

'The great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie - deliberate, contrived and dishonest - but the myth - persistent, persuasive, and unrealistic' JFK 1962

1: HS2 is NOT 'green' – it doesn't fit as part of the low carbon economy

Even DfT say it will not reduce CO2 emissions, but be 'broadly neutral' (and HS2 Ltd's sums flatter HS2). Trains capable of 360km/h use more than twice the energy of 200km/h trains.

84% of journeys on HS2 will indisputably create more emissions – all the new journeys (27%) and those switching from conventional rail (57%).

A showcase transport investment such as HS2 should contribute to the UK's target of reducing emissions by 80% by 2050.

2: HS2 will NOT deliver wider economic benefits and cure north/south divide

DfT/HS2 Ltd say there are extra benefits (worth £3.6bn) but this is mainly from additional local transport using freed-up existing capacity, not because of faster connectivity.

HS2 Ltd asked Imperial College to advise if high speed connections would lead to additional economic growth – they said very little (max £8-10m/a). HS2 Ltd also reviewed whether HS2 might be a catalyst for other investment – finding no conclusive evidence it would.

The redistributive effects (not examined by HS2 Ltd) will benefit London – not the regions. London is UK's dominant city, seven times bigger than the next biggest city. With 70% leisure travelers on HS2, and trips to London growing at twice the rate of those from London, money will move from the regions and be spent in London.

Government claims for transformational benefits are based on belief, not evidence. The 'evidence' claimed by Greengauge21 is based on an insufficiently developed methodology.

Professor Overman (LSE) in his recent evidence to Transport Select Committee said: "....Claims about the "transformational" nature of transport investments for particularly areas should be generally discounted in assessing these benefits because they have no convincing evidence base to support them."

3: HS2 is NOT a sound investment – its not value for money

HS2 will lose money. Phase 1 costs £25.5bn but only generates £15bn of extra fares, requiring an £11.9bn subsidy that goes to business and the affluent, inducing them to travel more. It will cost more than £500m per minute saved; or £1k per taxpayer.

A re-evaluation demonstrates benefits overstated, demand excessive, appraisal flawed. An independent report by FTI consulting confirms this. The key issues are:

- Benefits are some 60% overstated –totaling more like £13bn not £32bn (with an NBR of about 1 rather than 2.7). The largest benefit (time savings) assumes all time spent on trains is wasted, ignoring mobile technology developments – the assumed productivity benefits for business will not exist when HS2 is built and hardly exist now
- Demand forecasts are excessive, they are about twice what other organisation's forecast (including Network Rail, and DfT in 2007); they represent a 267% increase - over 3½ times more than now – use out of date data and views, producing a highly optimistic not central case scenario
- Appraisal uses an unrealistic comparator (inflating the benefits such as reduced crowding and shorter intervals between trains) and rejects valid alternatives (of uprating existing rail infrastructure)

The business case for HS2:

- Fails to learn the lessons of HS1 on competition
- Takes no account of new technology or Government's own initiative to reduce travel
- Even HS2 Ltd admit that if demand falls short by just over 20% (still a 190% increase) then the NBR will not reach 1.5 (an unacceptable ratio)

Almost half of all long distance rail trips are made by people from households in top 20% income bracket (over £70k/a). HS2 is a railway for the rich, but to be paid for by everyone.

4: A new railway is NOT needed to solve the rail capacity problem

We can generate 65% more capacity with just extra rolling stock on West Coast Main Line (WCML) and there is massive capacity potential on Chiltern Railways. 65% more capacity satisfies some leading authorities forecasts. It will not lead to material disruption.

DfT's own alternative to HS2 (Rail Package 2) de-bottlenecks WCML, delivering required capacity by running more and longer trains (for a net cost of just £2bn) and gives a better (3.63) NBR than HS2 (2.7). Extra capacity can be developed incrementally against actual need – not relying on long-term forecasts. RP2 is forecast to have less crowding than HS2.

Why this option was discarded by Government merits serious investigation. Why spend over £0.75bn this parliament on developing plans for HS2 when a complete solution costs £2bn? There is no basis for claims by Government of massive disruption, as it's not like the previous wholesale replacement of WCML, its principally about addressing pinchpoints on the route.

DfT's explanation that it did not provide sufficient extra capacity – on top of meeting all the demand forecast – suggests replacing the doubtful policy of 'predict and provide' with the economically squanderous one of 'predict and over-provide'.

5: HS2 will NOT greatly reduce domestic air travel

To generate sufficient shift from air (8% of HS2 journeys) HS2 Ltd assume a 178% increase in domestic air travel by 2033 and a third runway at Heathrow.

In reality demand for domestic air travel in the UK has been declining since before the recession, so opportunities for HS2 to displace air travel are reducing, not increasing. With no third runway for Heathrow the chances of major increases in domestic air are even slighter. Rail already has 80% Manchester market, and the NW and Scottish Lowlands air market has been shrinking since 2005.

Reductions in domestic air services may be replaced by more polluting long haul services. Experts agree air wins against rail for trips over 3½ hrs: HS2 Ltd say 4hrs for some markets.

6: The UK does NOT need to catch up with Europe – it is still ahead

The UK – unlike Europe – has had a fast national railway system for a long time. As Sir Rod Eddington said in 2006, the UK has extensive fast inter-city services.

We also have routes capable of 200km/h (125mph) – with quicker rail journey times between the capital and the five largest cities than in other major West European countries:

- Averaging 145 minutes in UK
 - 151 minutes in Spain
 - 184 minutes in Italy
 - 221minutes in France
 - 244 minutes in Germany

'When the facts change, I change my mind. What do you do, sir?' John Maynard Keynes