Freepost RSLX-UCGZ-UKSS
High Speed Rail Consultation
PO Box 59528
London
SE21 9AX

Bordeaux House
31 Kinnoull Street
PERTH
PH1 5EN

Tel: 01738 475775
Fax: 01738 639705
E-mail: info@tactran.gov.uk

28th July 2011

Dear Sir/Madam,

High Speed Rail: Investing in Britain's Future Consultation

Introduction

Tactran welcomes this opportunity to comment on the Department for Transport's proposals for investing in a High Speed Rail network which promotes sustainable growth throughout Britain. Tactran is one of 7 statutory Regional Transport Partnerships in Scotland. The Partnership covers the Angus, Dundee City, Perth & Kinross and Stirling Council areas, which combined represents approximately 12½ % of Scotland's landmass and nearly 10% of the Scottish population.

Tactran is fully supportive of the proposed development of a UK High Speed Rail network, which must deliver significant connectivity improvements between Scotland and London and other major economic centres within the UK; provide seamless high speed connectivity onwards into Europe; support a re-balancing of economic growth across the UK, particularly towards the more peripheral regions; and maximise the environmental benefits and contribution to Climate Change objectives which HSR has been shown to have the potential to deliver through significant modal shift, particularly from domestic and shorter distance air travel.

The continuing wellbeing and growth of Scotland's key businesses, tourism and other economic sectors relies on effective, efficient and high quality transport connections with London, other parts of the UK and international markets. It is essential that a UK High Speed Rail network delivers comparable "step change" journey time and capacity benefits for all regions of the UK, including Scotland. It is also essential that the UK and Scottish Governments take parallel action to ensure that those areas of the UK which will not be directly served by HSR, such as the northern half of Scotland, are not disadvantaged and are assured equitable accessibility to key national and international markets.

Tactran believes that the development of a comprehensive and regionally inclusive High Speed Rail network, which includes a commitment to constructing high-speed lines and fast, direct services running between Edinburgh and Glasgow to London at the outset, must be the UK Government's top rail investment priority over the coming years and should be fully funded by the UK Treasury.

Specific responses to the consultation questions are as follows :-

1 Do you agree that there is a strong case for enhancing the capacity and performance of Britain's inter-city network to support economic growth over the coming decade?

Yes. Over recent years the number of rail passenger miles travelled and freight-tonnes carried have increased significantly and intercity-traffic has been the fastest growing of all the rail passenger sectors. Growth in rail passenger demand has consistently exceeded rail industry projections and there is continuing pressure to deliver additional capacity for both long distance inter-city and local rail travel, which the existing network is increasingly unable to accommodate.

Some of the main inter-city rail lines are fast approaching their operational capacity, in particular the West and East Coast main lines as indicated in the relevant Network Rail Route Utilisation Strategies. The West Coast RUS indicates that the West Coast Main Line between London and Birmingham will be at capacity within 10 – 15 years, with little scope of running additional trains or longer trains to cope with increasing demand. This capacity constraint, as it develops, will inhibit the UK's economic performance.

The inter-city network plays an increasingly important role in linking the main city centres and regions in the UK. Rail is the best performing mode to do so in terms of efficiency and sustainability as neither air nor road can deliver significant additional capacity without incurring serious environmental costs and increased carbon emissions, contrary to Government Climate Change objectives.

Improving connectivity through investing in additional rail capacity and improved performance of the inter-city network is key to supporting sustainable economic growth and tackling the inequalities which exist in economic performance across the UK.

Over certain distances the current inter-city network cannot compete effectively with air travel, in terms of achievable journey time and cost. Tactran supports the construction of a new, truly UK national inter-city rail network which can operate at very high speeds and significantly reduced journey times, thereby enabling a reduction in dependence on air travel from those regions directly served by the HSR network. It must be recognised that there are some parts of the UK, including the northern half of Scotland, which will not benefit directly from HSR and where continuing reliance on air connectivity to UK domestic hubs, such as the London airports, is critical to these regions' economic prosperity.

2 Do you agree that a national high speed rail network from London to Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester (the Y network) would provide the best value for money solution (best balance of cost and benefits) for enhancing rail capacity and performance?

Tactran strongly supports the development of a national high-speed network which enhances regional connectivity and maximises the regional and national economic and environmental benefits which HSR has the demonstrated potential to deliver. It is recognised that the DfT has decided that the section between London and Birmingham should be constructed first and Tactran supports the current proposals for construction of this key section of the proposed HSR network.

However, DfT should make an immediate commitment to the early development of a more extensive national network, which includes dedicated high-speed lines in Scotland and the north of England as core elements of the overall UK HSR strategy. A truly national high-speed network must extend northwards beyond the currently proposed London to Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester "Y-network", to include new high-speed lines and terminal capacity in Edinburgh and Glasgow, with high quality onward connections to/from the regions north of Scotland's Central belt. It is, therefore, also essential that the Scottish Government prioritises planned enhancements in rail connectivity between the north and north east of Scotland and the Central Belt, as proposed in Transport Scotland's Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR), to ensure that these improvements are implemented as a complement to, and ideally in advance of, HSR implementation.

The current strategy of serving destinations north of Manchester and Leeds by through-running of HSR trains over conventional lines, with no parallel interventions to maintain and enhance connectivity for the UK regions beyond the HSR network, will significantly diminish the potential economic and environmental benefits of HSR to the UK as a whole and is, therefore, not viewed to be an acceptable strategy. The UK Government's strategy for the delivery of High Speed Rail must, therefore, include a clear and unequivocal commitment to the funding and construction of HSR lines starting from Scotland within the initial stages of the project.

Several studies have shown that the economic and environmental benefits of a high-speed network are significantly enhanced with high-speed lines running all the way to/from Edinburgh and Glasgow. Whilst it is accepted that any HSR network will have to be built in stages, the phasing of HSR development and construction must not be assumed to proceed incrementally on a south to north basis. There are strong regional peripherality, economic and environmental arguments in favour of a strategy which includes the earliest possible construction of HSR lines starting in Scotland. In terms of economic competitiveness there is a very real danger that progressing only the proposed "Y-network" from south to north will result in the benefits of HSR not reaching Scotland and the northern parts of England for decades, compounding existing north/south connectivity and regional economic disparities. The DfT's current overall HSR strategy should, therefore, be amended in favour of one which provides for the simultaneous development, and construction of route sections from both the northern and southern ends of the UK, to ensure that the regions north of Leeds and Manchester are not economically disadvantaged.

DfT and the UK Treasury are urged to commit to the early appraisal and full funding of work needed to bring proposals for early development and construction of proposed new HSR lines extending southwards from Edinburgh and Glasgow to the same status as the current proposals for the London to Birmingham section. This would enable construction of these northern sections of the network to be advanced at the earliest possible opportunity, including in the event of any delays with other sections of the network or with other DfT delivery projects.

Whilst it is accepted that there are serious capacity issues in the London – Birmingham corridor, there are also significant capacity issues further north beyond Leeds and Manchester. The slowest parts of the existing inter-city network are in Scotland and the north of England, where the relative connectivity improvements, in terms of journey time reduction, are less significant under the DfT's currently proposed HSR strategy. Projected journey time reductions to London from Scotland are approximately 22% compared with around 45% from Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham, meaning that Scotland will become relatively more peripheral from London and the continent. It is, therefore, imperative that consideration should be given to the early phasing of high-speed rail at the northern end of a national network extending as far as Edinburgh and Glasgow. Much of the benefit of HSR will come from releasing capacity on the existing classic network, enabling delivery of increased capacity and services that will benefit commuters, inter-urban travellers and also rail freight. Again, the proposed strategy of not constructing high-speed lines north of Manchester and Leeds precludes the potential for HSR expanding regional capacity for additional passenger and freight services in the northern half of the UK.

The full UK economic and, in particular, environmental benefits of HSR will not be realised until journey-times between Edinburgh/Glasgow and London are reduced to the point where rail becomes a more attractive and reliable option. Studies and experience in Europe indicates that modal choice between rail and air for comparable distance journeys is significantly influenced by the provision of fast, comfortable, high-quality and competitively priced high-speed rail. These studies and experiences also indicate that the potential for modal shift from air is significantly greater where a rail journey time of 3 hours or less is achieved, which would be the case with high-speed lines running all the way to Scotland. Under the present DfT strategy the proposed journey time is a less attractive and uncompetitive 3½ hours from Edinburgh/Glasgow to London.

The proposed "Y-network" is broadly similar to proposals in previous studies for linking London, Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds, all of which have shown positive business cases and, therefore, good value for money, albeit that most other studies have suggested two parallel east and west high-speed lines out of London. It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that the proposed "Y-network", in itself, would provide value for money. However, as indicated above, Tactran believes that other studies have demonstrated that much better value, in terms of wider regional and national economic and environmental benefits, would be achieved by a national HSR network extending to Scotland.

Tactran believes that an alternative strategy of restricting investment to increasing capacity of the existing rail network is not a viable solution as this would only add limited peak period capacity, would result in serious disruption to services during the lengthy construction period as was clearly demonstrated by the recent upgrade of the WCML, and would be of very limited economic benefit to the UK as a whole.

3 Do you agree with the Government's proposals for the phased roll-out of a national high speed rail network, and for links to Heathrow Airport and the High Speed 1 line to the Channel Tunnel?

As indicated above, Tactran believes that the Government's proposals must include a firm and absolute commitment to extending the high-speed network north of Manchester and Leeds to include Edinburgh and Glasgow.

It is recognised that the HSR network will have to be built in achievable phases. Accepting the likelihood that the first Bill through Parliament will encompass the London-Birmingham section, it is strongly recommended that detailed planning of the network to/from Scotland, including consideration of east and west coast options, should be undertaken over the next year or so and that consideration should be given to construction of high-speed track at the northern end of a UK network, which would deliver greater journey-time reductions in advance of, or at the same time as, the sections between Birmingham-Manchester and Birmingham-Leeds.

A critical element will be ensuring good links between new HSR lines and the existing Inter-City network, so that more attractive journey times to/from London by high-speed trains can be achieved for the cities and regions further north. As indicated above, this requires the prioritisation by Scottish Government of STPR enhancements to rail services north of the Central Belt of Scotland. The London – Birmingham line should also be utilised by London – Scotland Inter-City services, which would benefit from a reduction in journey time of close to 30 minutes. This would have the added benefit of significantly improving the business case for the phase one proposals since services to Scotland were, surprisingly, not included in the business case model.

Tactran supports a link to Heathrow but this should be constructed so that high-speed trains can continue onto the classic south-east network beyond Heathrow, thereby allowing high-speed trains to also serve southern cities and Gatwick Airport. This could reduce domestic pressure on London air slots and allow Government to consider using some of the freed up air capacity to ensure those regions of the UK which will not benefit directly from sub-3 hour rail journey times to London and its airports are assured equivalent levels of connectivity with critical UK and international markets.

Tactran also believes that there must be a seamless link between the new HS2 line and HS1, thereby allowing direct services between UK cities and regions north of London and continental destinations, including at the very least to Paris and Brussels. It is imperative that capacity is adequate for future demand and this should include a scenario where the UK would join the Schengen agreement allowing passport-free travel with other European countries.

The proposal for only a single track connection between HS2 and HS1 should be reconsidered. This link could also be of significant national importance for freight traffic should freight services be allowed to use HS2 at night as already occurs with HS1. This would also improve the business case for HS2 and would ease the current difficulties in moving rail freight from the north through London to the Channel Tunnel.

As part of HS2 between London and Birmingham/Litchfield, there must also be relevant upgrades of other sections of the existing network, in particular in respect of speed enhancements such as upgrading Carstairs Junction, so that the early benefits of HSR to Scotland and the north of England can be maximised. We would again stress the importance that HSR services to Edinburgh and Glasgow must be an integral part of the initial HS2 programme and that incremental improvements to the classic network should not distract from the need to expand the HSR network to Edinburgh and Glasgow.

4 Do you agree with the principles and specification used by HSD2 Ltd to underpin its proposals for new high speed rail lines and the route selection process HS2 Ltd undertook?

Tactran agrees with the principles and technical specification proposed for the London – Birmingham/Lichfield High Speed line. It is important at this stage to safeguard implementation of future technical advances in HSR technology so it is considered prudent to plan for future speeds of up to 400 kph.

5 Do you agree that the Government's proposed route, including the approach proposed for mitigating its impacts, is the best option for a new high speed rail line between London and the West Midlands?

It is apparent that significant amendments have been made to the original line in order to mitigate the impacts of HSR so Tactran supports the view that the current proposal can be regarded as the best option for this section of the network.

However, in order to reduce the pressure on Euston, both during and after construction of HS2, serious consideration should be given to creating a link between the WCML and Crossrail scheme (near Willesden/Old Oak Common) so that local WCML services can avoid Euston, which would also significantly enhance journey choices for the users of these services. We are aware of concerns in London about terminating the high-speed Line at Euston and there are arguments for a through station in the Euston/King's Cross area, with the line extending to Stratford, so that all trains from the north would either terminate at Stratford or in Kent, or continue to the Continent on HS1. Tactran sees merit in such a proposal and would support further consideration being given to this.

6 Do you wish to comment on the Appraisal of Sustainability of the Government's proposed route between London and the West Midlands that has been published to inform this consultation?

It would appear that the Appraisal has been undertaken in a thorough manner.

7 Do you agree with the options set out to assist those whose properties lose a significant amount of value as a result of any new high speed line?

Tactran does not wish to comment on this aspect of the consultation.

I trust that this response and Tactran's support for the development of a truly national High Speed Rail network is of assistance.

Should you wish to discuss any of the comments or issues raised in this response further please contact our Partnership Director, Eric Guthrie at ericguthrie@tactran.gov.uk or telephone 01738 475771.

Yours faithfully,

Councillor Will Dawson
Tactran Chair

Claremont House, 130 East Claremont Street, Edinburgh, EH7 4LB, Tel: 0131 524 5150

Chairman: Cllr Russell Imrie Partnership Director: Alex Macaulay

Freepost RSLX-UCGZ-UKSS
High Speed Rail Consultation
PO Box 59528
London
SE21 9AX

28 July 2011 Our Reference: SES-Rail

Dear Sir/Madam,

High Speed Rail: Investing in Britain's Future Consultation
Response by Scotland's Regional Transport Partnerships

Introduction

Scotland's Regional Transport Partneships welcome this opportunity to comment on the Department for Transport's proposals for investing in a High Speed Rail network which promotes sustainable growth throughout Britain.

The 7 Regional Transport Partnerships are statutory bodies covering all 32 of Scotland's local authorities. The RTPs are fully supportive of the proposed development of a UK High Speed Rail network, which must deliver significant connectivity improvements between Scotland and London and other major economic centres within the UK; provide seamless high speed connectivity onwards into Europe; support a re-balancing of economic growth across the UK, particularly towards the more peripheral regions; and maximise the environmental benefits and contribution to Climate Change objectives which HSR has been shown to have the potential to deliver through significant modal shift, particularly from domestic and shorter distance air travel.

The continuing wellbeing and growth of Scotland's key businesses, tourism and other economic sectors relies on effective, efficient and high quality transport connections with London, other parts of the UK and international markets. It is essential that a UK High Speed Rail network delivers comparable "step change" journey time and capacity benefits for all regions of the UK, including Scotland. It is also essential that the UK Government takes parallel action to ensure that those areas of the UK which will not be directly served by HSR, such as the northern half and South West of Scotland, Northern Ireland and South West England, are not disadvantaged and are assured equitable accessibility to key national and international markets. The RTPs believe that the development of a comprehensive and regionally

inclusive High Speed Rail network, which includes a commitment to constructing high-speed lines and fast, direct services running between Edinburgh and Glasgow to London at the outset, must be the UK Government's top rail investment priority over the coming years and should be fully funded by the UK Treasury.

Specific responses to the consultation questions are as follows :-

1 Do you agree that there is a strong case for enhancing the capacity and performance of Britain's inter-city network to support economic growth over the coming decade?

Yes. The number of passenger miles travelled and freight-tonnes carried on the rail network is now higher than at any time since the 2nd World War, despite operating on a much reduced network, and intercity-traffic is the fastest growing of all the rail passenger sectors. Over recent years growth in rail passenger demand has consistently exceeded rail industry projections and there is continuing pressure to deliver additional capacity for both long distance inter-city and local rail travel which the existing network is increasingly unable to accommodate.

Some of the main inter-city rail lines are fast approaching their operational capacity, in particular the West and East Coast main lines, as indicated in the relevant Network Rail Route Utilisation Strategies. The West Coast RUS indicates that the West Coast Main Line between London and Birmingham will relatively soon run out of capacity with little scope of running additional trains or longer trains to cope with a continuous increase in demand. This capacity constraint as it develops will inhibit the UK's economic performance.

The inter-city network plays an increasingly important role in linking the main city centres in the UK and is the best performing mode to do so in terms of efficiency and sustainability. Neither air nor road can deliver significant additional capacity without incurring serious environmental costs and increased carbon emissions, contrary to Government Climate Change objectives.

Improving connectivity through investing in additional rail capacity and improved performance of the inter-city network is therefore key to supporting sustainable economic growth and tackling the inequalities which exist in economic performance across the UK. The question is, therefore, not if, but how and how quickly.

Over certain distances the current inter-city network cannot compete effectively with air travel in terms of achievable journey time and cost and it is, therefore, necessary that a new, truly national inter-city rail network which can operate at very high speeds and significantly reduced journey times, thereby enabling a reduction in dependence on air travel for some regions, is constructed. It must also be recognised that there are some parts of the UK, such as the northern half and South West of Scotland, Northern Ireland and South West England, which will not benefit directly from High Speed Rail and where continuing reliance on air connectivity to UK domestic hubs, such as the London airports, is critical to the economic prosperity of these areas.

Reflecting the crucial importance of this parallel need for connectivity to national and international markets the RTPs are also responding to the current DfT consultation on Air Access to South East England.

2 Do you agree that a national high speed rail network from London to Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester (the Y network) would provide the best value for money solution (best balance of cost and benefits) for enhancing rail capacity and performance?

The RTPs strongly support the development of a national high-speed network which, along with other transport interventions, enhances regional connectivity and maximises the regional and national economic and environmental benefits which HSR has the demonstrated potential to deliver. It is recognised that the DfT has decided that the section between London and Birmingham should be constructed first and the RTPs fully support the current proposals for construction of this key section of the proposed HSR network.

We are equally strongly of the view that a truly national high-speed network must extend northwards beyond the currently proposed London to Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester "Y-network", to include new high-speed lines and terminal capacity in Edinburgh and Glasgow. The current strategy of serving destinations north of Manchester and Leeds by through-running of HSR trains over conventional lines north of Manchester and Leeds, with no parallel interventions to maintain and enhance connectivity for UK regions beyond the HSR network, will significantly diminish the potential economic and environmental benefits of HSR to the UK as a whole and is, therefore, not viewed to be an acceptable strategy. The UK Government's strategy for the delivery of High Speed Rail must include a clear and unequivocal commitment to the funding and construction of HSR lines starting from Scotland within the initial stages of the project.

The proposed "Y-network" is recognised to be, and is supported as, a key component of a national high-speed network, but the RTPs strongly believe that DfT must make an immediate commitment to the early development of a more extensive national network, which includes dedicated high-speed lines in Scotland and the north of England as core elements of the overall UK HSR strategy.

Several studies have shown that the economic and environmental benefits of a high-speed network are significantly enhanced with high-speed lines running all the way to/from Edinburgh and Glasgow. Whilst it is accepted that any such network will have to be built in stages, the phasing of HSR development and construction must not be assumed to proceed incrementally on a south to north basis. There are strong regional peripherality, economic and environmental arguments in favour of a strategy which includes the earliest possible construction of HSR lines starting in Scotland. In terms of economic competitiveness there is a very real danger that progressing only the proposed "Y-network" from south to north will result in the benefits of HSR not reaching Scotland and the northern parts of England for decades, compounding existing north/south connectivity and regional economic disparities. The DfT's current overall HSR strategy should, therefore, be amended in favour of one which provides for the simultaneous development,

and potential construction, of route sections from both the northern and southern ends of the UK, to ensure that the regions north of Leeds and Manchester are not economically disadvantaged.

DfT and the UK Treasury are urged to commit to the early appraisal and full funding of work needed to bring proposals for early development and construction of proposed new HSR lines extending southwards from Edinburgh and Glasgow to the same status as the current proposals for the London to Birmingham section. This would enable construction of these northern sections of the network to be advanced at the earliest possible opportunity, including in the event of any delays in other sections of the network or with other DfT delivery projects.

Whilst it is accepted that the most serious capacity issues are in the London – Birmingham corridor, there are also significant capacity issues further north beyond Leeds and Manchester. The slowest parts of the existing inter-city network are found in Scotland and the north of England, where the relative connectivity improvements, in terms of journey time reduction, are less significant under the DfT's currently proposed HSR strategy. Projected journey time reductions to London from Scotland are approximately 22% compared with around 45% from Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham, meaning that Scotland will become relatively more peripheral from London and the continent. It is, therefore, imperative that consideration should be given to the early phasing of high-speed rail at the northern end of a national network extending as far as Edinburgh and Glasgow. Much of the benefit of HSR will come from releasing capacity on the existing classic network, enabling delivery of increased capacity and services that will benefit commuters, inter-urban travellers and also rail freight. Again, the proposed strategy of not constructing high-speed lines north of Manchester and Leeds precludes the potential for HSR expanding regional capacity for additional passenger and freight services in the northern half of the UK.

The full UK economic and, in particular, environmental benefits of HSR will not be realised until journey-times between Edinburgh/Glasgow and London are reduced to the point where rail becomes a more attractive and reliable option. Studies and experience in Europe indicates that modal choice between rail and air for comparable distance journeys is significantly influenced by the provision of fast, comfortable, high-quality and competitively priced high-speed rail. These studies and experiences also indicate that the potential for modal shift from air is significantly greater where a rail journey time of 3 hours or less is achieved, which would be the case with high-speed lines running all the way to Scotland. . Under the present DfT strategy the proposed journey time is a less attractive and uncompetitive 3 ½ hours from Edinburgh/Glasgow to London.

The proposed "Y-network" is broadly similar to proposals in previous studies for linking London, Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds, all of which have shown positive business cases and, therefore, good value for money, albeit that most other studies have suggested two parallel east and west high-speed lines out of London. There are, therefore, good reasons to conclude that the proposed "Y-network", in itself, would provide value for money. However, as indicated above, the RTPs believe that other studies have demonstrated that

much better value, in terms of achievement of wider regional and national economic and environmental benefits, would be achieved by a national high-speed network extending to Scotland.

The RTPs believe that an alternative strategy of restricting investment to increasing capacity of the existing rail network is not a viable solution as this would only add limited peak period capacity, would result in serious disruption to services during the lengthy construction period as was clearly demonstrated by the recent upgrade of the WCML, and would be of very limited economic benefit to the UK as a whole.

3 Do you agree with the Government's proposals for the phased roll-out of a national high speed rail network, and for links to Heathrow Airport and the High Speed 1 line to the Channel Tunnel?

As indicated above, the RTPs strongly believe that the Government's proposals must include a firm and absolute commitment to extending the high-speed network north of Manchester and Leeds to include Edinburgh and Glasgow.

It is recognised that the HSR network will have to be built in achievable phases. Accepting the likelihood that the first Bill through Parliament will encompass the London-Birmingham section, it is strongly recommended that detailed planning of the network to/from Scotland, including consideration of east and west coast options, should be undertaken over the next year or so and that consideration should be given to construction of high-speed track at the northern end of a UK network, which would deliver greater journey-time reductions in advance of, or at the same time as, the sections between Birmingham-Manchester and Birmingham-Leeds.

A critical element of the current proposals is to ensure good links between the new HSR lines with the existing Inter-City network so that more attractive journey times to/from London by high-speed trains can be achieved for the cities further north. The RTPs would strongly argue that the London – Birmingham line should also be utilised by London – Scotland Inter-City services, which would benefit from a reduction in journey time of close to 30 minutes. This would have the added benefit of significantly improving the business case for the phase one proposals since services to Scotland were, surprisingly, not included in the business case model.

The RTPs support a link to Heathrow but this should be constructed so that high-speed trains can continue onto the classic south-east network beyond Heathrow, thereby allowing high-speed trains to also serve southern cities and Gatwick Airport. This could reduce domestic pressure on air slots at Heathrow in particular and allow Government to consider using some of the freed up air capacity to ensure those significant regions of the UK which will not benefit directly from sub-3 hour land based journey times to London and its hub airports are assured equivalent levels of connectivity with critical UK and international markets.

The RTPs also believe that it is essential that there is a seamless link between the new high-speed line (HS2) with HS1, thereby allowing direct

services between UK cities north of London and continental destinations, including at the very least to Paris and Brussels. It is imperative that capacity is adequate for future demand and this should include a scenario where the UK would join the Schengen agreement allowing passport-free travel with other European countries.

The proposal for only a single track connection between HS2 and HS1 should be reconsidered. This link could also be of significant national importance for freight traffic should freight services be allowed to use HS2 at night – HS1 is already used by freight. This would also improve the business case for HS2 and would ease the current difficulties in moving rail freight from the north through London to the Channel Tunnel. The case for a twin track link rather than single track only would also be greater should HS2 also be used by rail freight traffic.

As part of HS2 between London and Birmingham/Litchfield, there must also be relevant upgrades of the existing network, in particular in respect of speed enhancements such as upgrading Carstairs Junction, so that benefits from HSR to north of England cities and Edinburgh and Glasgow can be maximised. We would again stress the importance that High Speed Services to Edinburgh and Glasgow should be part of the initial HS2 programme. However, improvements to the classic network should not distract from the need to expand the HSR network to Edinburgh and Glasgow.

4 Do you agree with the principles and specification used by HSD2 Ltd to underpin its proposals for new high speed rail lines and the route selection process HS2 Ltd undertook?

The RTPs agree with the principles and technical specification proposed for the London – Birmingham/Lichfield High Speed line. It is important at this stage to safeguard implementation of future technical advances in High Speed Rail technology so it is considered prudent to plan for future speeds of up to 400 kph.

5 Do you agree that the Government's proposed route, including the approach proposed for mitigating its impacts, is the best option for a new high speed rail line between London and the West Midlands?

It is apparent that significant amendments have been made to the original line in order to mitigate the impacts of High Speed Rail so the RTPs would support the view that the current proposal can be regarded as the best option for this section of the network.

However, in order to reduce the pressure on Euston, both during and after construction of HS2, serious consideration should be given to creating a link between the WCML and Crossrail scheme (near Willesden/Old Oak Common) so that local WCML services can avoid Euston, which would also significantly enhance journey choices for the users of these services.

The RTPs are also aware of concerns in London about terminating the high-speed Line at Euston and there are arguments for a through station in the Euston/King's Cross area, with the line extending to Stratford, so that all trains

from the north would either terminate at Stratford (or in Kent) or continue to the Continent on HS1.

The RTPs see merit in such a proposal; Stratford will be central to the expansion of London over the next few decades, it offers good connections to the City and Docklands and the arrangement would probably provide greater operational flexibility in the future. We would, therefore, support that further consideration be given to such a proposal.

6 Do you wish to comment on the Appraisal of Sustainability of the Government's proposed route between London and the West Midlands that has been published to inform this consultation?

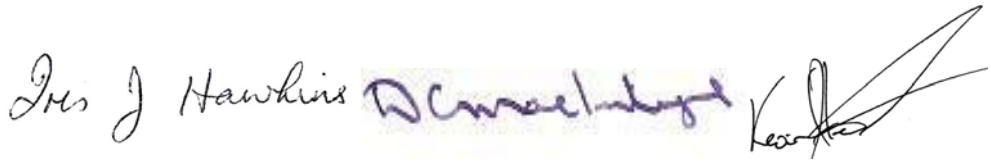
It would appear that the Appraisal has been undertaken in a thorough manner.

7 Do you agree with the options set out to assist those whose properties lose a significant amount of value as a result of any new high speed line?

The RTPs do not wish to comment on this aspect of the consultation.

We trust that this response and Scotland's RTPs support for the development of a truly national High Speed rail network is of assistance. Should you wish to discuss any of the comments or issues raised in this response further please contact the RTP Chairs Secretariat at alex.macaulay@sestran.gov.uk tel. 0131 524 5152.

Yours faithfully,



Cllr Iris Hawkins
Chair of
ZetTrans

Cllr Duncan MacIntyre
Chair of
HITRANS

Cllr Kevin Stewart
Chair of
Nestrans

Cllr Russell Imrie
Chair of
SEStran

Cllr Jonathan Findlay
Chair of
SPT

Cllr Brian Collins
Chair of
SWESTrans

Cllr Will Dawson
Chair of
Tactran