



Scottish Council for  
Development and Industry

## POLICY SUBMISSION

HIGH SPEED RAIL: INVESTING FOR BRITAIN'S FUTURE

SCDI RESPONSE TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT'S  
CONSULTATION ON HIGH SPEED 2

**July 2011**

SCDI is an independent and inclusive economic development network which seeks to influence and inspire government and key stakeholders with our ambitious vision to create shared sustainable economic prosperity for Scotland.

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## SCDI response to the Department for Transport's consultation on High Speed 2

1. SCDI is an independent membership network that strengthens Scotland's competitiveness by influencing Government policies to encourage sustainable economic prosperity. SCDI's membership includes businesses, trades unions, local authorities, educational institutions, the voluntary sector and faith groups.

### **Do you agree that there is a strong case for enhancing the capacity and performance of Britain's inter-city rail network to support economic growth over the coming decades?**

2. Yes. Inter-city rail travel has seen substantial increases in passenger numbers over recent years. As fuel prices increase and consumers are increasingly aware of their carbon footprint, this modal shift is likely to continue. Significant improvements in passenger satisfaction levels, investment in rolling stock and reduction in journey times on major routes have also been instrumental in increasing passenger numbers. The independent *Rail Value for Money Study*<sup>1</sup> by Sir Roy McNulty predicts a doubling of passengers on the rail network within the next 10 years. HS2's forecasts predict a growth of over 50% in long distance rail travel by 2043. Parts of the existing inter-city rail infrastructure are approaching maximum capacity. The West Coast Main Line (WCML) is projected by Network Rail to be full again by 2024, and potentially earlier. A key benefit of a new high-speed line compared to incremental improvements to the existing infrastructure is that it would solve the capacity crunch on all North-South main lines for decades to come, by creating new capacity and releasing capacity on the WCML, and it would not disrupt passenger and freight operations in the construction phase.
3. Cities will continue to be the key drivers of economic growth over the coming decades. Enhancements should be seen as not only about enhancing the capacity and performance of Britain's inter-city rail network, but about connectivity between the UK's regional cities and cities in Continental Europe. Following its incorporation in the European high-speed rail network in France, Lille is now ranked as Europe's fourth most accessible city and has received significant private sector investment which has addressed decades of decline.
4. High Speed Rail has the potential to create a more balanced society where opportunities are more evenly shared between regions. As with any high-speed transportation system, the greatest benefits are seen over longer distances. Network Rail's *Strategic Business Case for High Speed Rail*<sup>2</sup> concluded that a strong business case exists for the construction of HSR to Scotland . stronger than a route terminating in the West Midlands, Greater Manchester or Yorkshire.

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<sup>1</sup> Realising the Potential of GB Rail, DfT, [www.dft.gov.uk/publications/realising-the-potential-of-gb-rail](http://www.dft.gov.uk/publications/realising-the-potential-of-gb-rail)

<sup>2</sup> Strategic Business Case for High Speed Rail, Network Rail, [www.networkrailmediacentre.co.uk/Publications/Strategic-business-case-a44.aspx](http://www.networkrailmediacentre.co.uk/Publications/Strategic-business-case-a44.aspx)

Greengauge 21's *Fast Forward: A High Speed Rail Strategy for Britain*<sup>3</sup> calculated the economic and wider benefits of HSR. Scotland's benefit figure of £19.8bn is the highest of any region in the UK outside of London [Annex 1].

5. The leaders of Scotland's Six Cities, convened by SCDI, recently joined forces to sign their first pledge in support of a shared vision of success for Scotland. They agreed six shared priorities. In respect of investment in infrastructure to provide the environment in which investment and job creation can flourish, with improved connections between them and to external markets, they stated that Scotland's cities need the inclusion of Scotland in the UK's High Speed Rail Network<sup>4</sup>.

**Do you agree that a national high speed rail network from London to Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester (the Y network) would provide the best value for money solution (best balance of costs and benefits) for enhancing rail capacity and performance?**

6. SCDI strongly supports the introduction of a national high speed rail network linking the UK's cities and the UK's cities with continental Europe. Whilst welcoming the coalition Government's vision, the speed with which detailed plans for HS2 are progressing and the assurance that Birmingham will not be the end of the line, we remain concerned by the lack of a firm commitment to continue HS2 from Manchester and / or Leeds to Scotland and the lack of any timetable for this.
7. The proposed Y-shaped network will generate about £44 billion for the economy, which demonstrates the value and strategic importance of the investment. But including Glasgow and Edinburgh in HS2 from the outset would significantly further improve the business case and provide increased value for money to the taxpayer. Over 60 years, it pays for itself 1.8 times over. Network Rail's report showed that new HSR lines to Glasgow and Edinburgh are major demand generators, adding some 10-11 million trips to the network. However, using the classic network north of Preston severely reduces the advantage of new lines and reduces the demand by 62% to just 4.1 million. The benefits of the investment can be fully maximised over the longer London-Scotland distance.
8. Cross-border connectivity is a significant issue for the development of Scotland's economy. The Government's decision not to allow a third runway at the UK's hub airport, Heathrow, raises concerns that lower-value domestic slots, carrying traffic to and from Scottish cities, will be lost in favour of higher-value long haul services. This makes rail connections between Scotland and London all the more important. Including Glasgow and Edinburgh in HS2 will deliver significant economic benefits to Scotland, improving connectivity with London, the South

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<sup>3</sup> Fast Forward: A High Speed Rail Strategy for Britain, Greengauge 21, [www.greengauge21.net/wp-content/uploads/fast-forward1.pdf](http://www.greengauge21.net/wp-content/uploads/fast-forward1.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> SCDI Six Cities, Shared Vision, [www.scdi.org.uk/downloads/SixCitiesASharedVision.doc](http://www.scdi.org.uk/downloads/SixCitiesASharedVision.doc)

East and North of England and with Europe. Halting HS2 at Manchester and Leeds will comparatively disadvantage Scotland's economy and tourism industry.

HS2 also has the potential to reduce carbon emissions. The route between London and Scotland will certainly reduce overall emissions, as a result of the modal shift from air on the London-Scotland route. As HS1 and European routes have demonstrated, improved connectivity would promote modal shift towards rail and away from aviation. However, if rail is to become the mode of choice for most inter-city journeys between the population and economic centres of Scotland and the largest cities of the rest of the UK, building HS2 to Scotland is the only option. Of the 7 million journeys made annually between Glasgow or Edinburgh and London, 6 million are currently via air. Overseas evidence indicates that when a journey can be made in less than three hours, railways capture 50% of the market. Substantially enhancing the competitiveness of rail on these routes would significantly reduce air demand, capacity pressures at South East airports, and carbon emissions. HS2 to Scotland would deliver the journey times required at two and three quarter hours between Glasgow or Edinburgh and London. Running high speed trains on existing lines north of Manchester and Leeds would not have the same impact. Indeed, journey times would, at best, be 3 hours 37 minutes and high speed trains using classic tracks north of Manchester and Leeds could actually travel more slowly than at present.

9. To maximise the benefits of HS2 for the whole country and rail network, significant investment in the rest of the UK rail network should continue while it is developed, including electrification. On the existing East and West Coast Main Lines linking Edinburgh and Glasgow to London, there is the opportunity to undertake incremental and comparatively inexpensive improvements which would act as stepping stones on the way to a full high-speed rail link. Once HS2 is built, these lines would provide fast inter-regional travel where there is large scale demand, and open up more track space for freight transportation.
10. HS2 should be part of an overall transport strategy including air, freight and connections with the wider rail network. With the new lines comes additional capacity for freight transit. The UK and Scottish Governments should explore the opportunities for freight, either from high speed freight or greater access to existing main lines. SCDI recognise that high speed rail is unlikely to be competitive on routes to the north of Scotland's central belt. However, modal shift on journeys between the central belt and London will present opportunities for regional air services between both Aberdeen and Inverness and Heathrow. There should be coordinated interconnecting services between the high speed rail line and services on the classic rail network to and from the north of Scotland.
11. The alternative proposals for incremental investment which have been put forward by opponents of HS2 merely delay the need for investment in a new line, an incremental approach having the effect of higher costs and lower benefits. potentially with the costs outweighing the benefits under this approach. Even with significant enhancements to the mainlines to London (many of which are already at or approaching capacity), the existing infrastructure is not capable of delivering

speeds in excess of 140mph . in many cases much less due to existing route alignments, the interaction between, and conflicting technical requirements of, express and slower services and the constraints of many intermediate stations. Consequently the potential step change in connectivity over long distances offered by high speed rail will not be realised, the mode shift will be far less and the wider economic benefits will not be realised.

12. Given the timescales involved for delivery of HS2, decisions on its nationwide development are required now.

**Do you agree with the Government's proposals for the phased roll-out of a national high speed rail network, and for links to Heathrow Airport and to the HS1 line to the Channel Tunnel?**

13. SCDI accepts that there will be a phased roll-out of a national high-speed rail network, but is concerned by the timescales for delivery. Connectivity is an important factor affecting the UK's global competitiveness. Across Europe and the rest of the world, many countries have invested significantly in the development of high speed rail infrastructure. Annex 2 and associated charts demonstrate the extent to which other countries have invested and plan to invest in high speed rail. It demonstrates that the UK has fallen far behind the other major western European economies in high-speed rail infrastructure and that it will have fallen even further behind by the time the first phase of HS2 is completed in 2025. Scotland would still have no high-speed rail lines by 2033.
14. SCDI is content with the specification for the line between London and the West Midlands. It agrees that the case for a more direct link to Heathrow becomes progressively stronger as the line is extended beyond Birmingham and there is a greater market opportunity for modal shift from air to rail. SCDI strongly supports the proposed link with HS1 to enable direct services between the north of England and Scotland with European cities. It is essential that this link is built with sufficient capacity to ensure reliable connections and growth in the future.
15. SCDI recommended that construction of the new high speed line should be started at both ends as part of a firm commitment to cross-border high speed rail, and that the Scottish Government, working closely with northern English cities, should immediately begin to prepare the way through the planning process. We welcome the recent announcement by the Scottish Government of a Scotland-wide partnership to take forward the business case and high level planning for the route options in Scotland and terminus locations in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and links with the rest of Scotland's rail network. We believe that the Department for Transport and the Scottish Government should work much more closely on high-speed rail. SCDI understands that it is the UK Government's intention to consult informally next year on phase 2 to the north of England and publish a hybrid Bill in the next Parliament. SCDI believes that the consultation and the Bill should include the route between the north of England and Central Scotland.

**Do you agree with the principles and specification used by HS2 Ltd to underpin its proposals for new high speed rail lines and the route selection process HS2 Ltd undertook?**

**Do you agree that the Government's proposed route, including the approach for mitigating its impacts, is the best option for a new high speed rail line between London and the West Midlands?**

16. The benefits of the proposed route are very sensitive to changes in speed. SCDI strongly agrees with the Government's specification that HS2 should be able to accommodate trains travelling at 400kph in future. Train speeds will increase with technological developments. The experience in countries such as France and Japan with high-speed lines is that they should be future-proofed with improvements expected rather than expensively and disruptively upgraded after they are operational.

17. Any lengthening to journey times will further erode the more marginal overall benefits of journey time reductions to Scotland of the existing high-speed rail proposals. This will lessen the potential economic benefits and the environmental benefits of modal shift from air to rail from Central Scotland to London, given that a three hour journey time or less is the usual tipping point.

18. SCDI is, therefore, supportive of the proposed route and concerned by and opposed to alternative proposals which would slow high-speed rail in England.

**Do you wish to comment on the Appraisal of Sustainability of the Government's proposed route between London and the West Midlands that has been published to inform this consultation?**

19. Decarbonising the electricity supply used to power high speed trains will further enhance their environmental benefits. With low carbon electricity generation in Scotland to be transmitted to markets in England via strengthened and new interconnectors, extending HS2 to Scotland would demonstrate a nationally joined-up infrastructure strategy for the transition to a low carbon economy.

### **More information**

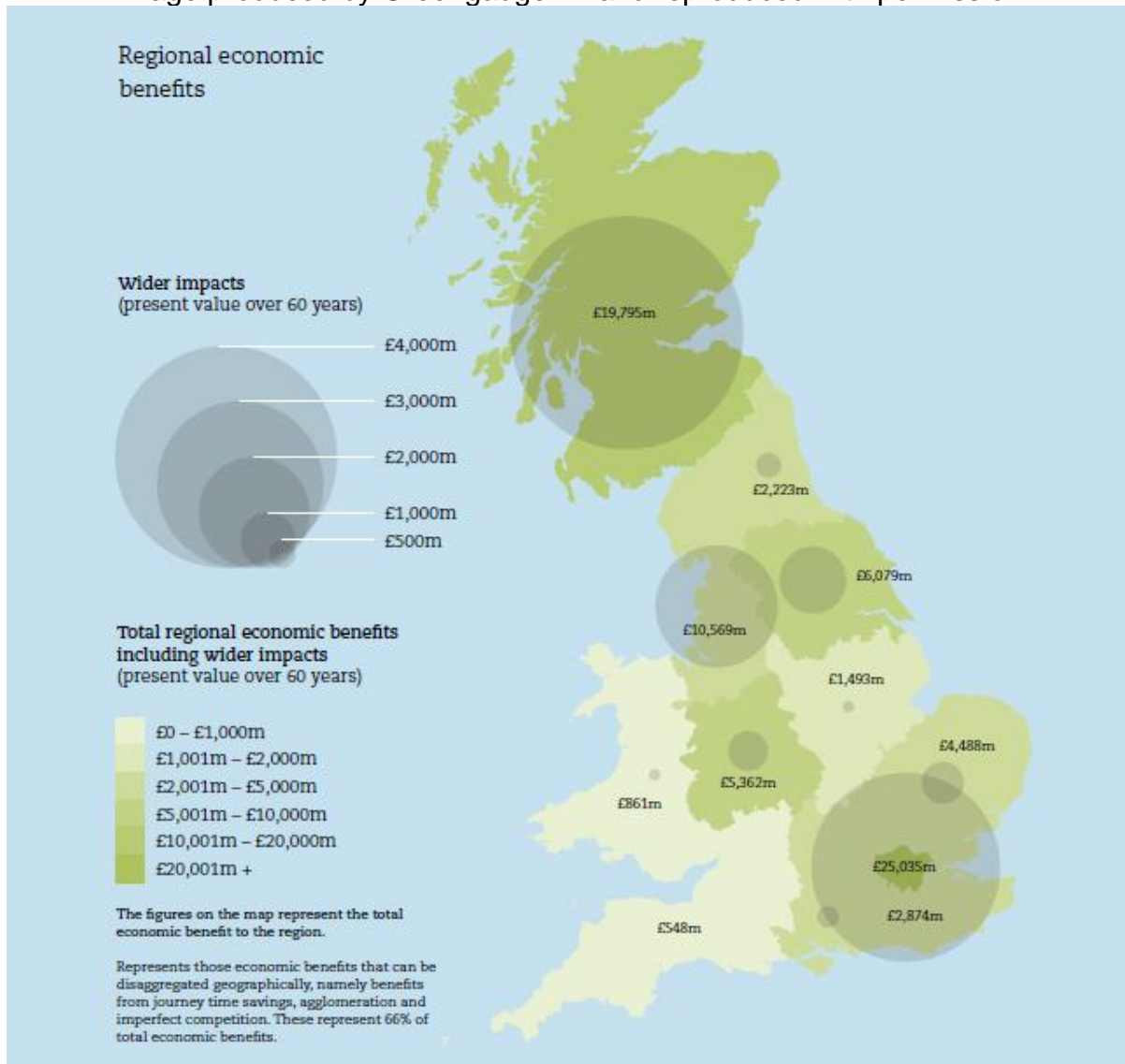
20. For more information on this response, please contact James Alexander, SCDI Policy and Communications Manager on 0141 222 9728 or [james.alexander@scdi.org.uk](mailto:james.alexander@scdi.org.uk).

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# Annex 1

## Regional economic benefits of High Speed Rail

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## Annex 2

### Global High Speed Rail Infrastructure

[figures from International Union of Railways, [www.uic.org/spip.php?article573](http://www.uic.org/spip.php?article573), updated 1 July 2011]

Country	In Operation	Under Construction	Planned (by 2025)	Total (by 2025)
Argentina			315	315
Belgium	209			209
Brazil			511	511
China	6299	4339	2901	13539
France	1896	210	2616	4722
Germany	1285	378	670	2333
India			495	495
Iran			475	475
Italy	923		395	1318
Japan	2664	378	583	3625
Morocco		200	480	680
Netherlands	120			120
Poland			712	712
Portugal			1006	1006
Russia			650	650
Saudi Arabia			550	550
South Korea	412	186	49	647
Spain	2056	1767	1702	5525
Sweden			750	750
Switzerland	35	72		107
Taiwan	345			345
Turkey	235	510	1679	2424
UK - England	113		204	317
UK - Scotland				0
USA	362		900	1262
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16954</b>	<b>8040</b>	<b>17643</b>	<b>42637</b>

# Global High Speed Rail

