

Call For Evidence

What Will Be The Spatial Effects Of High Speed Rail In The UK?

Submission by Robert Ravelli

1. Will the cities served by HSR become subservient centres to London or be enriched in their own right?

There is evidence in other regions around the world particularly in North America where it can work both ways. In the case of New York City, the advent of higher speed rail service upgrades has made cities within under a 2 hour commute such as Philadelphia more desirable for commuters. This in turn has made downtown Philadelphia real estate more desirable for New York commuters for its affordability and proximity to the train station. This influx of new affluent commuters looking for more affordable housing has enhanced the population of the city centre creating economic benefit to local retailers and restaurants and cultural attractions. Also, some back office activities have moved to the City because of the proximity to the rail service to New York. This however has been less than expected as wage and tax rates are not that different from Manhattan.

The benefit of having commuters living in the Midlands but working in London is that they spend their earnings locally thus enhancing the local economy.

There is a need to incorporate a regeneration authority into HS2 to take advantage of the link between transport and land use. That way there can be targeted joint development around the train stations that are served by HS2 with mixed use retail, office and residential. The land development revenue can be used to offset operating and capital costs of the line. There are numerous examples of transport oriented development (TOD) globally and across London such as Dalston Kingsland on the East London Line where residential and retail were incorporated into the station design.

It can also work the opposite way. With a high speed rail link to Europe via Eurostar, the Midland cities will enjoy the locational advantages that London now has with the additional advantage of lower costs of living. This should broaden the appeal of businesses to expand or locate there. That is why it is essential that the two high speed lines have a smooth connection in London. I am concerned that having HS2 terminate at Euston will make connections with Eurostar at St Pancras inconvenient. The map you supplied infers that there will be a direct connection but I have not seen that in the current plans. This needs to be sorted out in more detail before any construction begins.

2. How will HSR impact on the economic and social life of the cities it serves?

The increases in passenger travel on high speed rail will enhance the locational advantage of Birmingham and Manchester. It will affect areas that are

conveniently located to the stations. Impact beyond that radius will be more limited unless there are good local connections. This is where it is important that bus and tram connections provided by local transport operators be integrated and enhanced through a station area travel plan. There should be clear intermodal connections between HS2 and local transport.

There could be an impact on residential housing prices as Londoners look to these cities as being within a commutable distance. This has been the case in Philadelphia where New York commuters are buying up flats and causing a rise in prices in some cases beyond what locals can afford.

3. What will be the impact of HSR on those cities/regions it will not directly serve?

This is more problematic however, the main benefit will be the reduction in overcrowding on local train services that HS2 will create. There could be more room for enhanced frequency of service for connections to HS2 stations.

I would advocate for a study into the feasibility of adding an intermediate stop on the line much like Ebbsfleet and Ashford on HS1. The station could be used as a catalyst for a transport oriented development providing much needed housing and economic growth to an area. Not all trains would stop there but perhaps one an hour (much like HS1 does at Ebbsfleet and Ashford). The location of such a station would need to be identified.

4. What should be the top priorities for investment in HSR in order to ensure it improves your locality/city/region?

The top priorities should be that it continues northward to Scotland to create a true national high speed system that reduces domestic air travel.

Beyond that, there needs to be a Development arm of HS2 Corp that ensures joint development around HS2 stations.

There needs to be a direct connection to HS1 Eurostar at St Pancras and not a connection that involves taking the tube or walking. Ideally both high speed lines should terminate at the same station.

5. What additional public/private investment should be considered by these cities and their wider region to capture the maximum value?

As stated before, there needs to be joint development station area plans for each HS2 station in Birmingham and Manchester as well as those proposed for the extensions to Leeds and Scotland. These plans should consider all the public/private investment requirements and how revenues can be folded back into HS2 operating and capital programs.

Beyond that, the affected cities should consider amending their spatial plans and

performing economic analysis that factors in HS2 being completed. Housing prices could be impacted.

In conclusion, as an urban planner who has spent many years dealing with the effects of transport on land use, I concur with the observations of Charles Landry found in the Call for Evidence Appendix.