

# High Speed Rail Omnibus Survey - Topline Summary Findings

## 21 Feb 2011

### Background

TNS-BMRB was commissioned by the Department for Transport to conduct research about the proposed High Speed Rail scheme. 2,037 interviews were carried out with GB adults aged 16 and over on the TNS Omnibus Survey between 9 and 13 February 2011. None of the respondents live in post code units potentially affected by the proposed High Speed Rail scheme. Data has been weighted to ensure it is nationally representative.

This document summarises the topline findings from the research. More detail can be found in the separate set of PDF data tables. Please note that from early March this document will be superseded by a comprehensive report on the research findings.

### Results

- Q1. Roughly half of British adults (53%) are aware of the proposed High Speed Rail scheme.
- Q2. One in ten British adults (11%) claim to know a lot or a fair amount about the proposed High Speed Rail scheme, with four in ten (42%) saying they know a little or not very much at all about the proposed scheme.
- Q3. Television (41%) was the most common source of information about the proposed High Speed Rail scheme among British adults, followed by newspapers (15%). Around one in twenty British adults mentioned each of the radio (6%), the internet (4%) and family and friends (4%).
- Q4. Half of British adults (47%) are in favour of the proposed High Speed Rail scheme, with 12% strongly in favour. One in ten (9%) are against the proposed scheme, and the remaining 44% are either undecided or are neither in favour nor against the scheme.
- Q5. When asked to spontaneously say how they thought they would be personally impacted by the proposed High Speed Rail scheme, seven in ten British adults (69%) said there would be no impact and one in ten (11%) were unsure. Respondents were three times more likely to name a positive impact than a negative impact, with the most common positive impacts relating to travelling becoming quicker and easier.
- Q6. The majority of British adults think the proposed High Speed Rail scheme would have a positive impact for Britain as a whole on: journey times (81%); opportunities for business (77%); levels of employment (72%); and congestion on roads (61%). A quarter (24%) thought the proposed scheme would have a *big* positive impact on journey times.

Half of British adults think the proposed scheme would have a negative impact for Britain as a whole on cost of train tickets (52%) and cost to the government (47%), whilst over four in ten think it would have a negative impact on noise levels (44%) and the environment (42%). However, there is less consensus on these four measures, with three in ten (30%) thinking the proposed scheme would have a *positive* impact on the environment, and a quarter (25%) thinking it would have a positive

impact on the cost to the government.

- Q7. The most important impact for British adults personally is the environment (which 71% rate as important), followed by congestion on roads (61%), levels of employment (60%), and cost to the government (59%). The least important impact is noise levels (43%). A little over half (55%) think journey times are important.
- Q8. Roughly two thirds of British adults agree that the proposed High Speed Rail scheme would create jobs and growth by bringing Britain closer together (63%), and would help boost growth in the Midlands and the North (68%). Over half also agree that: our railways are nearly full and so a new line is needed (61%); High Speed Rail would be better for the environment as it would reduce road and air travel (56%); and we need to invest in High Speed Rail to prevent Britain from being left behind (54%).

In relation to negative propositions relating to the proposed High Speed Rail scheme: Half of British adults (50%) think High Speed Rail is £30bn we cannot afford, and four in ten think it would destroy the countryside (38%) or would mean unacceptable levels of noise for communities directly affected by the line (42%). Three in ten (29%) think the High Speed Rail would not save any carbon and two in ten (19%) think it would be a white elephant.