



HIGH SPEED RAIL – INVESTING IN BRITAIN’S FUTURE

This response is made on behalf of the Planning Officers Society (POS).

The Society represents the most senior professionals and managers of planning functions in the English Local Authorities. We are rightly styled as the credible voice of public sector planning.

We set out to:

- enable public sector planners to work together with Government and partners
- be a strong and united voice for public sector planners supporting and shaping planning policy and practice in local communities
- be a preferred point of contact for public sector planners where they can access learning, support and networking opportunities
- find common ground with other disciplines, organisations and the media to improve the planning process, policy and implementation
- broaden our membership and create a strong cohort of young planners, representative of the ethnic and gender diversity of the UK.

The Society's aim is to make planning more effective in delivering sustainable development to support the well-being of our communities.

HS2 has inevitably proven an emotive subject, particularly for those communities, businesses and local authorities located along the proposed route between London and the West Midlands. POS drew upon existing evidence from authorities both in favour and against the proposal to inform the Society's position on the national project.

POS considers that it is important to balance the issues surrounding the development of HS2. The Society recognises that additional rail capacity is required to meet forecast demand and that the provision of this capacity would enable the more effective use of the existing rail network. If the proposal goes ahead there must be the following assurances from Government:

- that the identified mitigation measures to address the environmental impacts of the scheme are not underestimated
- that economic and regeneration benefits of the scheme materialise and that HS2 learns from previous schemes including HS1
- it releases capacity on the existing rail network and thus provides more frequent services on the 'classic' rail network otherwise the proposed network is unacceptable
- that the project is not financed from funds identified for other transport interventions
- there is complementary investment across the entire network so as to support economic activity outside of major urban areas

POS understands that HS2 is a strategic and transformational project and would therefore like Government to demonstrate how it fits into the wider strategy for transport and land use planning in the UK.

Don Gobbett
POS Transport Convenor
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