



Cities and shires across southern England will benefit from HS2

Research published today by Greengauge 21 shows that building HS2, the new high-speed line from London to the West Midlands, opens up lots of opportunities for new services on the existing rail network to meet local needs.

“Services which simply cannot be fitted on today’s network will become viable once HS2 is built”, says Jim Steer, Greengauge 21 Director. “Non-stopping inter-city services from the North and the Midlands to London will transfer across to HS2, making space on the West Coast Main Line for more freight on rail and more local services.”

“Towns and cities along the route will be better off – and these places include Lichfield, Tamworth, Nuneaton, Rugby, Northampton, Milton Keynes and Watford. Rail services to these and other destinations will be faster, more frequent and with much better connections. Peak period travel restrictions can be ended.

“It also becomes possible to operate new connecting and cross country services that would need to travel short distances on the West Coast Main Line”, he added. So, East West Rail – the project long sought after between Oxford and Milton Keynes – becomes possible. The case for the Croxley Link – near Watford – will be much improved because of the transformed service at Watford Junction.

Places impacted by the construction of HS2 could have new services - for example at:

- Kenilworth (with a direct London service)
- The Aylesbury - Amersham corridor (new services over the Croxley Link)
- Bicester and Winslow (new services to Milton Keynes)
- Lichfield (fast regular services to London).

“But the benefits from the new capacity freed up on existing lines by HS2 needn’t stop there,” says Jim Steer. “We have very recently seen the withdrawal of the through service to London from Wrexham and Shrewsbury which could not be fitted onto the West Coast Main Line. Post-HS2, this service could operate much more rapidly to London once the West Coast Main Line is freed up, and mid Wales could be connected too. Walsall could gain a London service and commuter services in the West Midlands can be expanded.”

“While there is demand for these services, without HS2, they would require major infrastructure upgrades that would not be justified. HS2 provides that capacity as a spin-off benefit.”

Notes to Editors

1. Greengauge 21 was established in 2006, to initiate the debate on high-speed rail in Britain.
2. For more information or to set up an interview with Greengauge 21, please contact:

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3. The Greengauge 21 HSR Public Interest Group was established in Spring 2008, to develop the case for a network of high speed lines, resulting in the definitive report *Fast Forward: A High Speed Rail Strategy for Britain*, published in September 2009.
4. The HSR Public Interest Group membership comprises:
 - Advantage West Midlands
 - Association of North East Councils
 - ATOC
 - Birmingham City Council
 - City of London Corporation
 - East of England Development Agency
 - East Midlands Development Agency
 - Glasgow-Edinburgh Collaboration Initiative
 - Great Western Partnership
 - Network Rail
 - Newcastle City Council
 - Northern Way (the partnership led by the three northern RDAs)
 - Nottingham City/ Nottinghamshire County Councils
 - PTE Group
 - Railway Industry Association
 - SEStran
 - Sheffield City Region
 - Transport for London
5. Greengauge 21’s report, *Capturing the benefits of HS2 on existing lines*, is available on the Greengauge 21 website (www.greengauge21.net).



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"And let's not forget the hugely expanded role that railfreight can play, reducing the number of lorries on the roads, once it becomes possible to increase services on the West Coast Main Line."

The report concludes that those with electoral responsibility for the places affected by HS2, whether in Parliament or in local government, should examine the propositions in this report carefully. "Many places in southern England, as well as further afield, will benefit from the advent of HS2. These gains are just as much a consequence of the investment as those that will be experienced in Birmingham and the larger cities of the north that will get direct HSR services", Greengauge 21 said.

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