. All that is required is a spectacular U-turn, writes Ross Clark, but who is going to tell the PM?

One man well qualified to have a word with David Cameron is his Uncle Bill, Warwickshire landowner Sir William Dugdale, whose family have vociferously campaigned against HS2. “The clearest sign came when a bill to instigate the project was left out of the Queen’s Speech,” writes Clark. “Four weeks ago, it emerged that the Cabinet Office was clinging on to a report which demolished the commercial logic for the scheme. The Chancellor’s enthusiasm has cooled, and Transport Secretary Justine Greening makes no attempt to argue with Tory MPs who criticise the project. “Given the trauma the Government suffered for its explicit U-turn on pasties, it daren’t admit its flagship infrastructure project was just as badly thought through.”

Comments - 0

**20120615**

<https://www.ft.com/content/cb797a80-b086-11e1-a79b-00144feabdc0>

“Manufacturing and industrial production are absolutely crucial to the UK if we are to have a thriving economy,” he says, “and this present government is leading initiatives on what infrastructure we need, like HS2 [the London to Birmingham high speed rail connection], like the questions over nuclear power and other forms of energy generation.” He adds, “At the core of all those things is engineering.”

Comments - 0

**20120621**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/letters/is-tax-avoidance-really-immoral-7873413.html>

Fantasy of HS2 - The M40 may be a scar (letter, 18 June) but it fulfils one of the main purposes of a transport system; it serves the local population. By the time this motorway leaves Oxfordshire, its junction numbers have reached double figures. HS2, in its dashes between London and Birmingham, would not stop at a dozen or so stations, enabling those living near by to abandon their cars and so decongest the motorway. It is a fantasy that M40 traffic will be much eased if HS2 is ever built.

Comments – 0

**20120624**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/letters/9350113/Family-justice-can-favour-mothers-and-demoralise-fathers.html>

HS2 bad for business

SIR – Colin Stanbridge urges the Government to move on with its infrastructure project for HS2 (Letters, June 17). As a businessman I expect he will have looked at the business case for HS2 and seen that the rail capacity required can be provided, at a far lower cost to the country than HS2, through alternative projects such as upgrading existing networks. Demand for HS1 is running at one third of the forecast demand, and costing the country higher subsidies than originally planned. Demand forecasts for most of the world’s high-speed rail services have proved to be over-optimistic, and the operating subsidies required significantly underestimated. The Government should promote infrastructure projects that benefit all of Britain. The business case for HS2 does not stand up to scrutiny.

Comments - 0

**20120624**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/9352838/Pay-up-motorists-Transport-Secretary-Justine-Greening-says-she-will-not-stop-rise-in-fuel-tax.html>

To appeal to young voters, Conservatives should also back long-term infrastructure projects such as the £32 billion HS2 high-speed rail scheme. “It’s always easy to focus on the now and the next 10 years,” she said. “What we have to do is now to look further ahead. We can’t just hope that Britain is going to be successful for young people who are growing up in it today. We’ve got to build a country that they can be successful in.”

Comments – 0

**20120626**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-18505222>

Thousands of graves will be dug up and moved to make way for the new high-speed rail line between London and Birmingham. But how does this happen and why do people feel squeamish about it?

And it is not the only instance.

* In Salford, campaigners are fighting the development of an Asda store on an old cemetery believed to have more than 300 graves.
* In the US, the Chicago Department of Aviation is just coming to the end of its project to remove about 1,500 graves and use the land for a new runway at O'Hare International Airport.
* And Walmart has been criticised for applying to build on land in Alabama that is believed to be an unmarked graveyard for slaves.

"The onus is always on dignity", she says. "There are some cases if we know the remains are very deep that it might be appropriate to use machinery, but generally we use trowels and go very slowly and carefully."

As Draper adds, the lack of close living relatives could for some be the line between acceptable digging and not.

Under the plans, the Curzon Street terminal would be built on Park Street in Digbeth, Birmingham, a 19th Century graveyard. And St James Gardens, a consecrated former church burial ground in Euston, central London, will also need to be dug up.

Comments - 0

**20120706**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/road-and-rail-transport/9381048/High-speed-rail-leaves-taxpayers-saddled-with-debt.html>

Over-optimistic forecasts for passenger demand have left taxpayers "saddled with £4.8 billion of debt" over the HS1 Channel Tunnel rail link, a report by MPs said today.

These "unrealistic estimates" for the London to Folkestone HS1 link must not be repeated when the business case is made for the proposed London to Birmingham HS2 high-speed line, the report said

Total taxpayer support for the 68-mile HS1 over the period to 2070 is likely to be £10.2 billion, the report from the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee added

Commenting on the report today, Public Accounts Committee chairman Margaret Hodge said: "While HS1 provides an efficient service, contributing in an important way to British transport infrastructure, there were costly mistakes in the history of the project. These must not be repeated with HS2.

"The DfT failed to take into account the growth of low-cost airlines or the competitive response of the ferry companies.

Ms Hodge said some of the DfT's assumptions about the benefits of faster travel were "simply untenable". "For example, the time business travellers save by using high-speed rail is valued at £54 per hour yet the time commuters save getting to and from work is only valued at £7 per hour.

A DfT spokesman said: "As this report recognises, HS1 is a successful and central part of our transport infrastructure, carrying millions of passengers a year from a regenerated St Pancras (station in London) to the east of England and the continent. "It was delivered on time and on budget and this report commends the 'exemplary' way the sale of the line was handled - generating more than £2 billion for the taxpayer, far exceeding market expectations."

Comments - 0

**20120706**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-18733308>

HS1 Channel link leaves £4.8bn debt, says MPs

The Public Accounts Committee blamed over-optimistic forecasts about the number of passengers using the service.

It also said the delivery of regeneration benefits from HS1 had suffered from a "lack of effective leadership".

"The department must revisit its assumptions on HS2 and develop a full understanding of the benefits and costs of high-speed travel compared to the alternatives," she said.

The first section of the HS1 line was completed in 2003 and the full line opened in 2007 for 186mph Eurostar trains between London, Paris and Brussels.

"Our passenger forecast modelling has improved significantly since the original work for HS1 over 20 years ago, with better understanding of what drives passenger demand, better computer modelling and more computer power to do it," he added.

Comments - 0

**20120706**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/channel-tunnel-rail-link-leaves-48bn-debt-7918269.html>

Over-optimistic forecasts for passenger demand have left taxpayers “saddled with £4.8 billion of debt” over the HS1 Channel Tunnel rail link, a report by MPs said today.

These "unrealistic estimates" for the London to Folkestone HS1 link must not be repeated when the business case is made for the proposed London to Birmingham HS2 high-speed line, the report said.

Total taxpayer support for the 68-mile HS1 over the period to 2070 is likely to be £10.2 billion, the report from the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee added.

Commenting on the report today, Public Accounts Committee chairman Margaret Hodge said: "While HS1 provides an efficient service, contributing in an important way to British transport infrastructure, there were costly mistakes in the history of the project. These must not be repeated with HS2.

Comments - 0

**20120706**

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2169599/Over-optimistic-estimates-passenger-numbers-HS1-Channel-Tunnel-link-saddles-taxpayer-4-8bn-debt.html>

These 'unrealistic estimates' for the London to Folkestone HS1 link must not be repeated when the business case is made for the proposed London to Birmingham HS2 high-speed line, the report said. Total taxpayer support for the 68-mile HS1 over the period to 2070 is likely to be £10.2billion, the report from the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee added.

International passenger numbers on HS1 are only a third of the 1995 original forecast and two-thirds of the level the Department for Transport (DfT) forecast in 1998, said the committee. It went on: 'Over-optimistic and unrealised forecasts for passenger demand on HS1 left the taxpayer saddled with £4.8'billion of debt.'

The report added that the DfT 'gives insufficient attention to evaluating its major projects' and should develop evaluation frameworks for all current major projects including the under-construction cross-London Crossrail scheme and HS2

'HS1 was supposed to pay for itself but instead the taxpayer has had to pay out £4.8billion so far to cover the debt on the project.' She went on: 'The root of the problem is the inaccurate and wildly optimistic forecasts for passenger numbers. 'The DfT failed to take into account the growth of low-cost airlines or the competitive response of the ferry companies. 'This isn’t the first time that over-optimistic planning and insufficiently robust testing of planning assumptions has got the department into trouble. My committee’s report on the East Coast Mainline raised similar concerns.'

Ms Hodge continued: 'The DfT also told us that it had not considered the benefits and costs of alternatives to HS2 such as investment in broadband video-conferencing or investment in alternative, more local train routes.

A DfT spokesman said: 'As this report recognises, HS1 is a successful and central part of our transport infrastructure, carrying millions of passengers a year from a regenerated St Pancras (station in London) to the east of England and the continent. 'It was delivered on time and on budget and this report commends the "exemplary" way the sale of the line was handled - generating more than £2billion for the taxpayer, far exceeding market expectations.' The spokesman added: 'Our passenger forecast modelling has improved significantly since the original work for HS1 over 20 years ago, with better understanding of what drives passenger demand, better computer modelling and more computer power to do it.

There are higher priorities than a train line that will only benefit a fortunate minority, while costing well over £1,000 for every family in Britain. 'It would be a dereliction of duty of the part of the Government if it does not follow the committee’s advice and conduct a thorough cost benefit analysis of HS2 before another single penny of taxpayers’ money is spent on the project.'

Comments – 88

* HA HA - WHAT A JOKE.... This line is so desperately needed that Virgin Trains are currently using 5 coach diesel trains wherever possible on the London to Birmingham route instead of the usual 10 coach electric ones (a great way to save fossil fuels and avoid pollution, eh Mr Branson?!). According to a friend of mine who works in the rail industry "the bottom has fallen out of the London - Birmingham rail market"! Still, what's £32 billion between friends?

**20120716**

<https://www.bucksherald.co.uk/news/train-service-from-aylesbury-via-winslow-to-milton-keynes-gets-the-green-light-1-4060813>

Plans for a new train line linking Aylesbury to Milton Keynes, via a station in Winslow, have been approved by the Treasury.

Chris Wright, the secretary of the Bucks and Oxon Rail Action Committee, who has campaigned for East-West Rail for 25 years, said: “It will put Aylesbury on the map. “At the moment if you want to go to Manchester you have to travel down to London first. But now you will be able to go to Milton Keynes and then up north.”

He said: “In Aylesbury rail travel will offer increased advantages as the traffic congestion gets worse. “The railway will take people straight into town without getting stuck in traffic jams.”

By electrifying the line the trains are more environmentally friendly than diesel, they require less maintenance, accelerate quicker, cause less damage and cost less to operate.

County councillor David Rowlands, who has campaigned for a East-West Rail stop in Winslow for 20 years, said: “I’m absolutely delighted.” He believes that once opened the new rail line will reduce traffic levels on the A413, which he describes as ‘the most dangerous road in Bucks’.

Prime Minister David Cameron said: “From Crossrail, high speed rail and now the billions of pounds of investment we are announcing today, this Government is committed to taking the long term decisions to deliver growth and jobs. “In what is the biggest modernisation of our railways since the Victorian era this investment will mean faster journeys, more seats, better access to stations, greater freight links and a truly world class rail network.”

“As someone who cares deeply about the environment, the opportunity to dramatically expand rail, a greener form of transport than aviation or road is very exciting indeed. This investment will help people to choose trains over cars, reduce carbon emissions and provide a rail system that is faster, more reliable and greener.”

Transport secretary Justine Greening said: “Just as we are dealing with the budget deficit, so we are also determined to deal with the massive infrastructure deficit we inherited.

“Rail is just one part of an unprecedented programme of transport investment this Government has put in place to drive growth and job creation in the UK economy. “We are building HS2, investing £1bn in strategic road schemes and supporting 56 local road schemes, as well as supporting light rail and bus projects.”

Comments - 0

**20120723**

<http://www.rail.co.uk/rail-news/2012/five-year-railway-investment-plan/>

Politicking - There has been a lot of political lobbying by councils and MPs on the Bedford to Sheffield line of route for rail investment, especially since the HS2 announcement last year. After the decade-long expensive West Coast Main Line upgrade there was a sense being conveyed by these elected lobbyists that their constituents were missing out on rail investment.

Comments - 0

**20120724**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-18968932>

Is HS2 steaming ahead or in danger of going off track?

The admission this week by HS2 Ltd, the 'arm's length' company managing the project, that they overlooked more than 400 responses during last year's consultation process means the whole enterprise could be mired in legal challenges for years to come.

Homeowners say it's already too late to stop their properties from being blighted.

Reports that HS2 was being opposed even within the Cabinet should surprise no one. The Welsh Secretary Cheryl Gillan, MP for Chesham and Amersham, has never made any secret of her hostility to it. But she is widely expected to leave the government in a forthcoming reshuffle

More significant is the scepticism of the Treasury in general and, I am told, of the Chancellor George Osborne in particular. You might expect the keepers of the public purse to agonise over the £33 billion cost of the scheme. But they are equally exercised by the scaling-back of the so-called 'multiplier effect'. Their calculation that every £1 invested in HS2 would generate not £2.40 for the economy, as originally forecast, is now exactly half that figure.

Railway experts have debated for years whether or not less expensive make-do-and-mend strategies including Rail Package Two could deliver a safe, efficient and affordable alternative to the big bang of high-speed rail.

They point to the recent findings of the Commons Public Accounts Committee that the first high-speed line linking London with the Channel Tunnel was continuing to fall short of business expectations.

Labour, who initially championed HS2 while in government, now say they cannot make a "cast iron commitment" to it.

There is a tacit acceptance at Westminster that were it not to be on the statute book by 2015 it really would be, as one Cabinet minister reportedly put it, "a dead duck"

Supporters of HS2 point out that the original Victorian rail pioneers saw no great early returns on their investments. And yet the evolution of Britain's modern industrial economy would have looked very different without them

Comments - 0

**20180801**

<https://www.railjournal.com/opinion/are-ppps-the-way-to-fund-high-speed-rail-construction>

FUNDING the construction of high-speed lines was widely discussed at the UIC’s eighth world congress on high-speed rail staged in Philadelphia, United States, last month. This is hardly surprising considering the strain on governments reeling under a mountain of debt and banks struggling to stay afloat in the current economic crisis.

Professor Andrew McNaughton, chief engineer for Britain’s HS2 project, said the British government has accepted that the new high-speed line from London to Birmingham cannot be funded without public funding, but the government does not have to be the sole funder. “The City view is that things that last 20 to 30 years can be funded quite feasibly by the private sector, and there is considerable potential for funding stations privately,” McNaughton explained. “But the cheapest way to fund structures that last 100 years is through government funding.

The tariff will be much higher than that charged by RFF for using other high-speed lines, which is the price operators must bear for the benefit of attracting private funding. But Selwan is convinced the line will be a success as it will reduce the Paris – Bordeaux journey time by 65 minutes to 2h 5min. Selwan says that a lot of people currently fly between the two cities as they still perceive that flying is faster than taking a TGV, but a two-hour journey time will kill air competition.

Selwan is adamant the PPP model adopted in France is the way forward for high-speed infrastructure, as he is keen to see it taken up elsewhere. “I’m lobbying for a PPP for HS2 in Britain,” he told me. Whether it will get past McNaughton and the British government is another matter. There is also a question over the ability of private companies to raise sufficient funds for a project in the current climate. In any event, PPPs are certainly here to stay

Comments - 0

**20120812**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/road-and-rail-transport/9469344/HS2-route-should-be-moved-to-M40-corridor-says-high-speed-rail-expert.html>

Mark Bostock, the engineer who drew up the route of the Channel Tunnel rail link 20 years ago, said the Government is disregarding many of the lessons from the high-speed train link between Dover and London.

Mr Bostock has devised a new route for HS2 that he says would safeguard the Chilterns, connect with Heathrow Airport and save the taxpayer several billion pounds.

This proposal also includes a station near Bicester in Oxfordshire, which would boost economic growth in the surrounding area. The current HS2 route envisages no stop between London and Birmingham, although a spur to Heathrow may be built at a later.

Mr Bostock said: “I do not believe the officials in charge of HS2 have looked at the idea of utilising the M40 corridor I have seen no evidence that they have even looked at it. And I find that that very surprising.”

“There has been a presumption that the Government assumption is the best,” he said.

“They [the Government] seem to be obsessed with speed,” he said. “It is a very old-fashioned view. What we as passengers are looking for is connectivity, certainty, punctuality and comfort

Last month a High Court judge gave approval for a judicial review of the HS2 consultation process run by the Department for Transport. The review was demanded by dozens of councils and pressure groups created by local residents to oppose HS2.

HS2 Limited, the quango set up to deliver the project, said that it had explored plans to follow the M40, but that it believes the route announced by Miss Greening earlier this year “gives the best balance between cost, benefits and sustainability”

Stephanie Boston, director of Conserve the Chilterns and Countryside said: “On top of the ever-worsening business case, HS2 stands to devastate communities and the countryside in an area of real national significance and outstanding natural beauty

“If the Government wishes to take its environmental obligations seriously, it should consider proposals such as those put forward by the Heathrow Hub, intended to limit the damage to the Chilterns area.”

“Twenty years ago the Government had bought a lot of properties and spent a lot of money before finally adopted to change their plans for HS1 and follow our route,” he said. “It is not too late to do the same this time.

Comments - 0

**20120815**

<https://www.bucksherald.co.uk/news/extra-50-000-to-be-spent-on-fighting-hs2-1-4164508>

An extra £50,000 of taxpayers’ money will be pledged to fight the Government’s high speed rail plans.

Aylesbury Vale District Council had already pledged £100,000 to pay for technical and legal advice, and last night cabinet members approved the extra money – which will be taken from a £3 million contingency fund.

Councillors described the HS2 plans as a ‘folly’ and said it would be a mistake to pull out of opposing the route at this stage.

Along the route more than £1.2 million has been pledged by councils fighting the plans, including £500,000 over three years by Bucks County Council.

Last year the Audit Commission was asked to investigate the fighting funds, but decided against taking any further action

AVDC and the county council are involved in a high court judicial review, where in December they will attempt to prove the Government’s decision to press ahead with HS2 was unlawful.

Councillor Michael Edmonds, the council’s deputy leader and cabinet member for economic development, said of the HS2 project: “What the Government is planning to do is a folly.

“It’s a criminal waste of money that could be spent on things like hospitals.

But Councillor Lambert asked when a final campaign spending figure was going to be settled on. Mr Lambert said: “At the moment it looks like an open cheque book.

“We believe we have struck the right balance between the reasonable concerns of people living on or near the line, who will be offered a package of compensation measures, the environment and the need to keep Britain moving.

AVDC has used £89,000 of the £100,000 it has pledged

Comments - 0

**20120906**

<https://www.expressandstar.com/news/2012/09/06/journey-from-miner-to-major-ministerial-role/>

But Stafford-born Patrick McLoughlin now has one of the biggest and most important jobs in the Government. The 54-year-old former miner has been appointed as transport secretary in David Cameron's first cabinet shake-up and will take his place at the top table of politics.

Colleagues past and present today said he was a "miner done good" and the PM announced in the Commons yesterday: "I've done something that New Labour never managed, I've taken a miner, put him in the cabinet and he's running the railways."

"I'm proud as a Cannock Chase MP that a former pitman from Cannock is now one of the most senior politicians and is running a big and important department.

The appointment of Mr McLoughlin, who becomes the eighth transport secretary in eight years, has also been welcomed by the Stop HS2 campaign group. The group claims Mr McLoughlin is "considered to be sympathetic to countryside issues and is a keen walker".

"Given his background, we hope the new man in the Department for Transport will be far more receptive than Justine Greening, who refused to even meet with us during her 10 months in the job. "We hope to put our case to both the new Minister and Secretary of State as soon as possible."

Comments- 0

**20120909**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-19535194>

Former Welsh Secretary Cheryl Gillan has called the London to Birmingham high speed rail project a terrible idea after her sacking from the cabinet.

"That allows me to almost go back to my roots, if you like, and to speak out about something that is affecting my constituents and my constituency, and that is this terrible HS2 project which the prime minister and my cabinet colleagues have known of my complete opposition to for a long time".

She said she was now "liberated" from collective responsibility to avoid criticising the proposed high speed rail link which is planned to go through her constituency, adding she saw it as "a very exciting time in my political life"

Comments - 0

**20120911**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-19556961>

Mrs Gillan said she still hoped to stop the HS2 plan for a new high speed rail route between London and Birmingham. She said it was not good value for money and would be hugely damaging to the environment and said it did not make sense to press ahead with it while reviewing aviation policy. Mrs Gillan, MP for Chesham and Amersham, was replaced as Welsh Secretary by Clwyd West MP David Jones in last week's cabinet reshuffle.

Comment - 0

**20120911**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/letters/9533850/Pleasure-of-seeing-the-countryside-from-the-train.html>

SIR – One of the pleasures of travelling by rail is to move sedately, at speeds of up to 125 miles per hour, through the countryside, and be able to appreciate the beauty of it. Justine Greening, when she was Secretary of State for Transport, said that more than half the HS2 journey between London and Birmingham would be in tunnels or cuttings, and that that was one of its benefits. I don't think so.

Comments - 0

**20120914**

<https://www.kenilworthweeklynews.co.uk/news/anti-hs2-campaigners-hope-to-take-fight-to-new-ministers-1-4260612>

PROTESTORS fighting controversial plans for a high speed rail track to run past Kenilworth have fresh hope of finally having their case heard in Government thanks to the appointment of new transport ministers

Stop HS2 group campaigners, who are fiercely against the introduction of the high speed line between London and Birmingham, were repeatedly denied any meetings with the former transport minister, Justine Greening.

But they have now written to the newly appointed transport secretary, Patrick McLoughlin - a keen walker and former farm worker - with fresh hope that he will be more sympathetic to their cause and finally hear them out.

If approved, the contentious track would cut just past Kenilworth and through Burton Green as part of plans to speed up train travel to the capital city. Campaigners fear it will blight homes and businesses, damage untouched countryside and is not economically viable.

“We will be pressing for a complete rethink on HS2, hoping that Mr McLoughlin will see the importance of an integrated transport infrastructure solution for Britain opposed to this ill thought out grand project.”

Comments – 0

**20121004**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/9586612/HS2-rail-link-gets-Hitler-parody.html>

The Government’s controversial high-speed rail link between London and Birmingham has been given the ‘Hitler parody’ treatment on the internet

The spoof - which is set to a famous scene from Downfall, a film that charts Adolf Hitler’s final days in his Berlin bunker - shows the Nazi dictator reacting with fury when his petrified lieutenants tell him there is no business case and little public support for the £33 billion HS2 train line.

HS2 is the latest in a long line of issues to receive a Downfall parody. Other topics that have been parodied include the US sub-prime mortgage crisis, rock band Oasis splitting up and the Apple iPad.

The HS2 parody, which was put online this week, starts with Hitler – in the role of Secretary of State for Transport – saying to his generals: “Don’t worry, we have the business case. We will persuade those stupid MPs to vote for it.” However one of his staff replies: “It barely breaks even, despite the insane increase in traffic we forecast.” At this, Hitler flies into a rage: “Even with the million jobs we made up you still couldn’t get it right. We said it would reduce flights from Heathrow – it won’t. It’ll only create 10,000 jobs in the Midlands – less than last month’s increase in unemployment in Birmingham alone.” His temper gets worse when he is told that no businessmen support the rail line. When a general ventures that pop mogul Pete Waterman has agreed to publicly back HS2, the dictator replies: “How can a man who brought us One True Voice be the only person willing to defend HS2 in public?” At one point Hitler says that “even” Sir Richard Branson has fallen out with the Government.

Not all of the internet parodies created have been successful. In January a Labour MP was forced to resign as the party’s media adviser after creating a spoof video comparing Hitler’s final days with Alex Salmond’s machinations over the referendum on Scottish independence.

One Downfall parody shows Hitler ranting about Downfall parodies being blocked from the internet due to copyright issues from Constantin Film, the movie’s distributor.

Comments - 0

**20121006**

<https://www.bucksherald.co.uk/news/crumb-of-comfort-eyesore-pylons-could-go-if-hs2-is-built-1-4339884>

The Europe Minister wrote the letter after a Wendover and Halton forum meeting to discuss the high speed line, saying: “I would never suggest electricity lines being placed underground is adequate compensation for the impact HS2 will have.”

Roger Waller, of Dunsmore, near Wendover, who attended the meeting, said: “It is obviously going to be very expensive to move them (the pylons). They are going to have to build another set before they take those down, I presume – unless they are going to blackout large parts of Bucks.” Mr Waller does not expect pylons to be placed underground, citing technical reasons such as the heat they would produce.

Meanwhile Mr Waller has also criticised the forums, saying that the concerns which are being raised are not resulting in any changes – describing the meetings as ‘like blotting paper, which absorb anger and don’t do anything’.

The HS2 spokesman said: ““We have had positive feedback from local people that the forums are an effective way for them to meet with our engineers and environmental experts to discuss how the project is progressing and to highlight any of their concerns for HS2 Ltd to address in the project’s ongoing design and environmental work.”

Comments – 0

**20121007**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/road-and-rail-transport/9591329/No-way-to-run-a-grown-up-railway.html>

No way to run a grown-up railway. The West Coast Main Line debacle is evidence of a deeply flawed rail network

Virgin Trains had lived, at least temporarily, to fight another day. But far more importantly, on Tuesday night, a southbound Class 390 express had crashed through the Government’s flagging credibility, through one of its most cherished projects – HS2 – and through its fundamentally flawed idea of how to run a railway.

The West Coast line has indeed been “transformed” – but this “remarkable achievement” is almost entirely the work of the taxpayer, not Sir Richard. It was the Government, not Virgin, that paid £8.7 billion to upgrade the tracks and signalling, making possible today’s faster, more reliable and more frequent trains.

The debacle has implications well beyond the West Coast route. Some of the same statistical models are being used, in different ways, to justify a new high-speed line from London to Birmingham, HS2. Opponents now have extra ammunition to argue that HS2’s figures do not add up.

More widely, of course, the fiasco feeds a wider and very damaging “narrative” of coalition incompetence and chaos. Extraordinarily, late on Friday night, one of the suspended civil servants, Kate Mingay, hired libel lawyers to attack her own department for making “inaccurate” statements about her. The entire rail network, meanwhile, is on hold for months, as Whitehall grinds through inquests and reviews.

Comments - 0

**20121010**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/road-and-rail-transport/9597695/Government-will-fast-track-HS2-rail-plans-Transport-Secretary-says.html>

The Government will fast-track plans for a high-speed rail link between London and Birmingham, the Transport Secretary (Patrick McLoughlin) has disclosed.

Patrick McLoughlin said proposals for High Speed Two would not be disrupted by “grief” and “hassle” from backbenchers, and would go ahead with the full support of David Cameron and George Osborne.

He added he hoped to work with Labour to get cross-party consensus on legislation to be included in the next Queen's Speech and taken through Parliament before the 2015 general election

He will also publish a route for the next stage of high-speed rail linking London and Manchester in the next few months, he said

Speaking to the Independent newspaper, he said he would "love to" complete the project within five years, but accepted it will probably take longer.

“The easiest thing for any government to do on a project the size of HS2 is to say we’re not doing it,” he said

“All we get is grief. All we get is hassle. But one of the things that government has got to try and do is to look to the long-term future.

Whichever route we are going to put it on we are going to upset people."

Mr McLoughlin said he had been assured HS2 had the support of Prime Minister David Cameron and Chancellor George Osborne, despite the opposition of some Tory backbenchers

“There has been a huge change in the way we look at transport since the Birmingham-to-London line was built almost 200 years ago,” he said.

“At one stage it looked like the age of the train was dead. But the age of the train is not dead. ”

Advocates argue the scheme will create jobs and wealth in the Midlands and north of England, as well as reducing domestic air travel.

Critics say it will despoil the picturesque English countryside, passing through rural locations including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Comments - 0

**20121012**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-19920593>

Protest against overground HS2 route through Ealing

A 12-hour protest has been staged against plans for an overground High Speed 2 rail link through west London.

Stop HS2 campaigners say 18 bridges will need to be replaced, including the Hanger Lane gyratory, to make way for the route

Up to 10,000 vehicles an hour pass through Hanger Lane and Ealing Council wants the rail link to go underground.

An HS2 spokesman said contractors were studying both options and no final decisions had been made

She said: "Our protests engage people that will be affected by the HS2... to let them know that it isn't too late and it's time for them to have their say. "HS2 are very good at trying to sell the benefits... but they have never come clean about the fact that they are going to have to rebuild huge parts of the Hanger Lane gyratory, if not all of it."

Peter Fry, from HS2 Ltd, said London would be a "big winner" in the scheme.

Mr Fry said bridges would be replaced in phases, and noise barriers would be introduced.

In August, Councillor Bassam Mahfouz, Ealing Council's cabinet member for transport and environment, said: "A tunnel needs to be seriously considered and is the clear preference of residents from Northolt, Greenford, Perivale, Ealing and Acton to alleviate the serious issues they face under the current proposals."

Comments - 0

**20121012**

<https://www.ft.com/content/f5d5305a-0e12-11e2-8d92-00144feabdc0>

Stoic philosophy - Stowe is featured in the seventh of a series on areas associated with the UK’s foremost private schools

For amid the rolling agricultural landscape of this southern edge of the English Midlands, about 70 miles north-west of central London, there is what locals see as a threat to their tranquility – the arrival of HS2, a high-speed non-stop rail service to operate from the UK capital to Birmingham by 2026, with a later extension to the far north of England

“The effect of HS2 is uncertain but more than the line itself, it is the disruption that the build and access could cause which could put off potential homeowners,” says Robert Fanshawe of buying agency Property Vision.

But for many owners and buyers, a transaction is not an attractive idea because of HS2. Politicians on Buckinghamshire County Council oppose the scheme, saying: “We do not believe the business case stacks up” and promising to “strongly object”. Knight Frank has set up a team to advise owners and admits “hundreds of homes may have to be destroyed” while the values of thousands of other properties could be blighted.

It presents homeowners with a dilemma: to sell at a reduced price now, to a limited market willing to live with the disruption caused by HS2’s construction, or to wait to see whether day-to-day noise from the service is less than feared and causes only minimal impact on house values.

Comments - 0

**20121105**

<http://www.rail.co.uk/rail-news/2012/london-oxford/>

Plans to Construct the First Main Line Between Two Cities in a Hundred Years Approved by The Government

Further pressure to link the East west route with HS2? This announcement means that pressure will grow for a link with HS2 at Calvert, just a few miles away from Bicester. The new route between Bedford, Milton Keynes, Marylebone and Oxford has potentially the best commercial payback of any rail scheme so would be a great feeder route for HS2.

Now rail will be available in all directions from 2017, why not link HS2 and complete the railway matrix announced in October this year

Comments - 0

**20121112**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-20296195>

High-speed rail plan for Glasgow to Edinburgh line

The Scottish government aims to deliver the scheme by 2024 - at least 10 years before any high-speed link from England may be extended north of the border. If successful, it would see 140mph trains linking Glasgow and Edinburgh.

She said that a survey last year, carried out by the Scottish Partnership Group for High Speed Rail, had shown "a huge level of support" for HS2 in Scotland.

The findings, published in the Fast Track Scotland (FTS) document, claimed an HS2 link to London could benefit Scotland by up to £25bn.

Ms Sturgeon said its findings demonstrated that Scotland could introduce HS2 way ahead of any Westminster timetable. "We now know that within just 12 years, we could build a line which will see journey times between our two major cities cut to less than half an hour," she said. "That will benefit our businesses, our jobs market and also our tourism industry, and it will put us up there with the world's greatest transport networks.

Comments – 0

**20121209**

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/road-and-rail-transport/9731680/Passenger-numbers-blow-apart-case-for-HS2-train-line.html>

The Government’s main justification for its HS2 rail scheme has been demolished in secret figures released to the High Court.

Ministers say the controversial £34 billion train line from London to Birmingham and Manchester is “desperately needed” to tackle a “capacity crisis” and “time bomb” on the existing route to these cities, the West Coast Main Line (WCML).

In fact, however, the Government’s own official passenger counts show that almost half the seats on the line’s peak-time trains last year were empty. They also show that peak-hour crowding on the line has actually fallen in the last three years.

Ministers fought for months against releasing the figures, refusing numerous freedom of information requests for them on the grounds that they were “commercially confidential.” But they were forced to give way after opponents last week launched a High Court judicial review against the plans. The figures were delivered on the last working day before the case started.

“These numbers blow apart the last prop of the Government’s argument for HS2,” said Martin Tett, leader of Buckinghamshire county council, one of 18 local authorities which have combined to bring the case. “The business case for the line has already collapsed. Their argument was all about capacity.”

Announcing the go-ahead for HS2 this year, the then Transport Secretary, Justine Greening, said that capacity lay “at the heart” of her decision. “Unless we take action, by the 2020s the West Coast main line will be full,” she said.

Crowding is likely to have fallen again this year with the introduction of four new trains and the addition of two extra carriages to many of the existing trains. Virgin claims that the changes are adding 50 per cent more standard-class seats.

Campaigners hope that as well as undermining ministers’ capacity claims, the disclosure of the figures will assist one of their own key arguments in court — that the consultation exercise done by the Government before its go-ahead for the scheme was flawed and based on incomplete information

The capacity figures are not the first key pieces of information to be withheld by the Government. Earlier this year, The Sunday Telegraph revealed a report, suppressed by Department for Transport officials, which undermined a major plank of HS2’s business case

Ministers have fallen back on the capacity argument as their other justifications for HS2 have weakened. Since the project was launched, the claimed benefit-cost ratio for the first phase, from London to Birmingham, has fallen dramatically from 2.9 to 1.7, meaning that it will return a claimed £1.70 worth of benefits for every £1 invested in it. However, if the assumptions in the suppressed report are used, the benefit-cost ratio drops still further to 1.1, a level defined as “low value for money” by the Department for Transport.

It will save about 25 minutes on the journey time from London to Birmingham. Ministers appear committed to the project, with the new Transport Secretary, Patrick McLouglin, promising to “fast-track” it with a bill in the next Queen’s Speech.

But if the court cases go against the Government, forcing them to re-run the consultation process, opponents hope the delay will be sufficient to kill the scheme.

Ministers’ timetable is already slipping. They were due to announce the route for the second stage — from the West Midlands to Manchester and Leeds — this month, but have now deferred any announcement until next year.

Comments - 0

**20121209**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/civil-disobedience-in-middle-england-8395852.html>

When lap-dancing clubs or high-speed trains upset the natural order, residents take matters into their own hands

As far as one can make out, this much-touted infrastructure project is supported by the Treasury, the Transport Secretary, some Midlands businessmen and opposed by practically everyone else – the "Heathrow Hub", Aylesbury Golf Club, the councils whose territory lies in HS2's path and, one imagines, the 43,000 house-owners at risk from property blight. The latter figure may rise even further as the HS2 Action Alliance calculates there are 172,000 properties within a kilometre of the route.

Comments - 3

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