

Dear Lord Forsyth,

Thank you for inviting me to provide evidence to the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee on HS2 and its impact on the Midlands.

The Midlands region has a population of over 11 million people, and an annual economic output bigger than Greece, Hungary and the Ukraine. It is essential the needs of our businesses, people and communities are taken into account, and that HS2 goes ahead in its entirety – our productivity and prosperity depend upon it.

Following our discussions and as promised, please find enclosed the evidence and analysis underpinning our assumptions.

Our analysis highlights:

- There are no other interventions that can provide the benefits HS2 does
- HS2's capacity-releasing effects will improve services for over 70 places across the UK
- Regional improvements rely upon HS2 going ahead
- Terminating Phase One at Old Oak Common is impractical and a false economy
- The benefits of HS2 have been grossly underestimated

There are no other interventions that can provide the benefits HS2 does

Other local improvements and upgrades can provide modest improvements to the rail network, but not on the scale needed.

Upgrades on existing lines won't be enough and are extremely disruptive to existing rail users

Network Rail has estimated that upgrading the existing West Coast Main Line, Midland Main Line and East Coast Main Line would result in up to 29 years of weekend closures and would only provide 66 per cent of the capacity HS2 does, while being the cause of massive disruption. [See more via this recent news article.](#)

Lord Berkeley's claim that existing lines can be widened is not practical. It is all but impossible to four-track most of the existing network as houses are built right up to the tracks in a lot of urban and suburban areas.

HS2's capacity-releasing effects will improve services for over 70 places across the UK

HS2 *is* an upgrade of the existing network. Our analysis shows 73 stations could receive new services, more frequent services and less crowding on local, commuter and interregional routes due to HS2. This is because long-distance traffic will be removed from our current rail infrastructure and on to the new high speed line. At 72 of these stations, no further intervention is required to improve services other than HS2 itself.

Of those locations identified, 54 are stations not served by HS2 trains, emphasising the impact the new line will have on millions of people who may never use an HS2 service.

Our HS2 released capacity research is attached, or alternatively, view it [here](#).

Regional improvements rely upon HS2 going ahead

In our region, we have an ambitious plan to improve rail connectivity, comprised of seven projects – Midlands Engine Rail. This plan relies on the space created by HS2, connects to HS2 lines and its business case assumes that passengers will be able to connect to UK-wide high speed services.

Without HS2, there is no Midlands Engine Rail. To cancel HS2 now would undermine a decade's worth of plans to improve our regional networks, the vast majority of which either intend to utilise HS2's new infrastructure, require the capacity it releases, or will capitalise on the growing number of people using the railway every year.

Midlands Engine Rail's flagship project, the Midlands Rail Hub, is backed by a business case which is predicated on connectivity between local/regional improvements and HS2 services at Birmingham Curzon Street.

An overview of Midlands Engine Rail, our £3.5bn plan to add over 700 trains per hour to the regional network, can be found [here](#).

Terminating Phase One at Old Oak Common is impractical and a false economy

Old Oak Common is currently a through station not a terminus – to turn around (terminate and commence services) the number of trains required by HS2 would be impossible in the small amount of space available at this underground station. It would need a complete redesign. A direct connection to central London is essential to realise the full economic benefits of the project.

Transport for London has also rejected the proposal, telling the London Assembly: “The difference between those two [HS2 terminating at Euston or Old Oak Common] is the difference between Crossrail coping and Crossrail falling down”

The benefits of HS2 have been grossly underestimated

HS2's business case and the associated benefit cost ratio does not include the growth and development plans of development companies like the [Urban Growth Company](#) in Solihull, the [Constellation Partnership](#) in Stafford, Stoke and Crewe, and the [Midlands Engine Development Corporation](#) in the East Midlands. It also omits the massive regeneration around Birmingham Curzon Street station.

In the Midlands alone, there are huge redevelopment opportunities around the HS2-connected stations in Birmingham, Solihull, Stoke, Stafford, Chesterfield and Crewe. . These will create new housing, new jobs, new leisure and education facilities and widespread regeneration.

These are not just visionary and aspirational. The Midlands has already seen the benefits of the investment HS2 catalyses, particularly in the West Midlands where construction has already begun. In 2018, office development reached an all-time high, [Deloitte Crane Survey 2018] in 2019, city centre residential development and student accommodation development reached an all-time high. [Deloitte Crane Survey 2019]. Last year, the West Midlands attracted more Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) than any region outside of London and the South East.

The environmental benefits of HS2 are also undervalued. HS2 creates space for over 2 million lorries' worth of goods to be moved from our roads to our railways; transporting cargo in this way produces 76 per cent less CO2 than doing so by road [DfT Rail Freight Strategy 2016]. Moving people off the roads and onto the railways is essential if we're to meet our target of becoming carbon neutral by 2050.

Let me take this opportunity to once again re-emphasise the importance of us considering the outcome of the Oakervee Review in full, once it is published. Lord Berkeley's dissenting report represents his personal view and not those of all other panel members.

I hope all of the information provided proves useful, if there's anything else I can provide please do let me know. We will submit further evidence from investors in the Midlands region in due course, upon instruction from the committee.

We would like to warmly invite you to our region to see the work already being done on our high speed line, our ambitious growth plans and hear first-hand from businesses already benefitting from the promise of HS2. Perhaps we can arrange this?

Thank you again for demonstrating your interest in the transport needs of the Midlands and we hope to continue to liaise with the committee in future.

Yours sincerely,

Maria Machancoses,

