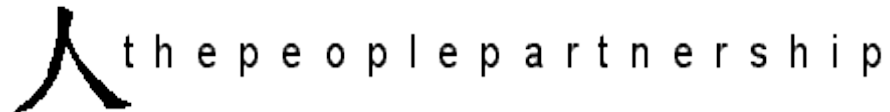


# High Speed Rail Consultation

## Qualitative research findings

March 2011



1. Research background
2. Summary and conclusions
3. Public perceptions of HSR/HS2
4. Understanding of the economic, social and environmental issues

# Objectives

- To ascertain public perceptions of the HSR/HS2 project
  - And, within this, to understand the levels and types of concerns within and without the proposed line of route
- To explore understanding of the economic, environmental and social arguments for HSR/HS2
  - And, within this, responses to specific arguments for/against HSR/HS2
- To provide guidance on how best to phrase the explanations that will outline the case for HSR/HS2
- To highlight any differences across the target audiences

## Method & sample – overview

- 18 x 1½ hour group discussions

### 6 x residents on line of route

- Aylesbury
- Brackley
- Leamington Spa

### 6 x business travellers

- Birmingham
- London
- Manchester

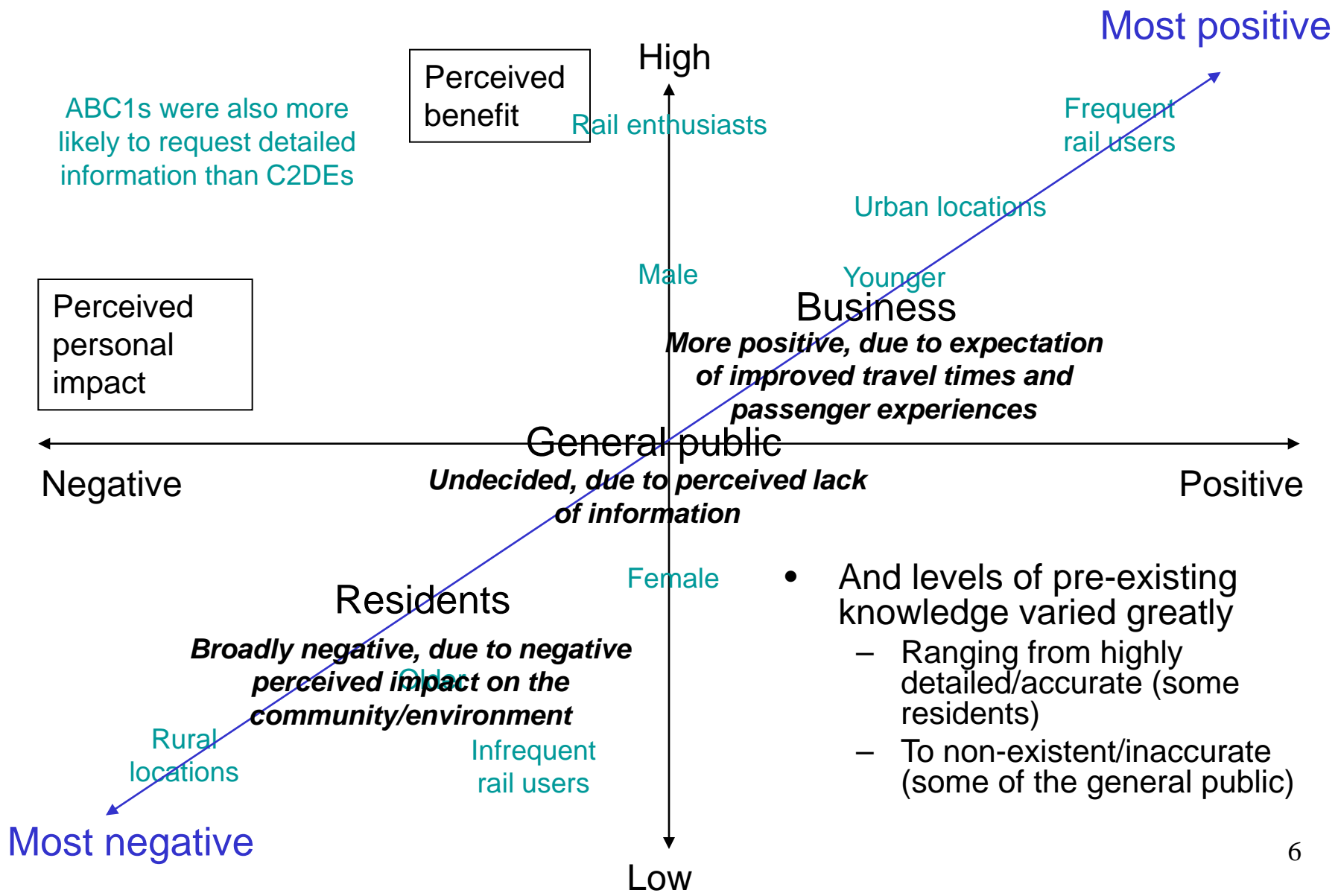
### 6 x general public

- Bristol
- Milton Keynes
- Norwich

- A range of ingoing views about HSR/ HS2 were represented within each group/across the sample
- Representation of the following was provided across the sample
  - Gender
  - Age/lifestage
  - SEG
  - Different BME communities
- No local activists were recruited within the residents groups
- All business travellers were travelling between London/Birmingham/ Manchester
  - Half travelling frequently
    - Once a month-once a week
  - Half travelling very frequently
    - At least once a week

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# Overview



# Responses to the case for HSR/HS2

## **'Investing in the future'**

- The most emotive benefit
  - Agreement that Britain cannot afford to be left behind international competitors
  - However, more information was required relating to how HSR/HS2 would help to build a modern economy and why it was needed

## **'Bringing Britain closer together'**

- Accepted literally, as making travel faster between cities
- Positive responses to the idea of job/wealth creation
- However, there was some scepticism, that HSR/HS2 alone would serve to regenerate urban centres and change the way business is conducted

## **'New lines and new trains'**

- Elicited consistent support, as overcrowding is a common experience
  - Sense that the benefits regarding broader customer travel experience, e.g. fewer delays, more comfort and better on-board facilities, could be more strongly communicated
- Interest in more information on
  - Why new lines, rather than an upgrade, are needed
  - The integration of HS2 with existing lines
  - The reference to 'no net increase in carbon emissions'

# Responses to the case against HSR/HS2

## Environment

- Impact on the community/countryside was of great concern to residents
- Others tended to feel that some impact was inevitable

## Need

- Consistent questions about perceived need were raised, including
  - Whether HSR/HS2 should be a priority in the context of public sector spending cuts
  - Why existing lines cannot be used
  - Whether the time savings are significant enough to justify the spend
  - Whether business people will continue to travel rather than use the internet

## Finance

- There were high levels of concern about potential over-spend
- And about presumed fare levels
  - It was anticipated that fares would be expensive and that, even if they were reasonable to start with, would creep up
  - There were repeated requests for guarantees from the Government relating to ongoing regulation of fare levels



# Key top line communication

- Top line communication would ideally link the international, national and personal

## **A national high speed rail link will help Britain to plan for and invest in the future**

- High speed rail will introduce world leading technology into the British rail network
- The new lines will improve the speed and efficiency of the network overall, for everyone
  - This will provide much needed extra capacity for passengers and freight operators
  - There will be better/more reliable links between cities
- The new trains will provide a better experience for passengers
  - More comfortable service, with better on board facilities and fewer delays
- Construction will boost the economy by creating jobs and wealth in the long term

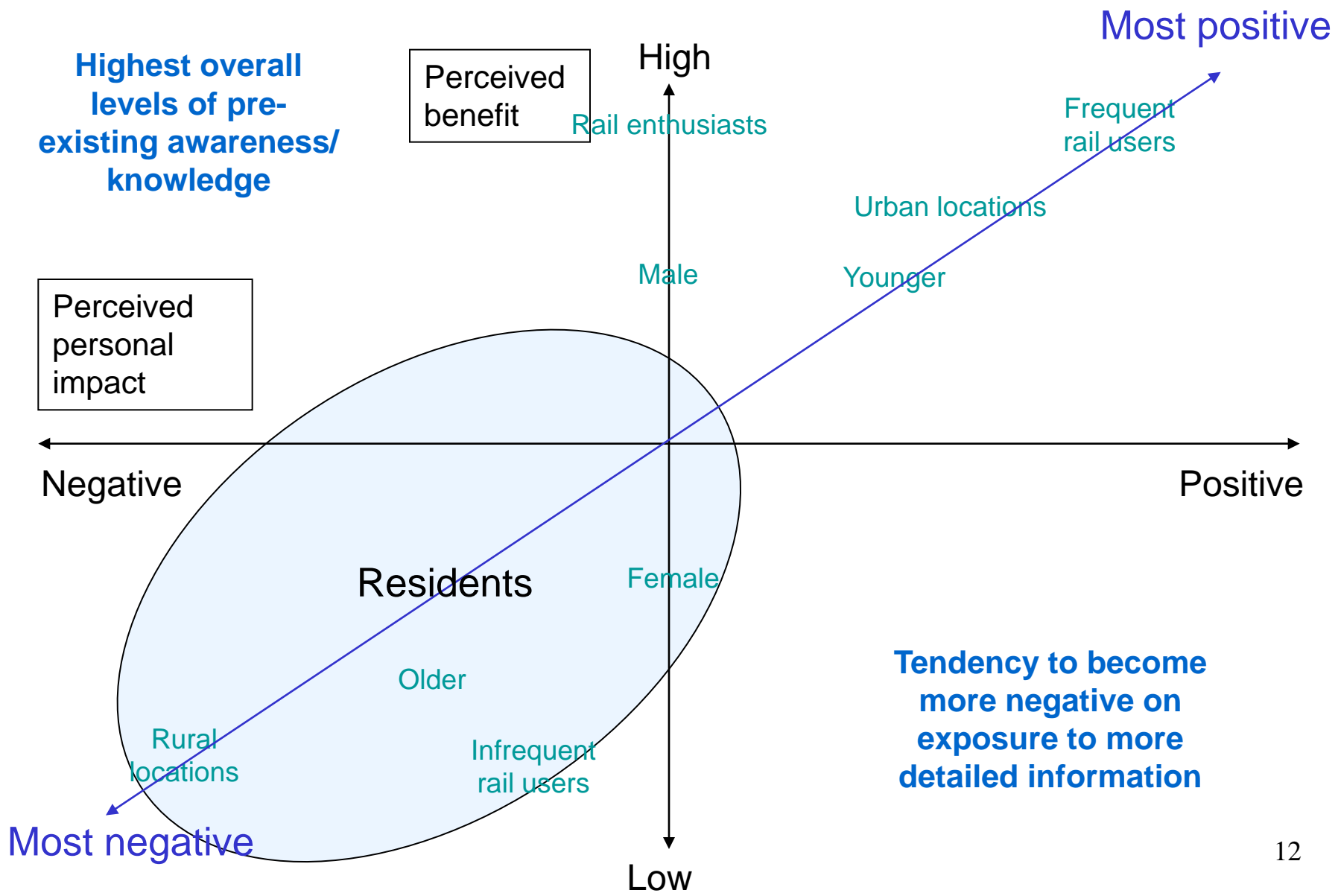
# Key supports

- What precisely is being proposed
  - New line being built, the route, journey times, train frequency, how it will link into the existing network and likely service facilities
- The capacity issues that will be experienced on the West Coast Main Line in the future and reasons for a new build rather than upgrade
- Costs and timescales
- Pricing and fare structures
- The evidence for job/wealth creation and how this would affect different areas of the country
- Any environmental advantages that HSR/HS2 would have over other transport options
- How the damage to the environment and local communities would be minimised (and how this has been done on similar projects, if relevant)

1. Research background
2. Summary and conclusions
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# Residents – overview

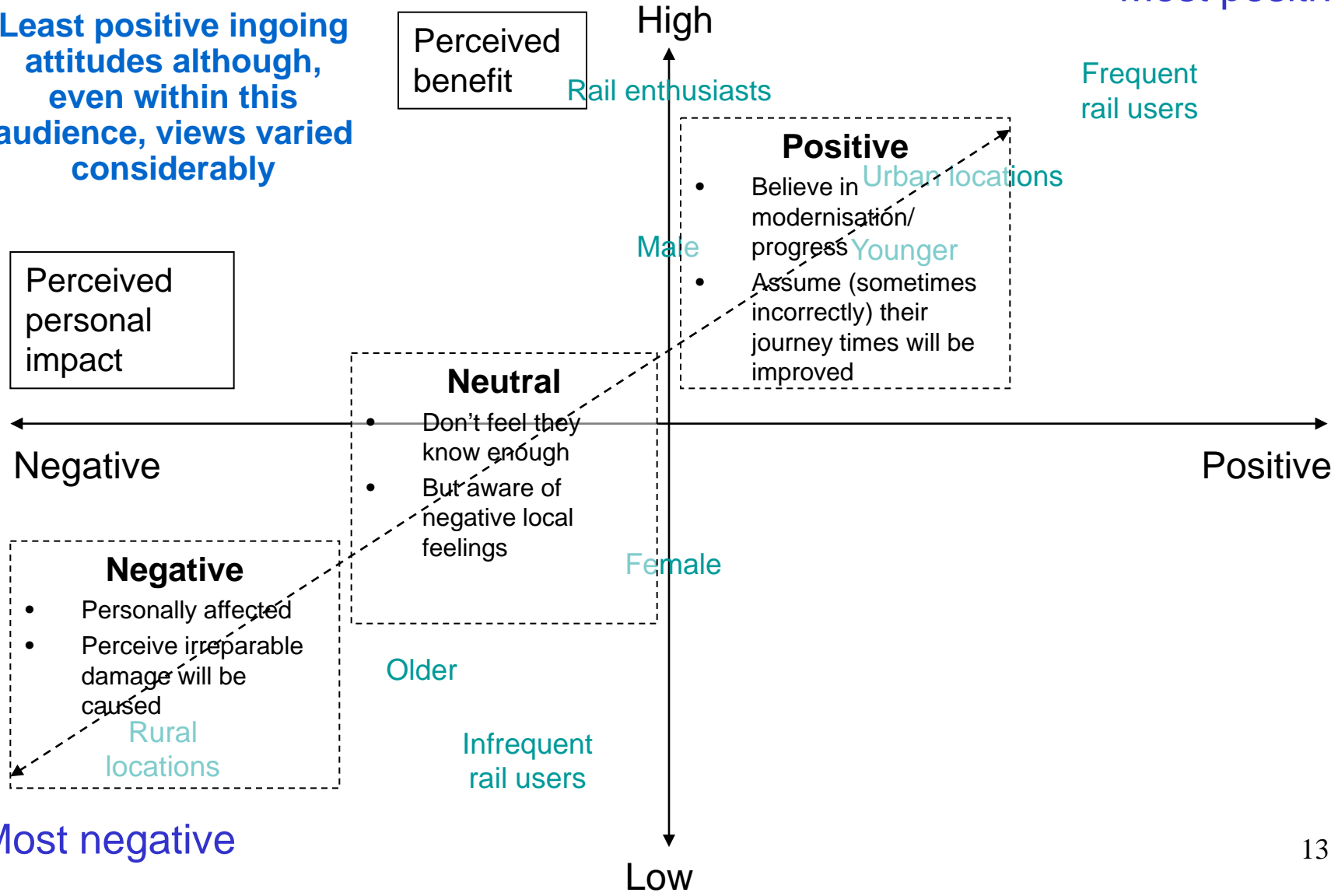


# Residents – ingoing attitudes



Most positive

Least positive ingoing attitudes although, even within this audience, views varied considerably



Most negative



# Residents – awareness

- Much higher levels of awareness of HSR/HS2 than amongst other audiences

## Key sources of awareness

- WoM, local conversations, gossip
- Local press/TV/radio/news
- Local initiatives in pubs/supermarkets etc
- Local websites generated by those affected
- Petitions
- MP talks in town halls, meetings
- Action groups
- Local protests – marches, man with beacon in Kenilworth
- DfT website
- National media

- **However, there was frustration around perceptions of information delivery**
  - Perceived lack of clear, direct communication with residents
    - Difficulty of differentiating between hearsay and truth
    - Lack of detail available (even on DfT website)
    - Independent sources not available
  - Sense from some that the consultation won't ultimately change the decision
    - Mixed levels of awareness of communication initiatives relating to the consultation

# Residents – pre-existing knowledge



- High levels of pre-existing knowledge compared with other audiences

## Common knowledge

- High speed line London-Birmingham
- New track being built
- Overall estimated costs

## Some knowledge

- How the track will be built
  - Some track on stilts
  - Use of tunnels
  - Alongside pylons
- Link to northern stations
- Frequency of trains
  - High frequency service
  - Every 4-15 mins?

## Areas of confusion

- Precise proposed route
- Terminal stations
- Whether it will stop in the Chilterns
- Construction timescale
- Whether/how it will integrate with rest of network
- Safety/noise issues
- Precise speed

## Residents – perceived benefits



- Many residents focused on the lack of perceived benefit that HSR/HS2 would deliver to them, although some did mention benefits that would be experienced by others/the wider community

<b>International</b>	MEDIUM	Some perception that the country needs to progress/keep up
<b>Economic</b>	MEDIUM	Some acknowledgement that HSR/HS2 could benefit business/the national economy
<b>Social</b>	LOW/ MEDIUM	A few believed there would be social benefits to wider society, although most felt that it would harm their communities irreparably
<b>Environmental</b>	LOW	Few believed it would benefit the environment
<b>Personal</b>	LOW	Most felt it would not benefit them directly, although some (mistakenly) believed it would



# Residents – levels and types of concern



- Many residents focused on their own personal concerns in relation to HSR/HS2

<b>International</b>	N/A	Outside of the focus of concerns
<b>Economic</b>	MEDIUM	Concerns about rising cost to the public purse Some worried it could have a negative impact on the local economy (e.g. loss of status as prime commuter town)
<b>Social</b>	HIGH	Perceived destruction of local communities
<b>Environmental</b>	HIGH	Countryside and ancient sites/period houses/irreplaceable woodland will be destroyed
<b>Personal</b>	HIGH	Homeowners not getting market value for properties bought up compulsorily Negative impact on local property prices generally No personal benefit from route Will not improve local rail services

# Residents' views



I believe it will ruin miles and miles of lovely countryside, period houses, quiet villages and woodlands  
**Brackley, older**

25 minutes saving from Birmingham does not justify a huge cost both financially and personally to those affected by the line – the Government's pro points can be easily argued against and no real evidence has been given to prove them  
**Brackley, younger**

It's a lot of expense at the wrong time. We can't stand in the way of progress ...but I think they should be spending money on the current system  
**Aylesbury, older**

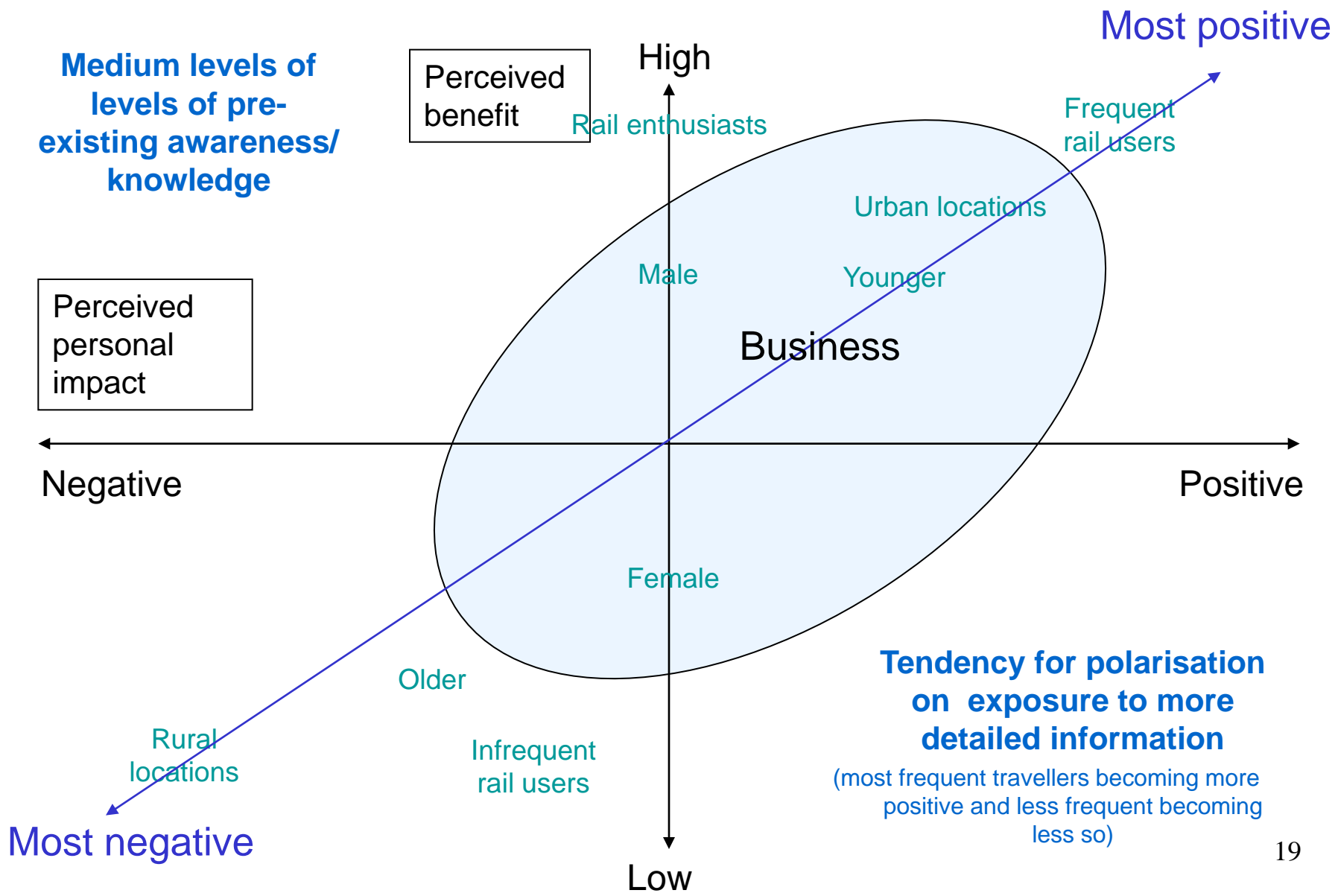
You get the impression the decision's already been made. It's lack of interaction really. We've had very little information about it and very little dialogue between the two parties  
**Aylesbury, younger**

The Government are talking about communities but are dividing communities – we can't just ruin the countryside, our country is so small. We're not France – we've got to understand our own resources – what leads people to believe that people want to get to London quicker?  
**Leamington Spa, older**

A good idea, that upgrading and moving forward – I've been to other countries and their trains are already better and faster... there's always a price when trying to move technology forward  
**Leamington Spa, younger**



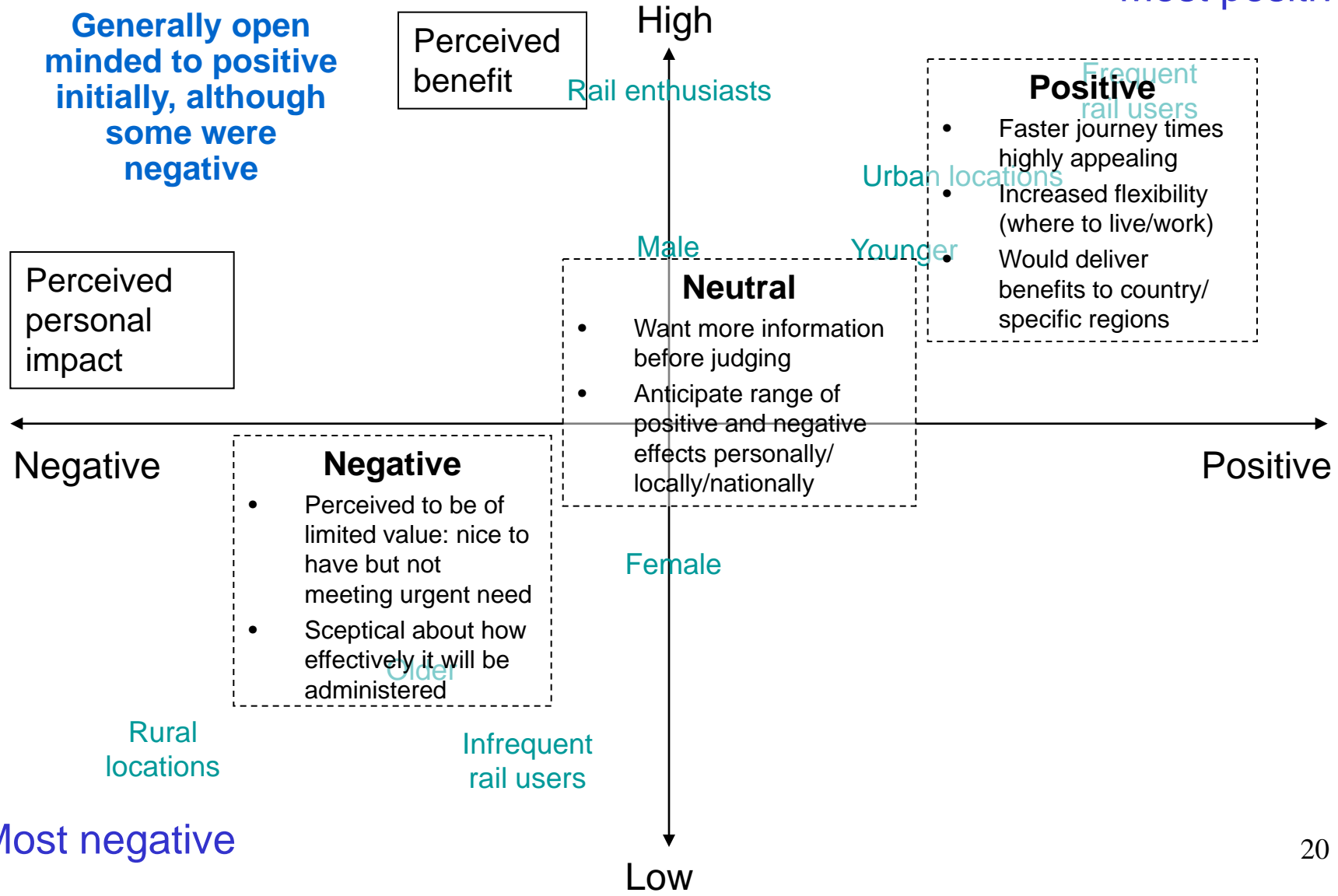
# Business – overview





# Business – ingoing attitudes

Most positive



Most negative

# Business – awareness



- Medium levels of awareness overall

## Key sources of awareness

- TV/radio/online news sources
  - Esp. commuter press
    - Metro/Evening Standard
  - DfT website
- 
- **However, there were some differences in levels of awareness**
    - Generally higher amongst those in London/Birmingham and more frequent travellers

# Business – pre-existing knowledge



- Medium levels of pre-existing knowledge compared with other audiences

## Common knowledge

- There will be a time saving on journeys between London and Birmingham

## Some knowledge

- Precise journey times between London and Birmingham
- Terminal station details
- The long term plan to link up with northern cities
- Frequency of trains
- Project timescales
- That there has been significant local opposition

## Areas of confusion

- Whether the line would involve an upgrade or new build
- The precise costs (various figures were quoted)
- Whether/how it will integrate with rest of network



## Business – perceived benefits

- Business travellers generally focused on the benefits to them personally, as well as economic benefits at a national/regional level

<b>International</b>	MEDIUM	<p>Strong focus for those travelling most frequently</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exposure to international rail systems can trigger embarrassment over the UK's and a desire for improvement</li> <li>• Also believe it will be attractive to tourists/international business</li> </ul>
<b>Economic</b>	HIGH	<p>Assume it will create jobs and may attract international investment</p> <p>May also regenerate northern towns and reduce the dominance of the South East as a business base</p>
<b>Social</b>	LOW	<p>Increased house prices for homeowners living near transport hubs</p>
<b>Environmental</b>	MEDIUM	<p>Belief that there must be some environmental benefits</p>
<b>Personal</b>	HIGH	<p>Faster, easier journeys</p> <p>Increased personal flexibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where commuters can work/live</li> <li>• Better access to Europe (via airport links/HS1)</li> </ul> <p>Better travel experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced overcrowding, better business facilities</li> </ul>

# Business – levels and types of concern



- Key concerns focused on whether HSR/HS2 would be a worthwhile use of money, esp. in the context of the suggested timescales

<b>International</b>	LOW-MEDIUM	Fear of obsolescence of the line by the time it is completed
<b>Economic</b>	HIGH	Concerns about cost, who will be funding and what will happen to costs over time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within this, how commercially viable will the line be</li> <li>• Many could not believe that upgrading existing line would not suffice</li> </ul> Scepticism around the likely success of urban regeneration
<b>Social</b>	LOW-MEDIUM	Worries about the possible impact of the line on local residents Concerns that the line will not be needed in the context of greater uptake of technology by business
<b>Environmental</b>	MEDIUM	Concerns about the relative impact of the line on the countryside
<b>Personal</b>	MEDIUM-HIGH	Timescales perceived to reduce relevance of the proposal significantly Debate over pricing and how relevant this would make the line for personal use Concerns that there will be technical implementation issues that will lead to delays/service disruption





## Business' views

It would make a real difference to me  
– I'm a big fan, definitely...it will put  
Birmingham on the map  
**Very frequent, Birmingham**

It's the employability side of it ... very  
positive I think...it's making London  
commutable on a daily basis  
**Very frequent, Birmingham**

For new investment there has to be  
sacrifices and I think this would be a  
good link  
**Very frequent, London**

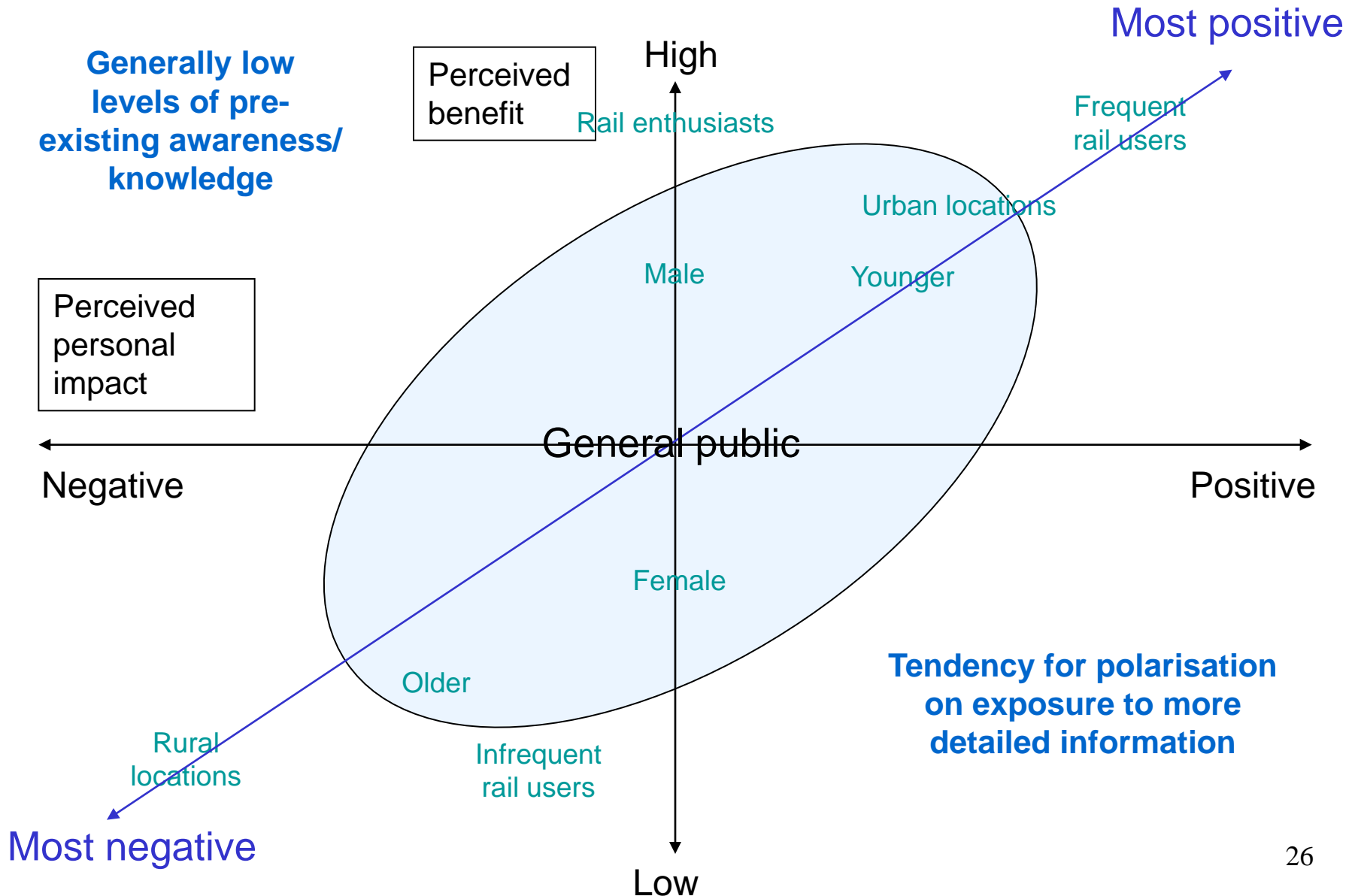
We need to be seen to be moving  
forward otherwise the world won't  
invest in us  
**Very frequent, Manchester**

Something's nagging at me, saying  
there'll be a quicker way or a better  
way of doing it and by the time we  
finish this there'll be something else  
**Frequent, London**

If it goes ahead, it's going to take till  
2032, so I'll be well retired – so why  
am I bothered about 15 minutes off a  
train journey?  
**Frequent, London**

I can't really see the justification for it at this stage  
**Frequent, Birmingham**

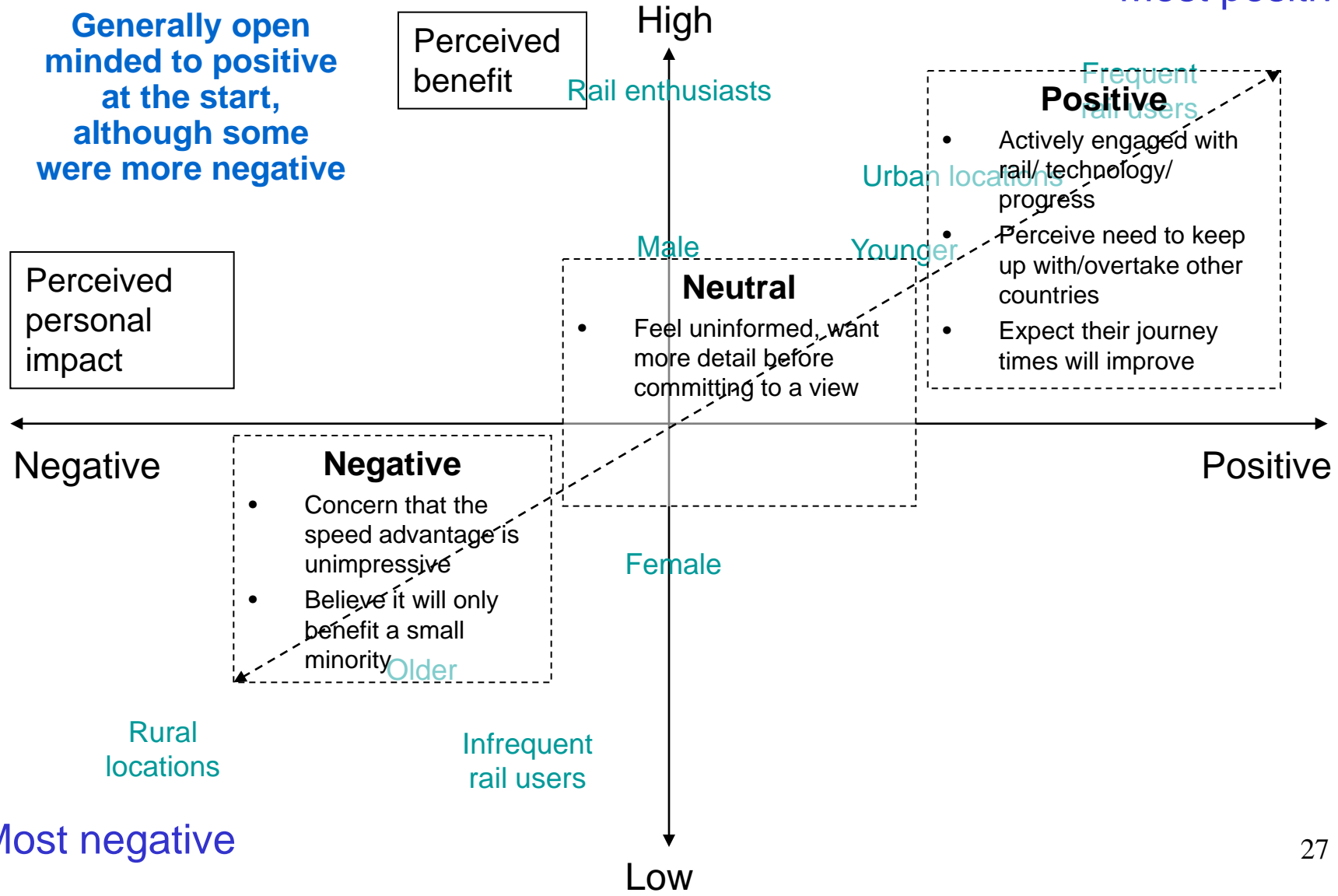
# General public – overview



# General public – ingoing attitudes



Most positive



Generally open minded to positive at the start, although some were more negative

Most negative

# General public – awareness



- Generally low levels of spontaneous awareness

## **Key sources of awareness**

- Local/national TV/press/radio

- **However, there was some evidence of higher awareness amongst rail enthusiasts and those who follow current affairs**
  - Had looked up information online
  - Had assimilated media debate

# General public – pre-existing knowledge



- Lowest levels of knowledge overall compared with the other audiences

## Common knowledge

- Limited common knowledge

## Some knowledge

- London to Birmingham
- ½ an hour time saving on London to Birmingham journey time
- That there has been significant local opposition

## Areas of confusion

- What HSR is
- Rationale for line
- Whether the line would involve an upgrade or new build
- Terminal stations
- Construction costs and how the line will be funded
- How the line would link into the existing network
- How this is different from work being done on the existing network
  - e.g. electrification of the Bristol to London Paddington line

# General public – perceived benefits



- The general public generally focused on perceived benefits to the nation, rather than themselves

<b>International</b>	HIGH	Strong emotional pull of keeping up/not lagging behind
<b>Economic</b>	LOW-MEDIUM	Some spontaneous suggestions that the line could help to boost urban regeneration
<b>Social</b>	MEDIUM	Focus on how it would enable the general population to travel around the country overall
<b>Environmental</b>	MEDIUM	Belief that there must be a benefit environmentally, e.g. in reducing road traffic
<b>Personal</b>	MEDIUM	Some perception that it could benefit them personally <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved journey times</li> <li>• Easier to travel around the country</li> <li>• Better travel experience (e.g. comfortable, cleaner, more seats, fewer delays, better food, room for bikes, better links with ongoing trains etc)</li> </ul>

# General public – levels and types of concern



- This audience did not generally express high levels of concern, although concerns did emerge on prompting

<b>International</b>	MEDIUM	Some questioning of whether the project represents a desire to keep up for its own sake
<b>Economic</b>	HIGH	Cost to the country was a recurring issue, in the context of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The current climate</li> <li>• Lack of strong perceived need</li> <li>• Lack of clarity about who will be funding</li> <li>• Concerns about over-spend and over-run on timescales</li> <li>• Impact of inevitable resident activist groups adding to cost</li> </ul>
<b>Social</b>	MEDIUM	Sense that this is not an inclusive project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focuses on areas that are perceived to be well linked up already</li> </ul> And that the impact on residents on the line of route will be high
<b>Environmental</b>	MEDIUM	Considerable concern from some about what the environmental impact will be <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Want reassurance on this from independent experts</li> </ul>
<b>Personal</b>	MEDIUM	Few perceived the time savings would translate into significant benefits for them Concerns about ticket pricing

# General public's views



I think it's supposed to cut journeys by about half an hour and you just think if it's cost effective and the costs are low, that's fine, but half an hour isn't a huge amount of time for prices to rise  
**18-35, ABC1, Norwich**

It will be excellent for the development of the North and make us better European partners – they need to consult people who aren't sentimental about things – they need to be objective  
**20-45, ABC1, Bristol**

It will just be elitist, won't it...you're going to end up with a white elephant at the end of it  
**45+, ABC1, Milton Keynes**

Anything where you're going to travel quicker makes people's lives easier  
**18-35, C2DE, Milton Keynes**

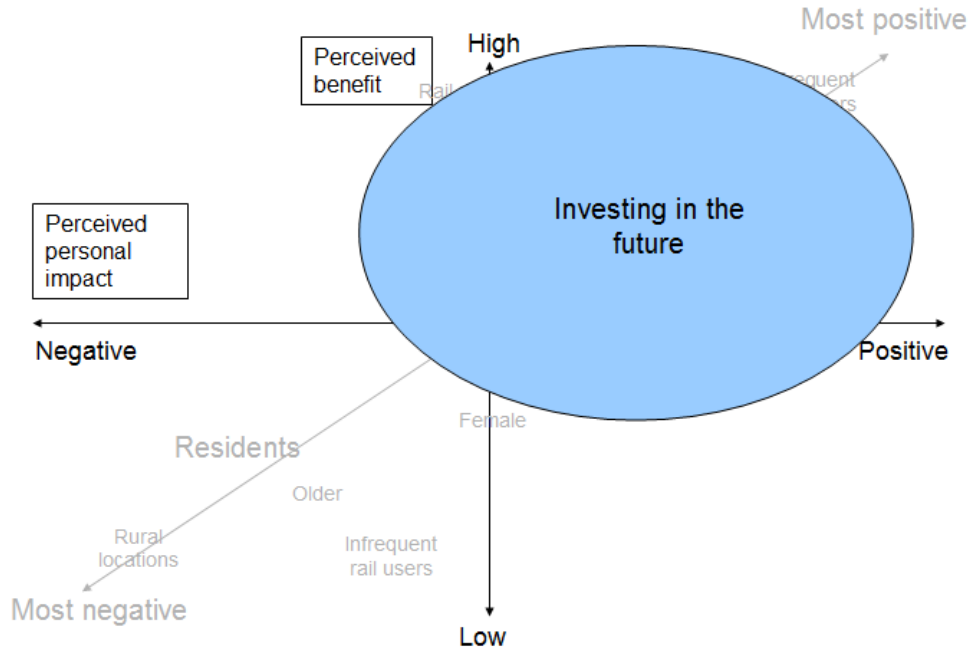
It's a good idea, I know there will be people saying: not in my back garden and, I know, living in Norfolk, it's not going to affect us, but for speed, economic reasons [it's good]  
**20-45, C2DE, Norwich**

They need to talk more about what it will cost – will it be affordable and exactly what is the project. I didn't know anything about the project – where it starts, where it finishes and the fact they are using new track but I do agree they need to move on  
**45+, C2DE, Bristol**



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# Investing in the future – overview



## High emotional impact

- Dynamic, progressive, upbeat
- Provides a positive focus/direction/way forward/future plan
- Feeds into the view that investment is needed in financial crisis

## But current language rejected

- Jargon/corporate speak
- Lacking precision/clarity/substance
- Esp. disliked by women/older people

## Further information requested

- Much more substantiation that HSR/HS2 is the best means of investing in the future (c.f. other options)
- Case studies to provide evidence, e.g.
  - What HSR has achieved in other countries (preferably highlighting similarities with the UK)
  - Cost/benefit analysis for the Channel Tunnel, illustrating economic, social and environmental benefits

# Investing in the future – detailed arguments (1)

‘High speed rail is a **once in a generation opportunity** to **transform the way we travel in the 21st century** – it would be **an investment in Britain’s future**’

## **Unclear as to why this is a once in a generation opportunity**

- Why now?
- Waiting might mean we have access to better technology in the future?

**What does this mean – how would HSR achieve this?**

## **Can raise questions**

- How would HSR constitute an investment in the future?
- What would the benefits be, who would benefit?
- And what would the costs be?

## Investing in the future – detailed arguments (2)

‘A national high speed rail network would help to build a modern economy fit for the future. Countries across Europe and Asia have ambitious plans for high speed rail and are starting to put these into practice – Britain cannot afford to be left behind’

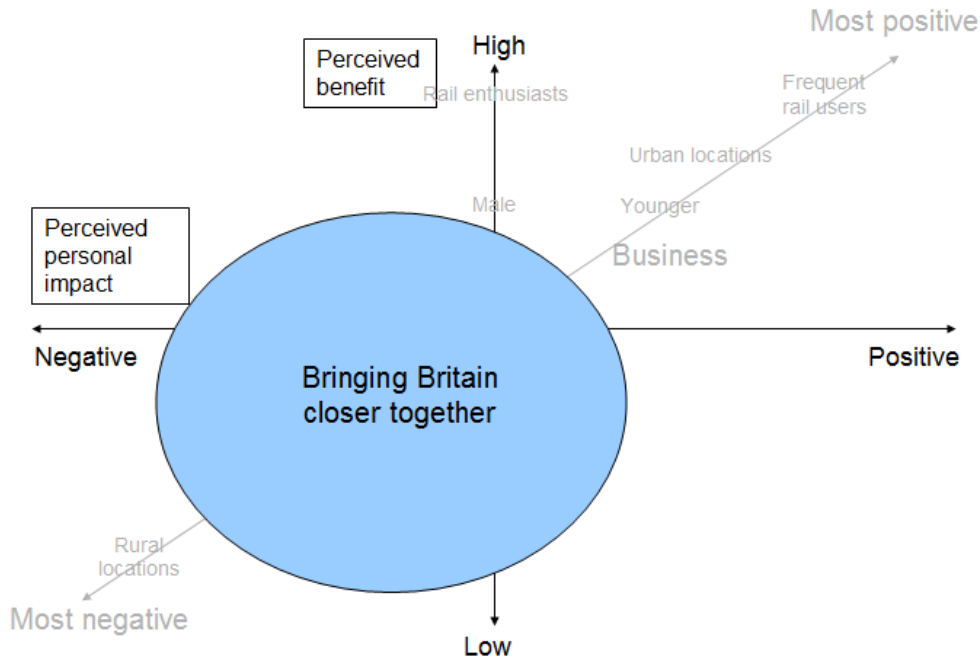
### High emotional engagement amongst younger/men

- Want to lead the field
  - UK used to be at the forefront, now we are behind
- Sense that there is a need to compete internationally

### However, others less convinced, esp. older/women

- Doesn't matter what others do
- Europe/Asia need HSR because they are large
  - More important for Britain to retain beautiful countryside/wildlife/heritage
- HSR/HS2 will not deliver a modern economy

# Bringing Britain closer together – overview



## Idea relatively well received overall

- General belief that HSR/HS2 would bring Britain closer together literally (in terms of journey times)
- However, some questions about the relevance/urgency of doing this now
- And difficult to understand how HSR/HS2 would
  - Regenerate urban centres
  - Transform the way that businesses work and compete

## Communication insight

- Most positive responses elicited by refs to job/wealth creation
  - Although scepticism about how a specific number of jobs/amount of wealth could be quoted
- More detail was requested to show how these figures had been reached

# Bringing Britain closer together – detailed arguments (1)

‘A new national high speed rail network would **create jobs, spread prosperity and transform the way that businesses work and compete**’

## Elicits positive response

- But debate over what jobs would be
  - Construction/running HSR/HS2?
  - Due to increased opportunities resulting from HSR/HS2?
- Who would get them
  - Pessimism that many would go to foreign workers
- And for how long
  - Belief that many would be short term

## Generates many questions/issues

- How will it spread prosperity/transform the way businesses work and compete?
  - Won't business people be travelling less?
- Perceived to focus on those with access to HS2
  - Can highlight lack of benefits for residents
- Focus on business reduces relevance to others, i.e. those who are
  - Residents
  - Older
  - In rural locations
  - Non-workers

# Bringing Britain closer together – detailed arguments (2)

‘Journey times between Britain’s major cities would be slashed, which would help to regenerate urban centres, bridge the North-South divide and provide an alternative to short haul aviation’

## Of most interest to very frequent rail travellers

- More generally, many were impressed by journey times between London and Manchester/Leeds
  - To a much greater extent than London to Birmingham

## Elicited varying reactions

- Very frequent business travellers tended to agree
  - Would encourage business relocation/improve local housing markets
  - Greater interest in regional economies, rather than urban centres
- Significant scepticism amongst others
  - Will only benefit London/commuters?
  - How will building a line in itself lead to regeneration?
  - Haven’t Birmingham/Manchester/Leeds already been regenerated?

## Elicited some scepticism

- Some believed it would boost the economies of Midlands/northern towns
- But Birmingham/Manchester perceived to be well connected already
- And other northern cities not included (e.g. Newcastle)

## Generated debate

- Very frequent business travellers felt HSR would be preferable to internal flights
  - Less hassle/more direct
  - Environmental benefits?
- However, others believed there would only be an impact if pricing was comparable and the network extended further

## Bringing Britain closer together – detailed arguments (3)

‘A high speed rail network would generate **economic benefits of around £44 billion** – **the first phase alone** would support **the creation of more than 40,000 jobs**’

### **Powerful figure but raises questions**

- How/from what?
- How does this compare with the cost?
- How sustained would this be?

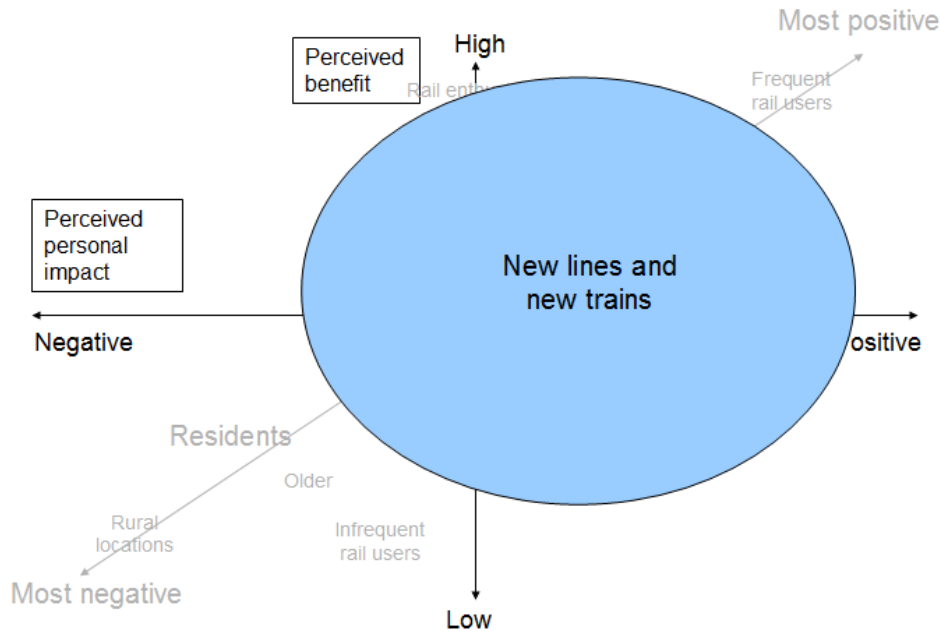
### **What are the timescales for the first phase?**

### **Motivating figure but can create fears that these will not much help **British unemployment****

- Will be short term?
- Benefiting only skilled workers in specific sectors?
- Benefiting foreign workers (needed due to British skill shortages)?
- Sense that as many jobs could be created by spending less by other means



# New lines and new trains – overview



## Capacity issues provide rationale for the need to plan for the future

- Many have experienced overcrowding personally
- Interest in how HSR/HS2 will improve the rail network overall
- However, not all necessarily understood/agreed with the stated need for lines to be new
  - Frustration that this issue was not directly addressed

## Environmental benefits

- Many felt that the environmental benefits of HSR/HS2 versus other transport options could be a greater focus of communication going forward

# New lines and new trains – detailed arguments (1)

‘Britain’s railways are increasingly crowded and more and more people are having to stand when they travel. The West Coast Main Line – Britain’s key rail artery – will be completely full by 2024, so investment in new lines and trains is needed’

**Many have experienced this and agree it needs addressing**

**Generally felt to be a key argument for HSR/HS2**

- Shocking assertion, sense that this needs to be planned for
  - Although requires further substantiation
- A few cynically interpreted this as poor management of WCML

**Requires explanation/ substantiation**

- Why not upgrade/provide extra rolling stock?
- Why choose this course versus alternatives?
  - Need for information/figures/ comparisons
- Why privilege this line when other networks are inadequate?
  - e.g. in South East

Lack of disruption to current services during construction was recognised as a benefit of a new line, although not all believed this would be the case in reality

# New lines and new trains – detailed arguments (2)

‘Moving long distance services onto high speed rail **would free up slots for extra regional and commuter services**’

## **Introduces idea of how HSR/HS2 will enhance the network**

- Full service transport solution for the future
- Can lead to queries over whether the Government wants to reduce road traffic

## **Specifically highlights local benefits**

- Strong antipathy to current overcrowding on local services, however this point is not clearly articulated
  - Could be more directly worded to illustrate increased likelihood of getting a seat?
- And broader quality of service queried by some residents

## **Although scepticism over whether this would happen**

- Rail companies would need to co-operate in competitive context
- Many feared existing lines would be closed down in reality

# New lines and new trains – detailed arguments (3)

‘High speed rail would bring a huge increase in passenger seats for no net increase in carbon emissions’

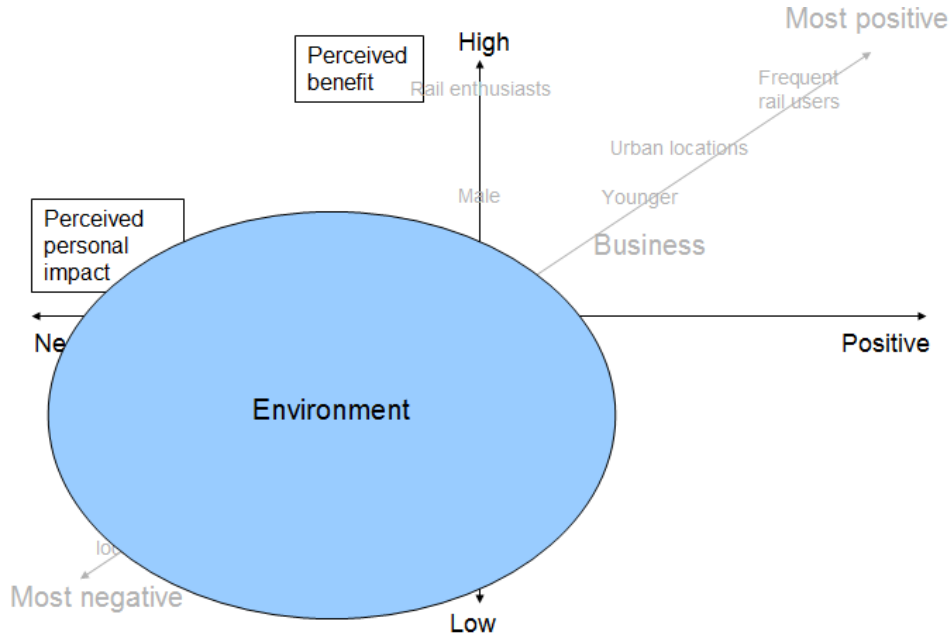
## **Idea not clearly understood**

- More informed interpreted as HS2 not increasing carbon emissions
  - But not necessarily impactful/appealing
- Could be questioned
  - Does this depend on all seats being full?
  - What about the impact of construction?

## **‘Carbon emissions’ not clearly understood**

- Many mistrusted references to this
  - Broad/unclear concept
  - Could be interpreted as being used intentionally to confuse

# Environment – overview



## Variations in terms of how top of mind this was

- Particularly high profile for rural/older residents and ABC1s
- Less so for others

## Residents' focus was on loss of home/community

- Seems at odds with perceived Government focus on community
- Potential loss of tourism due to this also highlighted

## General sense that HS2 must be beneficial environmentally

- But frustration that the evidence for this is not provided

## HS1 highlighted as having minimised environmental impact

- General sense construction was carefully managed
  - Esp. focus of rail enthusiasts/those living in Kent

# Environment – detailed arguments (1)

‘A high speed rail line would have a major impact on Britain’s beautiful countryside, as it would cut through the Chilterns and could harm ancient woodlands and important wildlife habitats’

## **Emotive issue for all**

- Loss of green space felt to be significant

## **Particularly important to residents**

- Believed this would cause irreparable damage
- Residents also regretted potential loss of heritage sites

## **Habitats less of a concern**

- Many assumed wildlife would be saved/moved on/adapt

## Environment – detailed arguments (2)

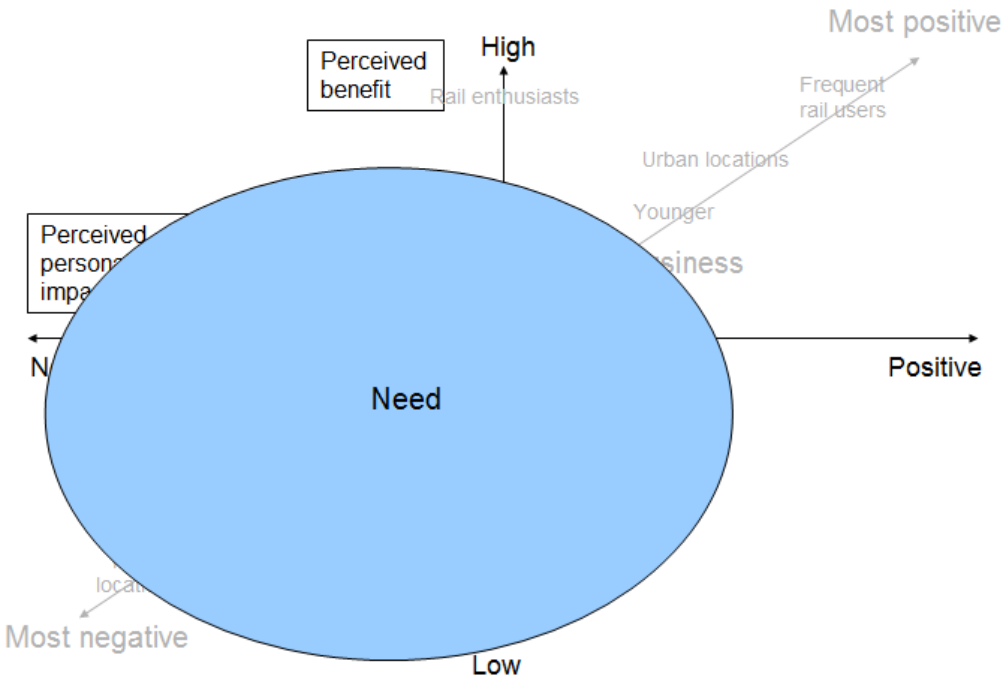
‘The speeds at which high speed rail trains would travel would cause  
noise pollution, which would spoil the tranquillity of the  
countryside’



### **Elicited a broad range of responses**

- Highlighted spontaneously by some, esp. residents
  - Although not all had thought about this
- Some claimed new trains would be quiet
  - Backed up by those living in Kent by HS1
- However, once raised, there were requests to understand how the impact would be minimised

# Need – overview



## **Raised spontaneously and repeatedly as an issue**

- More of a focus for residents/general public, although others requested more information as to the rationale for the line

## **Key questions raised**

- Why there is a need
- Why choose this solution versus others
- Why it is a priority now

## **Sense that current communication focuses on the speed of HSR/HS2**

- This could be questioned – prompted some to ask whether the focus should be elsewhere



# Need – detailed arguments (1)

‘There are **more important considerations for the country** at the moment than building railways that allow us to travel at **world beating top speeds**’

## **A range of ‘more important’ considerations were raised**

- Health, education, housing
- Addressing the deficit
- Reducing unemployment
- Reducing tax/VAT



## **However, not all agreed**

- Size/ambition/possible benefits would make it worthwhile
  - Need to invest
  - Waste happens in other ‘worthwhile’ areas anyway

## **Made some suspicious**

- Why do we need these speeds?
- If focus is on speed, should explain how faster trains will benefit business/tourism
- But should focus be elsewhere
  - Increased capacity?
  - Network improvement?
  - Better customer experience?
  - Better for environment?

## Need – detailed arguments (2)

‘A new line does not need to be built because existing lines could be upgraded instead’

### **Many agreed**

- Had experienced WCML upgrade and incremental improvements to journey times
- Some acceptance that the disruption to service was major but low awareness/recall of other issues
  - e.g. cost/over-runs

### **Advantages of a new line are not necessarily clear**

- Pendolinos perceived as nearly as fast as HSR
- Why not put more carriages on/use double decker carriages etc?
- Why not build new line alongside current line/motorway?
- Why not invest in other forms of transport?

## Need – detailed arguments (3)

‘The time saving on rail journeys is not enough to be significant for most people’

### **A key focus of concern for most**

- Perception that Britain is too small to make HSR a necessity
  - Longer distances in Europe/Asia
- Total journey times to Manchester/Leeds sound better than journey to Birmingham

### **However, journey times impressive for very frequent rail travellers**

- Stand to benefit most from these
- Can see this gives them great flexibility in terms of where they live/work

## Need – detailed arguments (4)

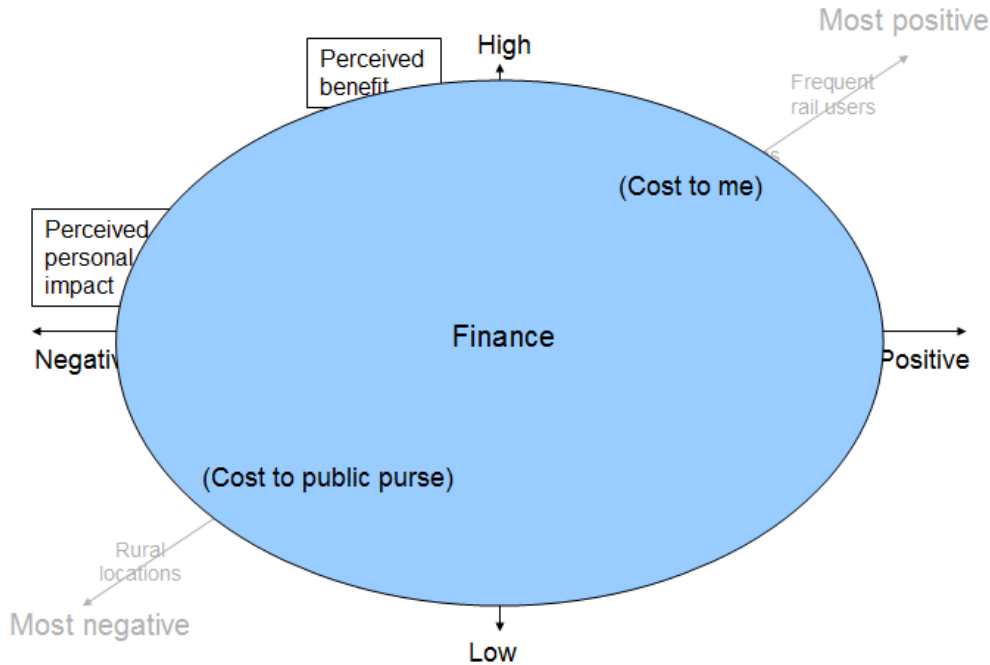
‘High speed rail would not be needed if business people start to use the internet more for meetings and conferences’

**Many residents/members of the general public agreed**

**Business audiences debated this idea more**

- Many felt face to face meetings will always have a place
- However, could tend to agree once project timescales became apparent

# Finance – overview



## Context of financial concern in terms of the country and individual

- Worries about what the country can afford
- And how much the individual will be able to pay for travel

## Need for contextualisation of figures

- Consistent sense that costs are meaningless if quoted in total/without comparison to similar/other projects

# Finance – detailed arguments (1)

High speed rail would be too expensive for ordinary people to use as train companies are bound to charge high prices for the privilege of travelling on these lines

**Assumption that prices will be increased due to speed benefit of HSR/HS2**

- Some assumed that tickets will be used as a way to recoup costs
- Some feared that the service could end up as an exclusive/premium business class service

**Information on fare structures being broadly similar to today's did not necessarily reassure**

- Perception that prices are currently high
- That fare structures are confusing
- And that reassurances so far in advance, esp. if not in the power of the Government, are meaningless

## Finance – detailed arguments (2)

A cost of £2 billion per year for high speed rail is too expensive for the country to afford at a time of economic hardship and it may commit future generations to subsidies and debt

### **Absolute costs felt to be meaningless**

- What does £2bn mean?
- How does this compare with the benefits?
- How does it compare with other transport options/social projects?
- Is this the real figure – will it rise, have costs been inflated?

### **What is the overall time period?**

- Does this relate to the London-Birmingham phase or beyond?
- Are timings definite, will there be over-runs?

### **Informing that payment/construction will not begin until 2017 did not necessarily reassure**

- Unclear as to whether the country will be in a better position
- Alerts people to the timescales
  - Can reduce enthusiasm – will I benefit in reality?
  - Can raise questions about technology/perceived obsolescence/different energy scenarios (e.g. availability of oil)