

International research establishes regeneration and transport benefits of high-speed rail

Embargoed until 13:00, Thursday 20 November 2014

Today, the Independent Transport Commission (ITC) launched its report, '[Ambitions and Opportunities: Understanding the Spatial Effects of High Speed Rail](#)', with the Transport Secretary, Rt Hon Patrick McLoughlin MP; the Chairman of HS2 Ltd, Sir David Higgins; André Delpont, special adviser for Bordeaux Euratlantique; and regional council leaders, including Cllr Sir Albert Bore.

After extensive international field research, the report concludes that high-speed rail (HSR) can be the cornerstone for a step change in the integration and improvement of regional infrastructure. With correct planning, HSR investment can help to increase the long-term capacity of the UK's transport infrastructure and act as a catalyst for the economic regeneration of our cities and regions.

Drawing best practice from cities and regions connected by HSR in the UK, France, Belgium and the Netherlands, the study examines the regeneration and connectivity benefits of the European HSR network to create a tool-kit for policy makers in our cities, regions and national government. The lessons from these case studies will help to ensure that the benefits of HSR investment are properly captured across the UK. A copy of the report is **attached**.

The key findings from the report include:

- **Excellent integration of transport systems with HSR can lead to a step-change in the quality of public transport across all modes**

Case study: Rotterdam Central station is an excellent example of a transport interchange connecting HSR services seamlessly with local and regional transport modes. The use of a holistic economic and spatial strategy for the Randstad (Netherlands) has helped the area to implement a coherent transport plan. In terms of rail, the area has benefitted from ensuring good local connectivity to HSR stations, and thinking of the rail system as a network rather than a series of lines.

- **Long-term planning will enable cities and city-regions to capture and shape these positive changes through incremental improvements**

Case studies: The TGV stations Gare d'Austerlitz and Gare de Lyon in Paris have generated impressive regeneration areas in their vicinity. The planners have grasped the importance of having a grand strategic vision and developing this incrementally, in order that redevelopment can adapt over time. A similar approach has been adopted at King's Cross St Pancras, with the regeneration of a formerly run-down area. This has been successful because Argent Group initiated a series of innovative temporary uses for the development site while the main buildings are being restored and developed.

- **Collaboration between central and local government, as well as between the developers and local citizens and civic groups, is essential**

Case study: Although its HSR line will not be completed until 2017, the Bordeaux Atlantique project has already connected an excellent tram network to the HSR station, and generated huge improvements in the public realm. The success of the project has been built on engagement with all stakeholders, coupled with clear leadership from the Mayor and the public development corporation.



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The report was launched at 14:00 on Thursday 20 November at the Conferencing Suite, Gridiron Building, 1 Pancras Square, London, N1C 4AG, with the following speakers: André Delpont, Bordeaux Euratlantique, Cllr Sir Albert Bore, Leader of Birmingham City Council, Sir David Higgins, Chairman, HS2 Ltd and Rt Hon Patrick McLoughlin MP, Secretary of State for Transport. Cllr Julie Dore, Leader of Sheffield City Council and Cllr Keith Wakefield, Leader of Leeds City Council, were in attendance.

The study's insights were discussed at a symposium immediately after the launch event with transport, planning and regeneration professionals who will be involved with developing Britain's HSR network over the coming decades.

John Worthington, Independent Transport Commissioner and Chairman of the HSR working group, commented on the report: "Our research on the impacts of high-speed rail in France, Belgium and the Netherlands, has shown that, far from being a white elephant, there are very many examples where investment in HSR has been the catalyst for significant urban and regional renewal.

"This has happened when HSR has been properly integrated with the local transport network, when co-operation has been strong between all interest groups, and when cities have planned ahead and understood that regeneration is a long-term process.

"We hope that this report will act as a call-to-arms for the UK's cities and regions and will, through the lessons it contains, help them to grasp the opportunities that HSR investment offers."

Rt Hon Patrick McLoughlin MP, Secretary of State for Transport, said: "This report is a welcome addition to the case for high speed rail in Britain. The hugely positive impact of projects across Europe shows that this Government's transformational ambitions are achievable if everyone works together and plans ahead.

"We have made great progress in encouraging towns and cities across the country to get ready to take advantage of the tremendous opportunity HS2 presents. We will continue to draw on the experience of success stories across the world to get the best out of our high speed rail plans and maximise the benefits for the country."

Sir David Higgins, Chairman of HS2 Ltd, remarked on the report: "This report sets out in clear detail, not just the very tangible benefits high-speed rail has brought to cities and their regions throughout Europe, but also the sustained focus, commitment and collaboration between central and local government necessary to maximise those benefits.

"The last year has seen a developing a consensus in support of such a strategic approach in this country and HS2 will do all we can to help maintain and sustain that momentum over the twenty year lifetime of the project."

- ENDS -

Media enquiries:

If you have a media query about the report or would like to set up an interview, please contact John Stevenson on john@ti-communications.co.uk or 07824 621756.

If you would like more information on the research programme or the ITC, please contact Dr Matthew Niblett on matthew.niblett@keble.oxon.org or 07813 174582.





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Notes to editor:

- The Independent Transport Commission is Britain's foremost independent land use and transport think tank. We are a research charity committed to providing insight and analysis of the most pressing long-term strategic issues in the fields of transport and land use. The ITC explores the long-term consequences of current policy, considers new approaches and makes recommendations on the way forward. For more information please see our website, www.theitc.org.uk
- 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 and Dr Matthew Niblett of the University of Oxford heads the Secretariat. 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), but the ITC retains strict editorial independence from all our funding partners.
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