



ASLEF Response to the HS2 Design Refinement Consultation

1. The Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) is the UK's largest train driver's union representing approximately 18,000 members in train operating companies and freight companies as well as London Underground and light rail systems.
2. ASLEF welcomes many of the alterations that are being made by the DfT with regard to the original plans from January 2012. ASLEF feels that many of the changes are necessary operationally to ensure the smooth building and running of HS2 as well as any future extensions of the service.
3. ASLEF supports the alterations to the plan for Euston Station. The Union feels that the new plans will ensure less excavation is needed, whilst there will be less disruption to current services as well as the local community. It's an unfortunate reality that any major infrastructure work causes inconvenience and can have a negative effect on people's daily routine. This is especially the case when dealing with busy transport hubs such as Euston. Therefore, there is a delicate balance between ensuring that infrastructure work is carried out correctly for the long term benefits of the scheme to be truly appreciated whilst ensuring that disruption is kept to a minimum during construction. The alterations achieve this as well as having the benefit of reducing costs by £400m.
4. ASLEF welcomes the alterations to improve the connectivity between HS2 and HS1. Widening the North London Line viaduct between Kentish Town

Road and Hawsley Road will continue to allow the connectivity that was proposed in January 2012, but will additionally allow for future growth on the North London Line as well as HS2. The North London Line is an important commuter line but is also important for Rail Freight going in and out of the capital. With this market forecast to grow over the coming years, ensuring the capacity is there to allow this is essential.

5. Creating good connections with Heathrow airport is essential. One of the main purposes of investing in high speed rail is to reduce domestic aviation. Frequently, people who are taking international flights from Heathrow will connect to the airport with domestic flights from the regions. This creates a large carbon footprint. If passengers feel that they can get fast, direct train services straight to Heathrow this will significantly reduce the demand for domestic flight. BAA estimates that there might be some 22% fewer domestic flights from Heathrow after 2032. Additionally, it will promote the use of rail from Heathrow into central London rather than people using private transport or taxis. Therefore whilst ASLEF welcomes the alterations to make it easier to connect HS2 to Heathrow in the future, the Union feels that this should be encompassed in the plans for the line in its initial construction. Since the proposals to build HS2 have been mooted, ASLEF has continuously argued that the route must go to Scotland and connect to Heathrow in order to truly reap the benefits available. The union stands by this.

6. Creating a maintenance loop near Stoke Mandeville in Buckinghamshire will support the efficient operation of the railway. Stoke Mandeville being approximately half way between the maintenance depots at Calvert and Euston makes it the most appropriate stop for this loop as does the proposed loop at Wormleighton which is half way between Calvert and Birmingham. The additional east-south chord will provide improved access from the proposed Calvert Infrastructure Maintenance depot and should be supported too.

7. ASLEF supports the enhanced rail access to the Washwood Heath depot from the west at Duddleston flyover. This will improve operational flexibility. This would reduce the amount of demolitions that are needed, creating less disruption to local roads.

8. Provision must be made for the future extension to Leeds and Manchester. There is little point in building the first phase of HS2 without consideration of minimising disruption for future construction. ASLEF believes that the extension further north should happen as soon as possible and therefore supports any works that make that an even more viable option.

9. ASLEF believes that high speed rail will have enormous benefits to the UK. However the Union maintains its position that to maximise these benefits, the line must go through to Scotland and also connect to Heathrow. Whilst these alterations do not achieve this, many of them are common sense changes that will help build the infrastructure with as little disruption as possible and will also help ensure that future extensions or increases in capacity are facilitated. The building of HS2 is a once in a generation opportunity and it is essential that it is delivered correctly.

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