



INDEPENDENT TRANSPORT COMMISSION

Britain's independent research charity for transport and land use policy

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ITC HSR Launch Symposium: Ambitions and Opportunities Report 20 November 2014

Symposium Summary Notes

Key Issues Raised:

- All four groups raised concerns about the current method of measuring and evaluating returns and success;
- Recognise social as well as just monetary values. Focus on long term returns of quality of life, social amenity, health, resilience and pride of place;
- Look outside the immediate project area along local transport corridors;
- Rethink opportunities of devolved power for local plans, with power to raise and retain funds and create the appropriate solution for each place;
- Design stations around the long term needs of an area, not just the specific needs of HS2.

The Event:

The Independent Transport Commission (ITC) is running a major research project investigating the spatial effects of High Speed Rail (HSR). Phase 2 of this research project is exploring what we can learn from European experience about the impacts of High Speed Rail investment on cities and regions. Following a symposium in Lille in February 2014, which looked at evidence from various cities in France and the Netherlands, further study visits have been held during summer 2014, alongside a series of expert panels to review existing evidence and gather insights on key themes. A report entitled *Ambitions and Opportunities: Understanding the Spatial Effects of High Speed Rail* was compiled and launched at a symposium in late 2014.

The Launch Symposium, kindly supported by Argent at the Gridiron building in King's Cross, was held on 20 November 2014 with a distinguished panel of speakers including Cllr Sir Albert Bore of Birmingham City Council, Sir David Higgins from HS2 Ltd, André Delpont of the Bordeaux Euratlantique project, and The Rt Hon Patrick McLoughlin, Secretary of State for Transport. The audience included a number of leading experts, including academics, architects, local government leaders, transport consultants and civil servants. The format of the event involved a high-profile launch of the Ambitions and Opportunities report with accompanying presentations by the above speakers and chaired by ITC Patron Sir Patrick Brown KCB, followed by short background presentations from project chairman John Worthington and André Delpont, setting the scene for the subsequent symposium. The symposium split the remaining delegates into four themed groups to explore the issues and ideas raised in the report: station neighbourhoods – identity and placemaking; creating and capturing value; governance and delivery; and integration. The following notes summarise the discussions from those groups.

Station Neighbourhoods: Identity and Placemaking

Facilitator: Neil Bennett, Farrells
Rapporteur: Alan Baxter CBE, ITC
Note-taker: Michael Bredin, ITC

The discussion took a number of different perspectives on the topic of identity and placemaking, and the key points of discussion included the following:

- One delegate addressed the issues of scale within the immediate and wider station areas, noting that

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stations tend to be an afterthought which causes issues in regards to segregation and physical connectivity.

- It was suggested that more thought be given to the possibility that HS2 could cause jobs to drain to London. One delegate thought it was important to understand clearly the definitions of “rebalancing” and “regeneration” so we can better understand concerns like job-draining. It was questioned how towns could be economically linked together through HS2. The example of collaboration reflected in one North and the Northern Powerhouse was raised.
- There was much thought given to the issues of connectivity to other modes of transport, particularly to airports including Heathrow, Manchester and Birmingham, and the importance of joining up the various elements of transport. One delegate questioned whether this might be an opportunity to create a national transport plan.
- There was a lot of interest in how HS2 might affect particular cities. Leeds was an interesting case where a lack of vision is causing some prime land adjacent to the proposed station site to go under-utilized. This points to the fact that you need vision and a process for integrating and enhancing the existing community. Concern was raised about the East Midland and Sheffield Meadowhall stations as they are located far from the city centres – one delegate wondered whether this was a major mistake for HS2 or whether this could be an opportunity to form new neighbourhoods around the stations.
 - It was suggested that there are essentially two scenarios: one with Euston where you regenerate an area, and another with Meadowhall where the city comes to it. John Worthington mentioned that, as seen in Japan, a peripheral location can develop with a clear political and economic vision, but it can take 50-60 years. Additionally, integration with classic rail may be a solution to bring high speed rail to cities centres.

It was questioned whether there are cities that could be damaged by HS2, and Stoke-on-Trent was brought up as an example of a city with major concerns regarding the arrival of HS2. It was noted that there can be conflict between “conventional” logic and intuition – have we lost out on how to make these decisions? One delegate suggested that something that is so transformational, requires a long term regeneration vision with the economic returns being measured holistically.

- There was a lot of discussion around the Euston/King’s Cross corridor and development resulting from HS2 as well as the experience of King’s Cross with Javelin and Eurostar which were targeted to very different markets. One delegate wondered what might come about if Camden Council were to support HS2 at Euston – right now, they are lacking even a starter vision for the station, and there is the risk of designing the station in a vacuum. John Worthington raised the example of King’s Cross, noting that they had to start early. One delegate suggested that we need to learn from these past examples, and that perhaps we have not learned sufficiently from King’s Cross and the continent.
- There is a need for balance between big and small pictures – we should think across silos and open up questions. A major lesson is to integrate, converse across disciplines, and be flexible. The most important thing is to think long-term.

Creating and Capturing the Value

Facilitator: Simon Green, Sheffield City Council

Rapporteur: Peter Headicar, ITC

Note-taker: Camilla Ween, Goldstein Ween Architects

The main question that was addressed was: *How do we capture and measure value?*

- Timeframes were recognised as an important aspect to create and capture value. There is certainly a gap between when the value is realised and when it needs to be accounted for in city plans, and it is crucial to consider the long-term benefits for major projects like this. This comes down to stimulating growth and the need for governments (both local and national) to forward-fund certain

projects that will capture the value from the major project, in the case HS2. The question then is, how is that ‘loan’ eventually captured from land value increases? It was thought that this was an area for further research.

- It was noted that geography and location are important factors – HSR will not create value alone without the wider city regeneration. This comes from having a complete vision. The example of Bordeaux was raised, where the project is driving the change including capturing the value. The success of Bordeaux has been that they had a ‘global’ vision for the whole region, including looking at the relationship of key economic opportunities: universities, aerospace business park, defence industry – all projects were connected. There was also a marketing link – with a common theme to sell the idea: when asked how or why the funding for rail was confirmed the answer was: *“It was a good idea”!*
- A major issue around land and value capture was distribution: links and connections must be created, linking peripheral areas to the hubs. The examples of Manchester and Burnley were brought up, as well as Birmingham which is more concerned with identifying growth and economic opportunities in their immediate surroundings.
- It was thought that the key objective of HS2 is to rebalance the UK economy and bring more wealth to the regions – cities need to be free to make local decisions and mistakes without being questioned by central government. There was a problem identified though, that there is too much focus on monetary value and that social values get lost as the appraisal process does not allow for these – however, they must be recognised. The social values are such things as quality of life, amenity, pride in place, liveability, health, sustainability, resilience, and more, and it is critical that we find a way to value these qualities that is outside of monetary valuation which, if quantified, will render these social benefits arbitrary.

Governance and Delivery

Facilitator: Keith Mitchell, Peter Brett Associates

Rapporteur: Mary Bonar, ITC

Note-taker: Lawrence Revill, David Lock Associates

This was a wide-ranging debate that touched on discussions addressing the need to “help HSR cities to move forward, especially in their relationships with central government.” They were concerned with the relative roles of the public sector and the private sector, and with the distribution of funds and powers between the centre and the local.

- The HS2 project started as a national priority infrastructure project but without a clear articulation of the vision to be realised – indeed the stated objectives have shifted during the evolution of the project and have not had a substantive spatial dimension that examined anticipated local physical, social and economic beneficial impacts. There needs to be available a means of relating investment benefits to local business taxation.
- Much like the station identity group, the governance and delivery discussion noted that there is a pressing need to bring together and, where possible, integrate national road and rail strategies, in terms of corridors, stations and regeneration and development potential, and to ensure that these are aligned with ‘regional’ ambitions.
- The group identified that there is a fundamental shift in the conception of station design, demonstrated by the continental visits, away from a built object on a site to a hub in a communications network of connections and public realm, part of the civic mesh of each city or city region. This means that, in most cases, the “red lines” are too closely drawn and do not reflect real impacts and benefits and opportunities for value capture. Two areas of new thinking are required from this point on:
 - As a matter of some urgency there has to be a shared and holistic vision developed for each local area where the new line arrives. Each needs to learn its ABC – Ambition, Brokerage, Continuity (and Consistency); a realistic vision in which all parties understand their

respective roles, and which can be sustained over time.

- While there is a clear distinction between national government delivering national connections and local government assuming responsibility for local networks, local government (governance) needs the means and mechanisms to be able to do this with leadership and autonomy. Each city region needs real power and control over local transport networks, though there may be different solutions for each place.
- There remains a lack of integration across funding silos which means that the process is project focused, not plan and strategy focused. This undermines potential synergies and compromises value for money. Bordeaux reveals the value of learning to collaborate across administrative and operational jurisdictions.
- The key to capturing land value uplift as a key element of delivery is clarity as early as possible in the delivery process so that expectations are clear. Effective long term planning aligned with a commitment to CPO as a mechanism of last resort is also required if investment is to be attracted. This would help to de-risk the whole process to reduce and control global costs and revenues, and allow a very long-term view to be taken based on patient money. All of our European comparators have the benefit of a public infrastructure bank which makes investments based on cheap, long-term money and the expertise to evaluate such projects appropriately. Such criteria are not those used for private finance.
- Finally the propensity for effective city regions varies across the country such that a one-size-fits-all to urban devolution may not work. Some city regions still reflect the concept of the metropolitan counties and the influence, co-operation, control and decision making (Greater Manchester) while some lost it (West Midlands) or never had it (East Midlands). This means that the arrangements going forward may need to be bespoke for each area. They cautioned that we need to keep a weathered eye on other towns and cities not integrated into the new network, places such as Leicester or Stoke-on-Trent.

Integration

Facilitator: Michael Colella, Transport for London

Rapporteur: Sarah Kendall, ITC

Note-taker: Henk Bouwman, ITC

The integration group focused on how to better link high speed rail (HSR) stations to neighbouring areas not directly served by HSR services. Their discussion was structured around the four questions raised during the launch presentations: lessons learned from past experience, how to best spread insights, what can we integrate to deliver complex projects, and what actions could be taken now to speed up and capture value?

- It was clear from the discussion that stations should not be planned in isolation or in piecemeal fashion – for example Ebbsfleet has seen little development in part due to its lack of connections to the existing rail and bus network, significantly reducing its local connectivity. It is important to use existing corridors to reduce opposition to major new infrastructure. Stations should be designed around the longer term needs for the area, not just the specific needs of high speed rail – master plans should be flexible but comprehensive.
- Again, the idea that there is a need to consider all levels of transport – be it rail, road, cycle, walking or air – came up in the integration group. This will allow for the widening of the passenger market for HSR services as well as draw additional footfall for development around HSR stations. Furthermore, these integrated transport networks should be developed simultaneously with HSR so that local, regional and international connectivity is optimised. Stemming from this, you also need to consider transit-oriented development as part of the core HSR scheme.
- The group felt it was important to emphasise the need to consider all of this as part of the conceptual stage of delivery of HSR in order to account for the wider and longer-term needs of the area around the proposed station. A clear vision and incorporating an urban master plan considering all longer term needs is vital to unlock economic development. There was a lot of talk around managing the

‘red line’ around the project ensuring that project planning limits logically consider how its proposals fit into neighbouring areas.

- The integration group also recognised the need to transfer more power to city-regions, including responsibility (and ideally funding) for local/regional transport, economic development and other infrastructure strategies require less involvement from central government. The ability of city-regions to tap into non-HSR funding pots needs to be more effectively explored – for example, can city-regions use Land Value Capture techniques to front load expensive infrastructure requirements?
- There was also a recognition that all levels of governments and stakeholders need to be engaged in the development and delivery process. Bottom-up initiatives are just as important as top-down. One delegate pointed out that all three levels are equally important:
 - National level with better integration of road and rail
 - Regional level for economic benefit
 - Local level for spatial integration to make a better place (leading to more economic benefits)
- Funding, much like station development, requires a holistic approach rather than piecemeal approval of individual elements. Funding structures should be based on long-term loans and should come from a range of sources, not just DfT and HS2 Ltd. Comparisons can be drawn from such things as motorway funding programmes and the like. Alternatively, new funding mechanisms can be invented to accommodate for the needs of such a large scale project.
- The group identified the following points for the successful delivery and integration of HSR:
 - Shared vision at all levels of stakeholders
 - Widen the agenda of the devolution debate, which will be critical for integration
 - Be realistic on the real-estate value, and beware of the ‘hope-value’ – it’s about long-term investments
 - One-size-fits-all does not exist – every town, station, city needs to take a unique approach and translate the general principles to their circumstances

Next Steps

The ITC will now draw together the insights gained from our project thus far, including our regional workshops in summer 2013, the Lille Symposium, expert panels, study visits and report writing into the third and final phase. This phase will build a network of ambassadors and collaborators to establish a menu of functional design ideas and operational delivery processes relevant to each city region impacted by HS2. We would like to express our thanks to all those who have taken part and look forward to working with you in this seminal phase.

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