# High Speed Rail: Consultation on the route from the West Midlands to Manchester, Leeds and beyond

# Sustainability Statement

## Appendix D: Strategic fit – Policy Drivers

**A report by Temple-ERM for HS2 Ltd**

# CONTENTS

# 1. THE STRATEGIC FIT – POLICY DRIVERS

## 1.1. Introduction

1.1.1. This appendix sets out the legislative and policy context for developing a high speed rail network. It considers how HS2 fits with current national priorities, including its potential role in promoting sustainable development through, amongst other things, supporting sustainable economic growth, protecting and enhancing the environment and supporting sustainable communities.

1.1.2. In January 2013 the Secretary of State for Transport set out his initial preferences for Phase Two of HS2. The Command Paper[1] supporting the announcement describes the project as an "opportunity to transform Britain's connectivity, capacity and competitiveness". It also highlighted the "opportunities for millions of people by providing direct links to London, the South East and Europe [and] by linking Birmingham, East Midlands, Sheffield, Manchester, Leeds and beyond, it will help merge these city economies into a formidable unit that can provide real competition to London and the South East".

1.1.3. The draft Environmental Statement for HS2 Phase 1[2] sets out strategic drivers for the scheme as a whole and also includes HS2's Sustainability Policy, setting out HS2 Ltd's commitment to be an exemplar project (see Appendix B.4).

## 1.2. Infrastructure for prosperity

1.2.1. The Autumn Statement 2012[3] stated that the UK is recovering from the most damaging financial crisis in generations. In the statement the Government set out protecting the economy, growth and fairness as three priority areas of action.

1.2.2. A key part of responding to the financial crisis was said to be delivering growth, requiring that "high quality infrastructure must be in place for the UK to remain competitive". Infrastructure growth has been a key strategy over the last few years. Specific detail was set out in the National Infrastructure Plan[4], within which Lord Sassoon (then commercial secretary to the Treasury) stated that "the immediate challenge is to rebuild the economy, creating conditions for enterprise to flourish based on an expansion of the private sector". The Plan also aimed to channel investment to help rebalance the economy across all regions. Chapter 4 of the Plan set out a programme for transport infrastructure investment and provided

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[1] Department for Transport January 2013: Investing in Britain's Future Phase Two: The route to Leeds, Manchester and beyond.

[2] High Speed 2 Ltd, May 2013: Draft Environmental Statement

[3] HM Treasury, December 2012: Autumn Statement 2012.

[4] HM Treasury, October 2010: National Infrastructure Plan 2010.

commitments to contribute to sustainable growth and tackle climate change.

1.2.3. An update to the National Infrastructure Plan in December 2012[5] set out the progress made to date to meet the objectives and ambitions of the 2010 Plan. The update included the January 2012 Government announcement of its intention to proceed with plans for a high speed rail network from London to Birmingham, continuing onto Manchester and Leeds. It went on to say that "this will deliver the essential capacity and connectivity that cities and regions across the UK need to thrive, attract investment and secure their long-term economic prosperity".

1.2.4. The recently enacted Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013 provided additional legislative emphasis on stimulating infrastructure development, putting in place measures to support local jobs and local growth. It aims to bring about important benefits to the economy and provide greater certainty to local firms and local communities.

## 1.3. The European transport network

1.3.1. The *European Spatial Development Perspective*[6] recognised that efficient transport is a basic prerequisite for strengthening the competitive situation and social and economic cohesion of the European Union. A key objective of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy 2006 was to ensure that European transport systems meet society's economic, social and environmental needs, whilst minimising their undesirable effects on the economy, society and the environment.

1.3.2. Establishing an efficient trans-European transport network (TEN-T) constituted a key element in the re-launched Lisbon Strategy for competitiveness and employment in Europe, and is expected to play an equally central role in the attainment of the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy. The European Commission states that to "fulfill Europe's economic and social potential, it is essential to build the missing links and remove the bottlenecks in its transport infrastructure, as well as to ensure the future sustainability of the transport networks by taking into account the energy efficiency needs and the climate change challenges". HS2 would extend the trans-European high speed rail network and so strengthen links between the UK and continental Europe.



1.3.3. The Commission has produced a white paper on transport[7], which, in laying down plans for the next decade, envisages a radically different

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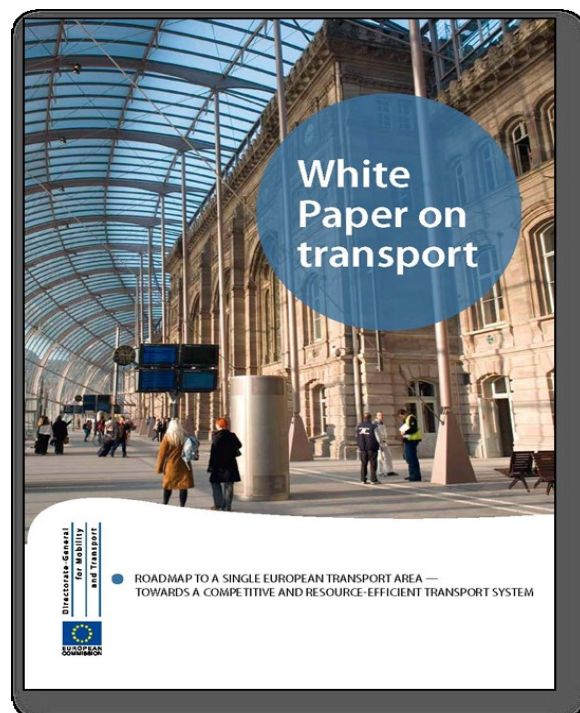
[5] HM Treasury, December 2012: National Infrastructure Plan: update 2012.

[6] European Commission, May 1999: European Spatial Development Perspective.

[7] Commission of the European Communities, March 2011: Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area- Towards and competitive and resource efficient transport system.

transport system by 2020, with a single European transport area, open markets, greener infrastructure and low-carbon technologies. The Commission sees high speed rail as a key part of this transport system.

1.3.4.  HS2 would directly support the National Infrastructure Plan, which identifies investment in a high-speed rail network as one of the main ways the rebalancing of the economy can be achieved.

## 1.4.  Sustainable transport

1.4.1.  Railways are a vital part of the UK's transport infrastructure. The European Commission and UK Government have released a number of white papers, strategic policies and recommendations that support growth in the rail sector and promote the development of sustainable transport. HS2 Ltd has set out its ambition to be an exemplar project within their Sustainability Policy. This policy goes on to say that "we will strive to limit the negative impacts through design, mitigation and by challenging industry standards and we will look for environmental enhancements and benefits".

1.4.2.  The Government has not published an overarching national transport policy with the exception of the local transport focussed *Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon: Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen* (January 2011). Instead, specific policy on national infrastructure is published as the need arises, and for high speed rail this was the command paper issued in January 2013. Investment in rail infrastructure is seen across government departments as the basis for delivering a comprehensive, sustainable and high performing transport system that can catalyse sustained economic prosperity.

1.4.3.  At the EU level, *A Sustainable Future for Transport: towards an integrated, technology-led and user-friendly system*[8] sets out the trends and challenges for sustainable transport development. It highlights as key issues, an aging population, higher transport costs for society; mobility of workers within the EU; and environmental challenges, with transport having a key role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the EU and creating an integrated transport system. Particularly, it highlights the need for integrating aviation and high-speed rail.

1.4.4.  The UK Government has set out a Transport Business Plan (2012-2015)[9], updated May 2012, which sets out its priorities, the first of which is to deliver commitments on high speed rail. The Plan pledges to carry out the preparation needed to start construction of the first phase of a high speed rail network for Britain early in the this Parliament, stating "HS2 will increase capacity, connectivity and promote economic growth".

1.4.5.  The Rail Command Paper, *Reforming our railways: Putting the Customer First*[10] sets out the Government's plan to reform and develop the national rail network. The paper highlights the desire to provide continued investment to enhance the network, including high speed rail where it "delivers value for money and supports the continued and sustainable growth of the industry and the economy".

1.4.6.  It goes on to say that "HS2 will deliver the connectivity and capacity on Britain's major north-south lines that our economy will need for sustainable growth". The economic benefit

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[8] European Commission, June 2009: A sustainable future for transport: towards an integrated, technology-led and user-friendly system.

[9] DfT Transport Business Plan (2012 – 2015)

[10] Department for Transport, March 2012: Reforming our Railways: Putting the Customer First.

that HS2 could provide is further highlighted as "it could reshape our economic geography, regenerate our urban centres and support economic growth in the major cities of the Midlands and the North".

## 1.5. Development planning in the UK

1.5.1. The Localism Act (2011) set out a radical shift of power to local communities to deliver decentralisation down through every level of government to every citizen.

1.5.2. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)[11] was a key part of Government reforms to make the planning system less complex and more accessible, to protect the environment and to promote sustainable growth. In setting out the Government's planning policies for England, its key focus is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which promotes "positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life". The framework emphasises the Government's commitment to securing economic growth to create jobs and prosperity, whilst protecting and enhancing the natural environment and providing support to communities.

1.5.3. While undoubtedly of national significance, HS2 has considerable potential to support a local approach to planning and growth, particularly through its implications for the redistribution of wealth, such as our current estimated jobs supported by station developments (between 48,700 and 70,300). HS2 has the potential to foster local enterprise, support local business and promote local prosperity, particularly in connected cities. One important mechanism for stimulating local growth is through local enterprise partnerships and other such established local forums, which will be strategic bodies bringing together private and public sector partners to identify the barriers to economic growth in their areas.
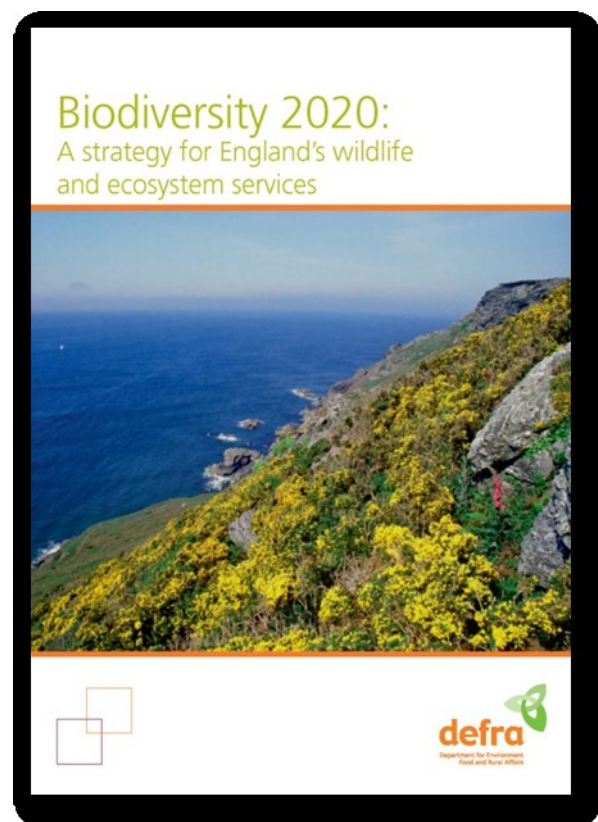
## 1.6. Drivers for sustainable development

### National priorities

1.6.1. The 2005 UK Sustainable Development Strategy: Securing the Future set out five principles for Sustainable Development aimed at: ensuring a strong, healthy and just society while living within environmental limits, delivered by means of a sustainable economy, good governance, and sound science. The coalition Government re-affirmed its commitment to sustainable development when it published its vision for Mainstreaming Sustainable Development in Government (February 2011). The vision set out an approach to Sustainable Development that means: making the necessary decisions now to realise our vision of stimulating economic growth and tackling the deficit, maximising wellbeing and protecting our environment, without negatively impacting on the ability of future generations to do the same.This refreshed vision and these commitments build on the principles that underpinned the UK's 2005 strategy by recognising the needs of the economy, society and the natural environment, alongside the use of good governance and sound science.

1.6.2. The following section looks at the main policy drivers for sustainability as they relate to HS2. The objectives defined by relevant policies and regulations are reflected in the AoS Framework.

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[11] Department for Communities and Local Government, March 2012: National Planning Policy Framework.

## 1.7. Climate change

1.7.1. The Department of Energy and Climate Change was established in October 2008 and the Climate Change Act 2008 came into force soon after. The Act commits the UK to reduce emissions from greenhouse gases by at least 80% by 2050 (compared to 1990 levels). The Act also puts in place the framework for establishing carbon budgets.

1.7.2. The UK has embarked on a long-term, strategically important journey to decarbonise its economy. There is a clear policy and target-driven framework for this journey up to 2050. Publications such as the recent *Carbon Plan*[12], and the Climate Change Committee's supporting evidence for the Fourth Carbon Budget[13], set out indicative routes for the UK to achieve its carbon targets, analysing the relative carbon contributions from different sectors of the economy and the nature of the changes that are likely to be required in the carbon performance of these sectors.

1.7.3. Electric rail (such as HS2) is a relatively carbon-efficient form of transport[14]. Therefore, rail has a significant contribution to make to tackling climate change by increasing its capacity, so that it can accommodate increasing demand. It is important to recognise that high speed rail has high energy demands and has a larger carbon footprint or carbon intensity than certain other modes, such as conventional rail and bus. However, the Committee on Climate Change's proposed Fourth Carbon Budget views HS2 as an integral part of the climate agenda in the UK through its role in providing an alternative to domestic and short-haul aviation.

1.7.4. Despite rail's relatively good carbon performance the rail industry has set its own carbon footprint targets for reducing $CO_2$ emissions per passenger-kilometre and per tonne-kilometre. The Government will encourage progress by funding research and writing environmental objectives into passenger franchises. Equally, rail's relative performance in reducing carbon emissions will depend on the success of other modes (car and plane) in reducing theirs.

1.7.5. The National Planning Policy Framework emphasises and encourages a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions alongside a reduction in congestion. It also goes on to say that "the transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel". It also sets out the importance of minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Biodiversity 2020:
A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services

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Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs

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[12] HM Government, December 2011: The Carbon Plan: Delivering our Low Carbon Future.

[13] Climate Change Committee, December 2010: The Fourth Carbon Budget: Reducing Emissions through the 2020s.

[14] HM Government, 2009: The UK Low Carbon Transition Plan

## 1.8. Natural and cultural resources

1.8.1. The conservation of flora and fauna in the UK is delivered by a range of legislation. At the highest level *The Habitats Directive*[15] establishes a European ecological network known as "Natura 2000". *The Habitat Regulations*[16], which implement the Directive in the UK, require competent authorities to restrict development that adversely affects the integrity of such European sites and protects European protected species, both animals and plants. They also require that plans that may adversely affect the integrity of such sites be subject to specific assessment under the Directive. In parallel with the AoS, a number of such assessments undertaken for Natura 2000 sites near the route (and in conjunction with Natural England) have concluded that significant effects on them are unlikely.

1.8.2. The UK Post 2010 Biodiversity Framework has been developed in conjunction with all four Governments in the UK. In England the most recent biodiversity strategy *Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services*[17] provides a picture of how England is meeting its international and European obligations. The 2020 Mission is "to halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people".

1.8.3. *The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature*[18] sets outs four broad themes for mainstreaming the value of nature across society, namely: protecting and improving the natural environment; growing a green economy; reconnecting people and nature; and international and EU leadership. Within this paper, the 'natural environment' covers living things in all their diversity and includes the fundamentals of human survival. This White Paper set out a framework for practical action. The potential impact of the scheme on biodiversity is discussed in Volume 1 sections 5.11 and 6.11.

1.8.4. The European Water Framework Directive, which has been adopted by UK law since 2003[19], aims to bring about the planning and delivery of a better water environment. It requires Member States to prevent deterioration in the status of all water bodies and sets objectives to achieve by 2015 good ecological status and good chemical status for surface waters, and good quantitative and chemical status for groundwater.

1.8.5. HS2 Ltd will need to work closely with the Environment Agency to ensure that the route would not exacerbate flood risk and that the objectives of the Water Framework Directive are met.

1.8.6. The National Planning Policy Framework describes the role of the planning system in protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, which may include local landscapes as well as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks. The potential impacts of the scheme on landscape are discussed in Volume 1 sections 5.9 and 6.9.

1.8.7. The National Planning Policy Framework also states that "when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight

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[15] Habitats Directive and Regulations (Conservation (Natural Habitats & c) Regulations (as amended)

[16] The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010

[17] Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, August 2011: Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services

[18] HM Government 2011: The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature

[19] The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003

should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. The potential impact of the scheme on cultural and built heritage is discussed in Volume 1 sections 5.10 and 6.10.

## 1.9. Sustainable communities

1.9.1. The concept of sustainable communities is used within the AoS to encompass all aspects of HS2 that affect the health, wellbeing and prosperity of people. This covers a range of policies and legislation addressing issues such as health, equality, national wellbeing, economic development and environmental protection. HS2 is likely to both support and conflict with various elements of policy under this wide-ranging heading.

1.9.2. The Government's policy on noise is set out in the Noise Policy Statement for England which defines specific aims including avoiding significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life and mitigating and minimising adverse effects. European Union policy on air quality[20] aims to develop and implement appropriate instruments to improve air quality. The *National Air Quality Strategy*[21] provides a similar if more detailed framework for work and planning on air quality issues, and defines air quality standards and objectives to be achieved. The potential noise impacts of the scheme are discussed in Volume 1 sections 5.6 and 5.6.

1.9.3. *The Equality Act 2010* provides a legislative framework to protect the rights of individuals that updates, simplifies and strengthens previous legislation. Appendix A, the *Equality Analysis*, addresses (insofar as it is possible to do so at this stage) the potential for HS2 to affect equality groups disproportionately because of characteristics of race, age, disability, sexual orientation and faith.
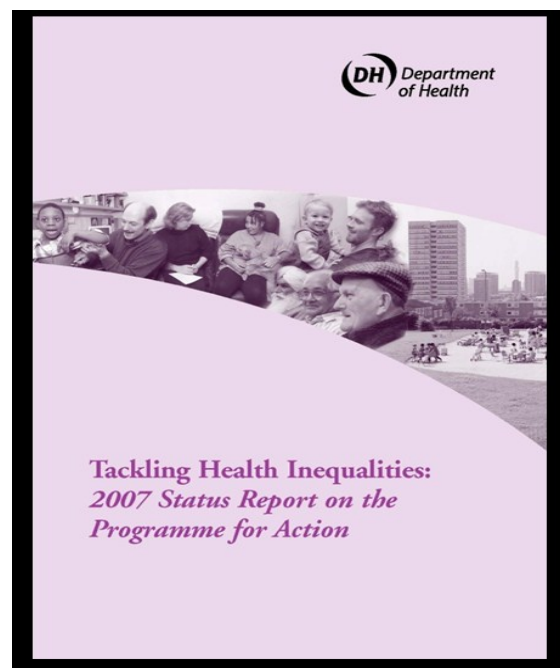
1.9.4. The UK Department of Health's *Tackling Inequalities – A Programme for Action 2003* and the *2007 Status Report* set out plans to tackle health inequalities in the UK and outline how transport related policies and measures could address health inequalities[22]. One example of how the appraisal of sustainability process considered the impact on equality was the appraisal of station sites, which considered integration of transport and land use planning.

1.9.5. The Public Health Outcomes Framework sets out a vision for public health, desired outcomes and indicators to understand how well public health is improved and protected. This includes indicators such as the percentage of population affected by noise.

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[20] European Union, 2008: Directive 2008/50/EC Air Quality

[21] Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in partnership with the Scottish Executive, Welsh Assembly Government and Department of the Environment Northern Ireland, 2007: The Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

[22] Department of Health, 2003: Tackling Inequalities – A Programme for Action 2003

1.9.6. Transport has an important role in ensuring the health and well-being of people and communities. The key objective of the World Health Organisation's *Collaboration between Health and Transport Sectors in Promoting Physical Activity*[23] is to increase the provision of sustainable travel to improve the health and well-being of citizens. Although this refers principally to walking and cycling, rail provides an opportunity to support these modes through the integration of stations with cycle and pedestrian networks and provision of facilities such as cycle parks.

## 1.10. Sustainable consumption and production

1.10.1. In 2008 the EU endorsed the *Sustainable Consumption and Production and Sustainable Industrial Policy (SCP/SIP) Action Plan*[24], which includes a series of proposals on sustainable consumption and production that will contribute to improving the environmental performance of products and increase the demand for more sustainable goods and production technologies.

1.10.2. Sustainable consumption and production not only relates to industrial processes but also to the sustainable use of natural resources such as minerals and biomass, air, water and soil, wind, geothermal, tidal and solar energy and land area. The EU has adopted a *Thematic Strategy on the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources*[25], which aims to ensure that the consumption of resources and their associated effects do not exceed the carrying capacity of the environment, and to break the linkages between economic growth and resource use.

1.10.3. Estimates for HS2's demands on material resources are addressed in Volume 1 sections 5.14 and 6.14.

## 1.11. Summary

1.11.1. This appendix has summarised the current legislative and policy context for high speed rail. A key theme emerging is the promotion of growth and tackling the north-south divide is a clear focus for Government. The 2013 Command Paper reiterates HS2's potential contribution to this by connecting the economies of the cities connected by HS2 into a "formidable unit that can provide real competition to London and the South East". HS2 is viewed by city councils along the route as providing a real opportunity for local enterprise partnerships and established forums to ensure that development, in particular around stations, fits with the local strategic vision to achieve the most sustainable economic outcome.

1.11.2. Rail transport, and high speed rail in particular, is known to be one of the most carbon efficient forms of transport when measured per passenger kilometre. The greenhouse gas emissions from HS2 will be a fraction of those from the transport sector as a whole, and from the UK in general.

1.11.3. HS2 Ltd has developed their own ambitions for sustainable development within their Sustainability Policy (Appendix B.4), and set out their vision of a "high speed railway network which changes the mode of choice for inter-city journeys, reinvigorates the rail

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[23] World Health Organisation, 2006: Collaboration between Health and Transport Sectors in Promoting Physical Activity

[24] European Commission, 2008: Sustainable Consumption and Production and Sustainable Industrial Policy (SCP/SIP) Action Plan EC

[25] European Commission, 2006: Thematic Strategy on the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

network, supports the economy, creates jobs, reduces carbon emissions and provides reliable travel in a changing climate throughout the 21st century and beyond".