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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **HIGH SPEED RAIL CAN UNLOCK CONNECTIVITY AND REGIONAL GROWTH FINDS THE INDEPENDENT TRANSPORT COMMISSION**

High Speed Rail will provide a catalyst for better connectivity and growth in the UK's regions but only if it is planned correctly, the Independent Transport Commission (ITC) announces in a new study paper looking at the effects of High Speed Rail (HSR) on our cities and regions.

The ITC study has over the past year held a national Call for Evidence as well as workshops in the key city-regions of Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester and London. From these dialogues, the ITC finds that there are many important effects of HSR that have been largely overlooked in the popular debate so far, and these must be taken fully into account in order for HS2 to unlock the full range of benefits that it could bring. The key findings are as follows:

- Capacity a greater benefit than time-savings. The **greatest potential benefit of the HSR project lies in the release of additional rail capacity** on our national rail network, reducing chronic overcrowding and improving national connectivity between our cities, both for passenger and freight traffic. The economic and spatial benefits of this capacity release will bring even more important travel benefits than the time-savings from faster trains.
- Connectivity planning must start now. **Good regional and local connectivity to HSR is essential** if its full range of benefits are to be captured: city-regions need to start planning now how they can best connect local and regional services to HSR stations. This will ensure that the benefits of the rail service extend to a much wider region than merely the HSR station.
- HSR will change the geography of the UK, **The ITC believes that HSR will change the geography of the UK by creating a new mega-city region.** This will benefit not only the regions but also London, which should experience improved connectivity as it did from HS1.
- Delivery and Governance. We believe that the **HSR project requires a governance and delivery structure capable of capturing the opportunities it will bring:** this structure should extend well beyond transport to include land use and planning in order to provide the commitment that HSR needs to attract private investment and stimulate regeneration.

In reviewing the existing evidence, the paper notes that a new High Speed Rail line would cost not much more than 10% more than a conventional rail line, while bringing added benefits due to the greater capacity release it offers. It urges the Government to reframe its presentation of High Speed 2 towards the potential of the line to bring better convenience, employment and connectivity to the public that it will serve. The paper also encourages the UK's city-regions to present a clear and coherent vision of how they will harness the opportunities that HSR will bring, and recommends Government provide seed funding for such initiatives.

Receiving this report former Secretary of State for Transport and ITC Patron Lord Adonis commented: *“As one would expect of the ITC, they have broadened the dialogue and outlined a route map of what needs to be done to turn a transport project into act of national transformation.”*

Baroness Jo Valentine, CEO of London First added; *“HS2 is an important piece of British infrastructure; it will boost capacity and tie our great cities closer together. But for cities - including London - to reap the full benefits, detailed planning must now take place to integrate high speed rail with local transport networks and to maximise the redevelopment potential around stations. I welcome this report as taking the kind of holistic view that needs to inform future debate.”*

The ITC welcomes the creation of the HS2 Growth Task Force chaired by Lord Deighton addressing some of the issues raised in our initial report. We will be submitting this paper to that Task Force and will now be preparing for the next phase of our project, ‘Learning from Europe’; this will include an international symposium in Lille in February to learn from the spatial effects of High Speed Rail in France and the Netherlands. A final report will be released in 2014.

An electronic version of the paper will be published on the ITC website at: [www.theitc.org.uk](http://www.theitc.org.uk) after 21 October 2013.

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## Notes for Editors

For further information please contact Simon Linnett, ITC chairman, on 0207 280 5092/ 07802 645597, email [simon.linnett@rothschild.com](mailto:simon.linnett@rothschild.com) or the ITC Secretary-General, Dr Matthew Niblett, on 07813 174582 email: [matthew.niblett@keble.oxon.org](mailto:matthew.niblett@keble.oxon.org) .

1. The ITC study paper, *The spatial effects of High Speed Rail: capturing the opportunity*, is available in electronic copy and will be posted on the ITC's website on 21 October 2013. It will be submitted in hard copy to the HS2 Growth Task Force led by Lord Deighton.
2. The report has been authored by the ITC through its Spatial Effects of High Speed Rail working group. The group is chaired by John Worthington, and includes Alan Baxter CBE, Mary Bonar, Sarah Kendall, Bright Pryde, Elizabeth Gilliard and Matthew Niblett. In addition to his ITC role John Worthington is also a Director of the Academy of Urbanism and formerly Professor of Architecture at the University of York.
3. The ITC paper is based on i) its series of national workshops held in Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds and London during the course of Spring and Summer 2013, and ii) on our national Call for Evidence, which ran over the Autumn and Winter 2012-13. A wide range of experts and organisations submitted evidence, including the Royal Town Planning Institute, Network Rail, Hitachi, the CPRE and numerous top academics and local government organisations. A full list of submissions can be found in the paper and also on our website using the following link: <http://www.theitc.org.uk/dyn.php?page=60> . This data has been supplemented by sources in the public domain and through seminars and conversations with experts.
4. The ITC gratefully acknowledges the support of all our benefactors and those who kindly responded to our High Speed Rail Call for Evidence. We are also grateful to the administrative team, particularly Bright Pryde, for helping to run the numerous project events.
5. The ITC, founded in 1999, is Britain's leading independent research charity investigating issues in transport and land use. It comprises a small Secretariat, an advisory team of 12 voluntary Commissioners, and has a base at Cowcross Street in central London. Simon Linnett, Executive Vice-Chairman of Rothschild, is the current ITC Chairman. The charity has no endowment and is supported by charitable donations from a wide range of leading businesses and organisations (for a full list of supporters please see our website [www.theitc.org.uk/5\\_funding.html](http://www.theitc.org.uk/5_funding.html) ), but we retain strict editorial independence from our funding partners.

**The Members of the ITC** include Simon Linnett (Chairman), Alan Baxter CBE, Kristine Beuret OBE, Mary Bonar, John Dawson, Nicholas Finney OBE, Dr Stephen Hickey, Sarah Kendall, Professor Peter Jones, Professor Gregory Marsden, Steven Norris, and Professor John Worthington. The Secretariat is led by Dr Matthew Niblett, a Research Associate at the Transport Studies Unit, University of Oxford.

**The Patrons of the ITC** are Lord Adonis, Lord Freeman, Sir Patrick Brown, Sir Terry Farrell and Professor Sir Peter Hall.

