

High-Speed Rail (HSR): Affordable to all



A new report from Greengauge 21 demonstrates that high-speed rail will not be expensive for passengers to use, even if a new line would cost billions of pounds to build. Greengauge 21 has analysed the fares that will be charged and the likely income profile of users.

The report—High-Speed Rail: Fair and Affordable—explains that both Greengauge 21 and Government analysis assumes that there will not be premium fares. “That’s why we can fairly describe high-speed rail as a ‘Railway for All’”, says Greengauge 21 Director Jim Steer.

“We have based our analysis on a breakdown of today’s rail fares for the kind of journeys that will be made in future by high-speed”, says Greengauge 21 Director Jim Steer. He added: “average fares on high-speed rail will be around £40 for a single journey and many will actually travel for much less—around the £20 mark”

The analysis in the report exposes what is not widely known, the average fare paid on ordinary trains today for long-distance journeys. The relevance of today’s fares is that the business cases developed by both Greengauge 21 and HS2 Ltd have assumed that high-speed prices will be set at the same level on average as conventional rail ticket prices—and it is now clear what this would mean in practice.

Dismissing claims that high-speed rail will be the preserve of a wealthy élite, the report’s authors point to the pattern of existing rail use across the income groups. “What we see is that the number of rail journeys made across the lowest income quintile is about the same as the amount of rail travel in the middle income groups. Higher trip rates in the highest income groups reflect the preponderance of rail travel in the South East, especially commuting into London, where average incomes are well above the national average” Jim Steer said.

“As the National Travel Survey data show, there is also a remarkable consistency in the average distance of rail trips, which hardly changes across the five income levels”, he added. “Rail users in the lower income groups are just as likely to travel longer distances as those with higher incomes.

According to Jim Steer, “high-speed rail will form part of a new national transport infrastructure, connected into other low-carbon forms of travel and offering the prospect ahead of an alternative to ever-growing car and short-haul air use for all sections of the community”.

More...

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:

Jim Steer on 07785 242506 (jim.steer@sdgworld.net) or

Julie Mills on 07956 405003 (julie.mills@greengauge21.net)
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, *High Speed Rail: Fair and Affordable*, will be available on the Greengauge 21 website (www.greengauge21.net).

High-Speed Rail (HSR): Affordable to all



David Begg, Chairman of the Northern Way Transport Group said: "We know that the faster links to London that high speed rail can provide are vital to the North's long term economic prospects. What today's report also highlights is that high speed rail fares will also be very attractive to the general public."

The findings of the report are also of keen interest in the West Midlands which will benefit from the proposed initial high-speed route between London and Birmingham. Geoff Inskip, chief executive of Centro, the transport authority for the West Midlands, said: "Whilst we recognise the importance of HS2 to the West Midlands in terms of regeneration, job creation and GDP, it's also important that high-speed rail is affordable and accessible by all. We therefore welcome this report."

End