

FINAL VERSION

## **HS2 : time to proceed or time to review alternative strategies ?**

### **A Workshop**

20 and 21 April 2016

**hosted by the Stockholm Environment Institute  
in the University of York**

and to be held at King's Manor in York City Centre

Although the Government, with the support of some other political parties, remains committed to the HS2 project there is continuing doubt among professional engineers and economists and among experienced railway people. In particular, the process from which the scheme emerged, the manner in which it has been assessed and the failure to properly consider a wide range of alternative proposals are all open to challenge. A letter to the Prime Minister from leading experts expressing these concerns and calling for a moratorium on development of the scheme to facilitate a review received only a superficial response. The Government has been similarly dismissive of a sceptical report by the Economic Affairs Committee of the House of Lords.

This Workshop is designed to clarify and consolidate the arguments for a review, prior to the final decision to proceed, and to identify which alternative proposals merit evaluation. The aim is to produce a short, evidence-based report to be presented to the Government, to other political parties, to politicians and officers in local government, to the railway industry and other interested players and to the wider public through the media in the hope that a focussed debate will follow and lead to an impartial and thorough re-evaluation and, if needed, a different strategy.

## The programme

### Wednesday 20 April

18:00 Gather at King's Manor to get to know each other

18:30 Buffet supper

*Chair : Jonathan Tyler, Passenger Transport Networks, York*

19:15 Welcome

*Dr. Lisa Emberson, Director, Stockholm Environment Institute at York*

19:30 A brief history of the governance of big projects : a discussion between  
*Mark Casson, Professor of Economics in the University of Reading*  
and

*Colin Divall, Emeritus Professor of Railway Studies in the University of York*

20:45 Epilogue : Government figures for HS2 just don't add up

*Jacco Thijssen, Professor of Finance, Management School, University of York*

21:00 Evening concludes

### Thursday 21 April

08:45 Welcome

*Chair : Sir Ron Cooke, formerly Vice-Chancellor of the University of York*

09:00 **The HS2 project**

09:00 What are the economic, operational (especially capacity and connectivity) and environmental objectives that underpin the HS2 project ?

*Jim Steer, Director, Greengauge 21*

09:25 Questions

09:35 An engineering critique and the interchanges issue

*Graham Nalty, independent consultant*

09:50 Questions

09:55 What tests should be applied in evaluating the final business case ?  
*Chris Nash, Research Professor, Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds*

10:10 Questions

10:15 Discussion  
*All participants*

10:40 Coffee break

11:00 **The alternatives to HS2** [each speaker: 12 minutes + 5 minutes for questions]

A high-connectivity network of new high-speed lines  
*Colin Elliff, High Speed UK*

HS2 Plan B : fast-connecting the Powerhouse first  
*Michael Wand, hsNorthStart*

Selective infrastructure, operational and pricing schemes to address specific problems  
*Chris Stokes, former Director of the Strategic Rail Authority*

A timetable-led strategy for enhancing Britain's railway network – the Swiss model  
*Jonathan Tyler, Passenger Transport Networks, York*

12:15 Discussion – and identification of other options

12:35 Buffet lunch

*Chair : James Croll, Emeritus Professor of Civil Engineering, UCL and lead-signatory of the letter to the Prime Minister in May 2015*

13:15 **High-speed railways and regional development**

A French perspective  
*Yves Crozet, Professeur émérite, Laboratoire Aménagement Economie Transports, Lyon*

How can we rebalance the UK economy – A review of the evidence  
*Tony May, Emeritus Professor of Transport Engineering, University of Leeds*

13:45 Questions

**14:00 Assessment of the options and their justification against the agreed objectives**

*All participants – in (self-selecting) sub-groups :*

- a meeting the capacity shortfall : 'predict and provide' or managed demand ?*
- b achieving a connected network – principles for railway investment*
- c optimal routes to regional development*
- d environmental impacts (particularly carbon outputs and ecological damage) and their evaluation*

In relation to their respective themes the groups will be asked to consider :

- \* how important each of the objectives underlying large-scale new railway infrastructure (as identified in the first morning session) is;
- \* how effective each of the solutions (as identified in the two morning sessions) might be in achieving each of these objectives;
- \* what the principal constraints are on pursuing each of these solutions; and
- \* what are the prospects of each of these solutions being deliverable in an economically and financially justifiable form ?

**15:00 Report back and general discussion :**

the costs and benefits of HS2 and the alternatives

15:30 Break

**15:40 Concluding plenary (with tea)**

- \*\* Is there a consensus on the key issues to be addressed ?
- \*\* a first draft of the Workshop document  
*Tony May, ITS, University of Leeds*
- \*\* What can we do to publicise the findings and press the case for a review ?

16:30 Workshop ends [*in time for the 16:57 train to London*]

About 45 people from a wide range of organisations will participate in the Workshop.

Journalists will be invited to participate fully in the event but under strict Chatham House rules (particularly no attribution of statements). They would be asked to treat the event as a news item and later to publicise the Workshop report in any appropriate way. We aim to publish it in May 2016.

Programme prepared by Jonathan Tyler, Tony May, Stephen Plowden, Richard Allsop and James Croll

15 April 2016