



High Speed Rail: Investing in Britain's Future — Consultation

Response from Transform Scotland

Friday 29 July 2011

1 About Transform Scotland

- 1.1 Transform Scotland is the national sustainable transport alliance. We campaign for a more sensible transport system, one less dependent on unsustainable modes such as the car, the plane and road freight, and more reliant on sustainable modes like walking, cycling, public transport, and freight by rail or sea. We are a membership organisation bringing together rail, bus and shipping operators; local authorities; national environment and conservation organisations; local environment and transport campaign groups; and individual supporters.

2 General comments

- 2.1 Our response to this consultation is set within the broader context of all transport modes and how they contribute to the economy, environment and public health of the nation. Within this context it is our belief that rail should be prioritised over car and air travel for medium- to long-distance travel within the UK. In the last 50 years this has not been the case; yet in spite of this, rail is currently the fastest growing mode of travel.
- 2.2 The current rail network was developed by private companies in the nineteenth century primarily to serve local markets, not as a national network. In contrast the motorway network was planned to achieve a broad coverage of key population centres and was government led. What is now required is a government led strategic plan for the growth and expansion of the rail network. This will require new high speed lines connecting our key centres of population in addition to enhancements to the classic network.
- 2.3 We therefore support the government's current proposals for HS2 and recognise that, in the longer term, there may be a need for a dedicated high speed line to continue from the North of England to Scotland.

3 Specific comments

3.1 A Strategic Plan for Rail

- 3.1.1 The development of the rail network must involve enhancements to the classic lines alongside new build high speed lines. It is essential that this is led by the Westminster Government, working closely with the Scottish Government and the Welsh Assembly. A strategic plan must be established as it was for the motorway network and it is for governments to drive this forward.
- 3.1.2 It is worth recalling that many of the early railways were not developed along the best routes because of lobbying by local vested interests — and history should not be allowed to repeat itself.

3.2 Integration

- 3.2.1 New high speed lines should be constructed in such a way as to integrate fully at key nodes with the classic lines and local public transport networks.
- 3.2.2 It is essential that city centre stations are provided and in this context planning should start now for sites in Edinburgh and Glasgow. It is our belief that enhancement of existing city centre stations is the best option

for the foreseeable future. In addition to station sites, the approach lines to the two cities will need enhancement to ensure that there is adequate line speed and capacity.

- 3.2.3 It is our belief that there is also a need for services from the northern part of the Central Belt. Stirling could be developed as a hub for direct services to the south via the West Coast Main Line.

3.3 Enhancements to Classic Routes

- 3.3.1 The proposed Y shape HS2 lines will connect to the classic network for onward journeys by high speed trains. It is therefore essential for connectivity with Scotland that the West Coast Main Line is upgraded. The existing Pendolino trains were built for 140mph running but cannot achieve this as the maximum line speed is 125mph. Additionally there remain severe speed restrictions at key points along the route and these should be addressed as a matter of priority. We would draw particular attention to two locations: Carstairs and the approaches to Carlisle Station.
- 3.3.2 By tackling the issues of line speed and pinch points along the route, existing journey times can be reduced and capacity increased as well as preparing for new high speed trains.

3.4 Rolling Stock

- 3.4.1 It is clearly essential that some of the new rolling stock for HS2 is able to continue on the classic lines as is the case in other European countries. In the lifetime of any new train it is likely that it will need to run part of its journey on the classic lines. It will therefore be necessary to include tilt mechanisms to ensure that maximum speed can be achieved along the West Coast Main Line to Scotland.
- 3.4.2 Another important factor is the passenger environment within the train; we must learn from best practice within Europe and ensure that new high speed trains really do attract people to travel by rail. We would point to the ICE trains in Germany as an appropriate quality of train.

3.5 Connectivity between Scotland and England

- 3.5.1 It is important to stress the need for good rail connectivity between Scotland and the North and Midlands of England as well as with London. In this context, upgrades will be required to the East Coast Main Line as well as the West Coast route. The 225 trains were built for 140mph running but as with the Pendolinos they remain restricted to 125mph.

.....

Transform Scotland is the national sustainable transport alliance, campaigning for a more sustainable and socially-just transport system. Our membership includes bus, rail and shipping operators; local authorities; national environment and conservation groups; consultancies; and local transport campaigns. Transform Scotland Limited is a registered Scottish charity (SC041516).

Transform Scotland
5 Rose Street, Edinburgh, EH2 2PR
t: 0131 243 2690

e: <info@transformscotland.org.uk>
w: <www.transformscotland.org.uk>