



GREENGAUGE 21

Thursday 11th March 2010, 12:10pm

High Speed 2

Greengauge 21 today gave a warm welcome to the Government's report on high-speed rail, which sets out a detailed plan for 'High Speed 2' and a vision for the longer-term development of a national network.

"This is a huge step forward for Government," said Greengauge 21 Director, Jim Steer, "and an important step for the nation in the development of a national transport network suitable for the 21st century. We applaud Lord Adonis's leadership in developing a strong case for high-speed rail in Britain and for understanding what a significant difference it can make to our economic competitiveness."

"Now is the time for well-considered and informed debate on the implications of these plans. We have a powerful and widely-drawn Public Interest Group that fully supports the need for a national strategy for high-speed rail and recognises that it needs to be implemented in stages. Our work in June 2007 ('High Speed Two: the Next Steps') identified the reasons why the London – West Midlands corridor should be prioritised" added Jim Steer. "The Government's work on HS2 has confirmed that high-speed rail has a strong business case, and represents very good value for money investment.

"The truth is that, as the country emerges from recession and economic growth resumes, so too will the demand for travel and for better connectivity between our main cities. All of our major transport networks were under pressure when we went into recession, and with economic recovery travel conditions will quickly deteriorate, again affecting the competitiveness of our economy. High-speed rail offers a step-change in connectivity, providing high levels of punctuality and safety and very high levels of comfort", he added. "Simply, there is no other investment that brings these benefits, takes development pressure off the south east and, when operational, reduces our carbon footprint", he said.

High-speed rail has been successful across Europe and its appeal spreads across all types of users. "It is emphatically not a solution just for business travellers or for the wealthy", Jim Steer said.

Besides the direct advantages offered to those travelling between London, the Midlands, the North and Scotland, HS2 will allow longer distance non-stopping services to be cleared off the

existing main lines, freeing up capacity for more local and commuter services and for more railfreight. “So before anyone rushes to the conclusion that places between London and Birmingham will not benefit, they should look carefully at the wider implications, which include a positive transformation of train services at places like Milton Keynes, and the opportunity to remove many more lorries off our road network and get them on to rail”, Jim Steer said.

He added, “It is clear to us in Greengauge 21 that there is increasingly widespread commitment to HSR across the British regions. Membership of our HSR Public Interest Group continues to expand and now includes such recently-launched groups as the Great Western Partnership, contributing funds to further development and research.”

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
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