

Britain's high-speed future starts here



Greengauge 21 today welcomed the launch of the Government's public consultation on HS2, the new high-speed railway line between London and the West Midlands.

Jim Steer, Greengauge 21 Director, said, "HS2 will provide much improved links from the great cities of Scotland, the North and the Midlands to London and the south-east." He added "The additional transport capacity and better connectivity will bring a huge economic boost to the country and will help rebalance national economic activity away from the congested south east."

As documents released by DfT today confirm, it will do so with a neutral impact on carbon emissions. There are no alternative ways of increasing capacity and connectivity with such a benign impact on greenhouse gases. So HS2 is also the most sustainable answer.

"It is a great credit to the Coalition Government that, faced with tight spending constraints, it has not only set aside the funds necessary to secure the powers to build HS2 – should that be the course it wishes to pursue following consultation – but it has also protected the substantial capital programme of investment in the existing rail network", Jim Steer added.

Greengauge 21 now has a substantial body of research on high-speed rail available on its website, upon which it hopes the public, local authorities and businesses will draw as responses to the Government consultation are developed.

"It would be a mistake to consider HS2 simply as a trade-off between national and local interests", said Jim Steer. "There are many ways in which high-speed rail benefits local communities, including encouraging urban central and inner-city development and regeneration rather than suburban sprawl out into the countryside".

The recent Greengauge report, *Capturing the benefits of HS2 on existing lines*, highlighted how places between London and the West Midlands could expect to see new and improved local services on the existing rail network as capacity is freed by the transfer of the faster trains to HS2. HS2 will also allow more capacity for rail freight on existing lines, reducing the numbers of lorries on our roads.

"We feel that elected representatives in the areas affected by the proposed HS2 route should consider ways to mitigate the impact of the scheme and, where possible, to secure the advantages that a newly liberated West Coast Main Line brings for local and regional rail services that serve their communities", added Jim Steer. The HS2 consultation process offers five months to do just this.

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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