



**High Speed Rail: Investing in Britain's Future. Consultation on the route from the West Midlands to Manchester, Leeds and beyond**

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 strongly believes the need for enhancing the capacity Britain's inter-city rail network is of paramount importance.
3. The British Rail Network is running at capacity. Over the past few years rail use has been at record highs with more distance being travelled by rail than any other era in peacetime. We are travelling 10 billion miles a year more than we did just one decade ago.
4. The growth on the main two north to south routes in the UK is also extraordinary. Between 2008/09 and 2009/10 the West Coast Mainline increased the number of passenger journeys it took by 15.8% and passenger kilometres by 18%.
5. The East Coast Mainline is one of the busiest lines on the rail network and there is insufficient capacity on parts of the line to deal with all the requirements of passenger and freight services currently, without considering growth.

6. Network Rail's Route Utilisation Strategy explains that "the West Coast Main Line is nearly full to capacity. The market for travel between London and Manchester is expected to grow at the fastest rate, with passenger demand expected to increase by as much as 61 per cent." It also states that "This RUS therefore supports the development and implementation of a high speed network initially between London and the West Midlands, but also to Manchester and beyond. We believe that this is the best way to free up capacity on the West Coast Main Line and are delighted the Government is committed to the project."
7. On the issue of the designated route ASLEF has concerns. The Union believes that it makes no sense to have a high speed network in the United Kingdom that does not go to Edinburgh or Glasgow. These are two major cities in the UK and the benefit of high speed travel and the shortening of journey times would be enormous. This is especially true when you consider that rail only enjoys a 15% market share in journeys between London and Scotland whereas the Eurostar now has about an 80% share of London to Paris travellers.
8. Examples of the benefits of High Speed rail are clear when considering the Eurostar and the new Madrid – Barcelona line.
9. Eurostar now has about an 80% share of London to Paris travellers. In Spain, since the opening of the new high speed service, 50% of passengers now use the train between Madrid and Barcelona. Madrid to Seville used to leave people with very little choice other than a plane journey. Now due to a rail line, only 1 in 10 fly.
10. Research already carried out by ARUP (A global firm of consulting engineers) and Volterra (Economic Consultants) had shown that a 'Y-shaped' network travelling from London to Birmingham, where it would split with one arm of the 'Y' heading to Yorkshire, could provide between

£1.5bn and £3bn of productivity benefits to the economy, in addition to transport benefits of around £29bn.

11. Their research estimates that linking the Sheffield City Region the Leeds City Region, and the “Three Cities” of Derby, Nottingham and Leicester as part of a national high speed rail network would connect an area of 6.7 million people and 3 million jobs. Existing connections to the Tees Valley and Tyne and Wear City Regions would provide access to a further 2.2 million people and 0.9 million jobs.

12. ASLEF believe that the only way to for High Speed rail to reach its full potential is to continue through to Scotland. Additionally linking Scotland to Heathrow would also be an important in reducing domestic aviation.

13. According to the EU, Heathrow's congestion problems could be eased by cutting domestic and European flights, while demand for new runways could be suppressed by building new rail networks. The EU transport commissioner, Siim Kallas, has announced a series of green transport goals. He explains "If we are successful in creating new railways they can take over short-haul airline connections. It makes it easier for the runway issue."

14. By linking Heathrow airport to Edinburgh and Glasgow, domestic connecting flights which use Heathrow as a main hub for international journeys will be reduced. It is important to remember that travel by HSR produces one-quarter the emissions of an equivalent trip by air, taking into account the average loadings typically achieved on each mode. Estimates from airport operator BAA show the high speed rail line will replace between 9,000 to 10,000 domestic flights a year when it is fully linked to Heathrow. This is a drop of 20%. This figure would be far higher if HS2 connected to Scotland. Flights between Scotland's central belt and London is the biggest market in UK domestic aviation. If HS2 truly wants to be

seen as a scheme to reduce domestic aviation and therefore carbon emissions, it simply makes no sense to end it in northern England.

15. ASLEF supports there being a new station at Manchester airport for the same reasons given above.
16. The Union is concerned that the new Sheffield station is a long distance from the city centre. The new station is about 4 miles from the city centre and the main Sheffield Station. Any possibility for a more central station should be fully explored for better connectivity and access to the city.
17. On the issue of capacity freed by the use of HS2, ASLEF strongly believes that a number of these paths must be reserved for rail freight. Rail freight is already running out of paths. There is significant suppressed demand for rail freight with forecasts predicting that rail freight overall will have doubled by 2030 with consumer rail freight growing four or five fold over the same period. Rail freight has a key role to play in the low carbon economy as rail produces 70% less carbon dioxide emissions than the equivalent road journey and a gallon of diesel will carry a tonne of freight 246 miles by rail as opposed to 88 miles by road. Therefore to maintain the green credentials of HS2, relieved capacity must be shared with the freight sector as well as passenger services. This has an economic benefit too. The benefits of rail freight fall outside the railway balance sheet but benefit the road network and the economy by removing or reducing £772 million per annum in congestion costs, £133 million per annum in road infrastructure costs and £68 million per annum in CO2 costs.
18. 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. The building of HS2 is a once in a generation opportunity and it is essential that it is delivered correctly.

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