

## High Speed Lines

### ATOC's view

ATOC supports the principle of the provision of a new high speed link to provide capacity to allow more people and freight to use rail. ATOC broadly agrees with principles of the HS2 Command paper produced by Sir David Rowland's HS2 team but believes that closer scrutiny and revision is required of some of the detailed options to ensure that the project will be taken forward on a basis which delivers value for money and serves the major areas of demand. ATOC also supports the Greengauge 21<sup>1</sup> group's recent Public Interest Group statement of 24 March which identifies some concerns and areas for review now that the Command paper has been published.

- ATOC supports HS2's and Greengauge 21's conclusion that there is a case for looking at serving not only Birmingham but also Manchester, the East Midlands, Sheffield and Leeds. There is a strong case for the construction of a further number of new high speed links from the London to Birmingham base case in order to support the development of a high speed network in the longer term (2020 and beyond). This should be based on the potential large catchment areas of Manchester and Leeds and the growth of rail demand that this will stimulate. ATOC also advocates the need to look at further options for HS2 to serve Scotland.
- ATOC supports HS2's decision to base the London terminal of the high speed line at Euston but believes that a further study of the options of onward dispersal needs to be conducted to alleviate the increased demand which would be placed on the heavily overcrowded tube lines. ATOC argues that consideration should be given to diverting London Midland services at Willesden to join the new Crossrail system. This would alleviate pressure on London Euston, allow for a smaller station 'footprint' and could facilitate less disruption during the rebuilding.
- ATOC is not convinced that a Crossrail Interchange station at Old Oak Common and for all HS trains to call, is the right solution to serve Heathrow as it will undermine the journey time benefits of HS2.
- ATOC believes a further review should be undertaken of the options to serve Heathrow, particularly the option of a spur line. This could provide the nucleus of additional extensions of the high speed network to the South and South West allowing the associated economic stimulus that high speed brings to be delivered to these areas as well.
- The proposed station at Birmingham, Curzon Street would appear to be the most suitable location for the city but due attention must be given to delivering the appropriate connectivity into the centre and with existing rail stations (New Street and Moor Street).
- ATOC recommends that further work needs to be carried out on service patterns for HS2. The services to call at the proposed station east of Birmingham Airport/International have yet to be defined and we note there is a balance to be struck between the road accessibility that such a station will provide and the journey time improvements to Birmingham city centre. Furthermore, more analysis will need to be carried out on the

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<sup>1</sup> ATOC is a member of the Greengauge 21 group.

impact on the existing Birmingham – London Euston services. At present these have the benefit of serving not only Birmingham but also a number of stations with high levels of demand (Birmingham International; Coventry) which supports high frequency services.

- There is need for capacity as well as speed. New infrastructure should be capable of delivering greater capacity, improved journey times and support high speed services. The HS2 paper recognises this.
- ATOC supports the decision to advocate the development of a line capable of higher speeds (340 – 400 km/h) in order to deliver the best possible benefits in terms of journey times.
- Pressure on capacity in the short term (up to 2020) makes it essential that investment in the existing main line network is not deferred or suspended as a result of the proposed investment in high speed lines.
- HS2's cost estimates are higher than those assumed by NR and Greengauge 21's studies. Whilst the business case, even based on the HS2 costs, is good (a benefit/cost ratio of 2:1) ATOC believes that the opportunity should be taken to re-examine these costs and to assess the benefits which can be obtained by wider private sector involvement.
- ATOC believes it is essential that the UK train operators are directly involved in the development of the project. They will be able bring their wide experience of rail operation to the project and will also be able to identify the areas where private sector involvement can contribute to improving the economic basis of the project.

### **Background and key issues**

- The Government Command Paper on high speed lines developed by HS2 was published in March 2010. It was based on their report sent to Transport Secretary Lord Adonis in December 2009, outlining HS2's vision for a new high speed route.
- The earlier Eddington Report (2006) highlighted the importance of meeting the transport needs of growing city catchments, key inter-urban corridors and key international gateways – all of which are directly relevant to the potential of high speed rail.
- The Government White Paper of 2007 on rail focussed on medium term enhancements to the existing network but, based on the conclusions of the Eddington report did not accept some of the benefits attributed to high speed lines, but subsequently the Secretary of State endorsed the case for further consideration. Initial development work took place under the aegis of the HS2 team and the report was completed at the end of 2009.
- The top speed by train in Britain today is 186 mph (300 kph), which is the speed limit on HS1 between London and the Channel Tunnel. Maximum speed for principal long distance services in Britain is 125 mph (200 kph).
- New high speed domestic services from Kent started operating on HS1 in December 2009.
- The success of HS1 from London to the Channel Tunnel, has led to renewed discussion of the case for dedicated high speed lines in Britain,

and Network Rail Reported its view in August 2009:  
<http://www.networkrail.co.uk/asp/5892.aspx>

- The principal benefits of new lines in Britain would be the creation of additional capacity to meet the growing needs of passengers and freight customers. The pressure points are identified in Network Rail's Route Utilisation Strategies for each route.
- The principal benefits of new high speed lines would be in terms of the economic development of the regions served (agglomeration benefits), increasing their competitiveness and reducing peripherality, as well as significant journey time savings for passengers.
- Other benefits would be in terms of a reducing the carbon footprint of passengers attracted from air and car, contributing to potentially reduced demand for runway capacity in South East England, and encouraging a significant shift from car, with a reduction in congestion. More work is required to understand and quantify such benefits.
- High speed lines based on advanced rail technology have the advantage of being compatible with the conventional rail network, so that trains can use existing city centre stations, or run through to destinations where a new high speed line could not be justified.
- Whilst energy consumption increases as speed rises, this can be offset through effective system and rolling stock design, and the higher capacity of trains mean that emissions per passenger kilometre remain low compared with other modes. Eurostar, for example, offers passengers a carbon neutral journey.
- The lead time for development and construction of HS1 was 20 years, and this is why it is right to plan now for lines that will be required beyond 2020. It is also why it is essential that Government continues to invest in upgrading capacity and capability of existing routes to meet the growth in demand between now and 2020.

### **Relevant ATOC activity**

- ATOC is a participant and funder of the Greengauge 21 Stakeholder group to share in the analysis being undertaken of the demand factors and external benefits that might drive the need for greater capacity and better connectivity. It is also a key contributor to the Route Utilisation Studies and has given input to the Network Rail HSL studies.

### **Key documents/links**

- HS2 command paper  
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/rail/pi/highspeedrail/>
- Eddington Report:  
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/about/strategy/transportstrategy/eddingtonstudy/>
- Rail White paper, 2007:  
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/about/strategy/whitepapers/whitepapercm7176/>
- Network Rail HSL report: <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/asp/5892.aspx>
- Greengauge 21 proposition:  
[http://www.greengauge21.net/assets/FastForward\\_Greengauge21.pdf](http://www.greengauge21.net/assets/FastForward_Greengauge21.pdf)

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