

## Regional Transport Partnerships Chairs Meeting

### Shetland

2 March 2011

#### ITEM 6: – High Speed Rail; Progress Report

## 1. BACKGROUND

**1.1** The previous Government's command paper on High Speed Rail (HSR) outlined the proposals for a High Speed Line between London and Birmingham through the Chiltern and also advised that detailed proposals would be prepared for extending the HSR network to Manchester and Sheffield/Leeds by two separate lines from Birmingham to form a Y shaped HSR network. The whole project (London – Manchester/Leeds) was then to go through the parliamentary process in one Bill.

## 2 RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

**2.1 Heathrow Link** The previous Government had already asked Lord Mawhinney to look at the case for Heathrow to be served by HSR. His report (dated 5 October 2010) did not find a compelling case that the London – Birmingham link should be routed via Heathrow but when the line was extended to Manchester and Leeds, consideration should be given to a High Speed spur that would enable direct links to Heathrow from the North and Scotland.

**2.2 Review of Y-network** Back in June, the new Coalition Government ordered the HS2 office (an arm of DfT set up to deliver on HSR) to review to review the choice of a Y-shaped network against the alternative 'reverse S' shaped network London – Birmingham – Manchester – Leeds. Following this review, The Government announced in October that their preference was for the Y-shaped network and instructed HS2 to develop proposals for the HSR network on that basis.

**2.3** In a statement to Parliament on 20 December 2010, The Secretary of State confirmed the Government's commitment to the high speed line between London and Birmingham (along the general alignment recommended by the previous Government), including an extension further north to link in with West Coast Main Line near Litchfield). The first phase of a high speed network will now also include a link between the HS2 line (London – Birmingham) and HS1 (London – Channel Tunnel) via a tunnel in London from Old Oak Common to the North London Line near Chalk Farm at Camden.

**2.4 Parliamentary Process, Consultation and Timescale** This first phase will now be taken through Parliament as a separate Bill. Formal consultation on the Government's proposed scheme between London and Birmingham is due to commence late February 2011 and it is understood that the Government will

issue a consultation paper to start off the process. It is anticipated that this will include an update on the business case for the scheme.

- 2.5** Strong opposition has already been voiced in the areas directly affected by the proposal, e.g. the Chilterns and Warwickshire, although strong support has been voiced by several influential bodies, e.g. Network Rail and Greengauge21.
- 2.6** Phase two of the High Speed network to Manchester and Leeds will be developed (detailed design and consultation) whilst phase one goes through the relevant parliamentary stages and will include a spur to Heathrow that will allow direct High Speed train services between the airport and the North. HS2 have been asked to report their route proposals for the lines to Manchester and Leeds by December 2012
- 2.7** The Government have allocated £750m to prepare the scheme and the timescale is for the line between London and Birmingham to commence in 2016 and to be completed by 2025 with completion of the network to Manchester and Leeds a further 10 years on.

### **3 IMPLICATIONS FOR SCOTLAND**

- 3.1** The confirmation of the Y-network option is arguably beneficial to Scotland in that it leaves realistic opportunities for linking Glasgow and Edinburgh to the High Speed Network via both the West and the East Coast.
- 3.2** In the HS2 report (on the London – Birmingham proposal), a High Speed service to Glasgow is envisaged but providing a service to Edinburgh via the new line and the West Coast Main Line has not been built into the model and business case. It is envisaged that the journey time would be similar to that for Glasgow, i.e. sub 4 hrs, which is around 0.5 hours less than the new East Coast timetable. The text in background papers of the report does however indicate an Edinburgh service and representation has been made to the Secretary of State that the business case for the London – Birmingham proposal would probably be improved by around 10% with the inclusion of a London – Edinburgh service.
- 3.3** In the new working brief to HS2 by the Government, there is no mention of extending the line beyond Manchester and Leeds and there are only minor references to Scotland in the HS2 report.
- 3.4** The Secretary of State advised Parliament on 20 December that “In the longer term, we will also explore with the Scottish Government the options for further reducing journey times to Scotland.”
- 3.5** In response to a Question, he further advised that “We are committed to discussions with the Scottish Government, but that would be a third phase to the project – we have to get to Manchester and Leeds first. The appropriate time to start discussing that third phase will be when we start the detailed design work on the second phase.”
- 3.6** This apparent lack of commitment to create a network that would extend into Scotland has been the subject of several media articles.

**3.7** It is understood that the Scottish Government see HS2 as the right body to plan for a HSR network that extends as far as Edinburgh and Glasgow and it is further understood there are continuous discussions between the Scottish and Westminster Governments on how this could be progressed.

**3.8** Although there is concern over the lack of commitment in taking the High Speed Network to Scotland, it must nevertheless be recognised that without the London - Birmingham project in place, there will 'never' be a high speed network extending to Scotland. It is also expected to be strong political opposition as well as support within the Government and the Opposition for the London – Birmingham project so it could be argued that it is important that strong support for this scheme is also raised in Scotland. The Chair of SEStran recently wrote an open letter to the Secretary of State (attached) providing such support but also voiced concern over the lack of commitment to bring High Speed Rail to Scotland.

## **4 RECOMMENDATION**

**4.1** The Meeting is asked to note the report

Trond Haugen  
Lindean Partnership Ltd  
Advisor to SEStran  
22 December 2010

Background Papers  
Remit letter to HS2 by Secretary of State for Transport – October 2010  
<http://www.hs2.org.uk/assets/x/76999>

High Level Assessment of the wider network options – Reverse 'S' and 'Y' network;  
HS2  
Oct 2010  
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/rail/pi/highspeedrail/hs2ltd/networkoptions/pdf/report.pdf>

High Speed Rail Access to Heathrow; Rt Hon the Lord Mawhinney Kt – June 2010  
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/rail/pi/highspeedrail/lordmawhinneyreport/pdf/highspeedrailaccessheathrow.pdf>

High Speed Rail, London to the West Midlands and Beyond – A report to Government by HS2 Ltd.; Dec 2009, made public March 2010  
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/rail/pi/highspeedrail/hs2ltd/hs2report/>

Hansard, 20 December 2010  
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm101220/debtext/101220-0002.htm#1012206000002>



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Chairman: Cllr Russell Imrie Partnership Director: Alex Macaulay

Our Reference: SES-Rail

03 Feb 2011

The Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP  
Secretary of State for Transport  
Great Minster House  
76 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DR

Dear Secretary of State

## High Speed Rail

I am writing this open letter as the Chair of SEStran to express concern over your recent announcement to the House on High Speed Rail but also to give strong support in your efforts to enable the construction of a High Speed Rail line between London and Birmingham as the first leg of a national High Speed Rail Network.

SEStran (South East Scotland Transport Partnership) is the statutory transport partnership covering the eight local authorities in and around Edinburgh and we will therefore have a very strong interest in the development of High Speed Rail in the UK.

At the SEStran Board meeting on 14 January I was asked to express concern that the High Speed Rail network was not likely to extend to Scotland for a very long time and in your statement to the House on 20 December 2010 you only mentioned the planning of the network as far as Manchester and Leeds. Your statement that "In the longer term, we will also explore with the Scottish Government the options for further reducing journey times to Scotland" could indeed be seen as a proposal to only consider upgrading elements of the existing network and services and is far from a commitment to incorporate Scotland as part of a national High Speed Network.


I would therefore ask that you put forward a much clearer message to the extent that there is a commitment by the Government to plan for a High Speed Network that will extend to Scotland (at least as far as Edinburgh and Glasgow). There are indeed strong arguments that the construction of the network should not just be a progression of phases heading slowly northwards but that construction should take place simultaneously in several places, including Scotland. Indeed, the High Speed Line in Scotland would have the greatest potential to reduce journey times, which has shown to be the most important element for a strong business case.

Notwithstanding the above, I would also like to express my full support in your endeavours to steer the Bill for HS2 between London and Birmingham through Parliament. This line is of utmost importance in the creation of a truly High Speed National Rail Network and should it fail, it is probable that no further High Speed Lines will be developed in the UK and the country will be left behind most other European countries.

The case for the London – Birmingham line is very strong in terms of the added capacity it creates but it is nevertheless the case that the business case only becomes impressively strong when the network extends further north to include Scotland. I would therefore argue that your arguments to get the Bill through the House (and indeed through the consultation exercise) will be much enhanced if you make a stronger commitment to create a national network that extends beyond Manchester and Leeds and into Scotland.

I would be delighted to be of any assistance in the High Speed debate and look forward to receiving your response.

Yours Faithfully,



Russell Imrie  
Chair of SEStran

CC Alex Macaulay, Partnership Director