
**Manchester City Council
Report for Resolution**

Report to: Economy, Employment and Skills Overview and Scrutiny
Committee – 8 September 2010

Subject: High Speed Rail and Manchester

Report of: Stephen Clark, Rail Programme Director, GMPTE

Summary

The report provides the committee with a summary of recent government and GMPTE work on high speed rail. The committee asked that the report included:

- work carried out by GMPTE on the economic benefits for a high speed rail between core cities;
- work carried out by GMPTE in promoting high speed rail between core cities;
- the impact of high speed rail on Manchester Airport;
- how high speed rail would improve travel links with the EU.

Recommendations

The committee is asked to note the report.

Wards Affected:

All wards.

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

- High Speed Rail to Manchester – Strategic Study. 19 March 2010: GMITA Policy and Resources Committee. Available on the GMITA website.
- High Speed Rail. March 2010. Command Paper 7827. On DfT website.
- High Speed Rail. London to the West Midlands and Beyond. December 2009 (published in March 2010). High Speed Two Limited. On HS2 website.

1. Government High Speed proposals: March 2010

- 1.1. In January 2009 Government establish High Speed Two Ltd (HS2) to consider the options for a new high speed rail network in Britain, starting with a costed proposal for a new line from London to Birmingham. HS2 reported their findings to Government in December 2009. The HS2 report formed the basis of a command paper that was presented to parliament by the Secretary of State for Transport in March 2010.
- 1.2. The case for high speed rail is driven by the projected need over the next 20-30 years for more capacity in transport capacity. Alongside the benefits of additional capacity there are also real benefits for the economy, and for passengers in improving journey times and hence for the connectivity of the UK.
- 1.3. The study concluded that the initial core high speed network should be a Y-shaped network linking London to Birmingham, Manchester, the East Midlands, Sheffield and Leeds. The network would be built to allow connections onto existing tracks, so that direct high speed trains can, at the outset, can travel to other cities including Glasgow, Edinburgh and Newcastle.
- 1.4. The study detailed the route for a new line from a rebuilt London Euston station to a new city centre station in Birmingham. Formal consultation on these plans was to begin in autumn 2010.
- 1.5. In March the then Secretary of State asked that HS2 began similar detailed planning on the routes from Birmingham to Manchester and Leeds, to be completed in summer 2011.
- 1.6. Integration between the HS2 line in London is achieved through a combination of the Euston terminus and a Crossrail interchange sited between Paddington and Heathrow. The latter would provide connections to Heathrow (about ten minutes via Heathrow Express) and to the Great Western Main Line.
- 1.7. The study also concluded that a second interchange station located south east of Birmingham would be beneficial – and provide enhanced access to Birmingham Airport and the motorway system. The plans are being developed with that station included in the core, subject to an acceptable funding package being identified.
- 1.8. *The paper sets out the desirability of a connection to the Continent via High Speed One. The paper reviewed the volumes of air travel from Birmingham and Manchester to Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam. It noted however that the predicted passenger numbers would be unlikely to justify running a large number of direct European services until a larger market develops. Furthermore the report also noted the complexity of connecting the Birmingham High Speed route with the route from St Pancras to the Continent. Further work is being carried out on this issue. Given the high*

cost of a direct link to High Speed One another alternative is a dedicated link between St Pancras and Euston.

1.9. Depending on parliamentary timescales and funding, construction on a new line from London to Birmingham could begin in 2017 for completion from 2026.

1.10. The costs of a high speed network serving London, Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds are estimated to be £30bn.

2. Work on connections to Manchester and north

2.1. HS2 commenced work to look at new lines connecting the London-Birmingham line to Manchester (with a connection to the West Coast Main Line), and to Leeds in March of this year.

2.2. The work in the North West will include work on the location of stations, including consideration of city centre and/or interchange stations, and providing access to major airports.

2.3. *The March 2010 command paper notes explicitly that the business case and options for an interchange to provide access to Manchester Airport will be examined on similar terms to the Birmingham Airport proposal. It is likely therefore that such proposals would combine airport access with road and rail access from the large hinterland to the south of Greater Manchester.*

2.4. The Department for Transport (DfT) has asked that the HS2 company presents its report on this work to the Minister before the end of June 2011. The report may not of course be published until several months after that date.

2.5. The new Secretary of State modified the remit for this work in June to ask that HS2 prepared an assessment of the relative merits of a routing to Leeds via Manchester, and separate legs from the West Midlands to each of Leeds and Manchester. The Secretary of State asked for advice on this point by the early July. It is not known what advice has subsequently been given.

2.6. The Secretary of State asked that further work on the route to Leeds be put on hold until the government has taken a decision on the scope and shape of the network to be put forward for strategic consultation.

3. GMPTE work on economic benefits of high speed rail

3.1. In summer 2009 GMPTE and Manchester Airport commissioned AECOM and KPMG to assess the case for Manchester to be served by a high speed rail line, and the economic consequences of such a development.

3.2. The study focused exclusively on the wider economic benefits of HSR, and examined the benefits of a number of strategic options. These focused on whether central Manchester or Manchester Airport should be served, whether

this should be on a direct line or a spur, and if Leeds, Sheffield or Scotland were appropriate onward destinations.

- 3.3. The study found that HSR would bring significant economic benefits for the region. Significant economic benefits could amount to almost 10 000 jobs across the Northern Way area. In combination with this employment growth, a boost to productivity could see the economic output of the Northern Way area growing by around £967million per year.
- 3.4. It also concluded that finding a satisfactory conclusion to the Northern Hub (formerly the Manchester Hub) was key to the success of high speed rail; it is critical that once passengers arrive into Manchester they are able to disperse quickly to their ultimate destinations. This reinforces GMITA's position that addressing the Northern Hub is a necessary precursor to high speed rail.
- 3.5. The study demonstrated clear benefits for Manchester city centre to be served on a direct HSR line, and the benefits that would arise from this for the North West.
- 3.6. The report also examined various ways of including the airport on a high speed line. All of the options tested in this respect had positive business cases and economic benefits. However the evaluation of options of including the Airport is complex, and it is clear that additional work will be needed to better understand the issues. It is clear also that such a station must be additional to, and not instead of, a central Manchester station
- 3.7. The report also examined the benefits of onward high speed links to Leeds, Sheffield and Scotland. The greatest benefits are to be derived from a link between Manchester and Leeds. It was noteworthy that a significant proportion of those benefits could be achieved through an upgrade to the conventional line, reflecting the currently poor journey time between the two cities. Given the difficulty of constructing a high speed line over or through the Pennines an upgraded classic line may in fact be the more preferable option. The report also recognised the benefits to be found in serving Scotland and South Yorkshire, though these are not as great as those to be found from a Leeds link.

4. Current work with HS2 on Manchester route

- 4.1. HS2 has begun work leading to the June 2010 report on a high speed line to Manchester. As part of this GMPTE and Manchester City Council have been involved in a working group that is looking at the specific issue of station sites in the North West. This group is taking an approach that involves long-listing and then sifting potential station sites to define a preferred site. This approach mirrors that taken in the work on station sites in London and the West Midlands where an extensive long-list was drawn up around broad locations.

5. Gaining support for High Speed rail linking the core cities

- 5.1. In September 2009 the leader of Manchester City Council formed a group called HSR\UK to make the case for a high speed rail network linking the English Core Cities, Cardiff, Glasgow and Edinburgh. Following a high profile launch the group developed a programme of media and public relations events during the period up to the publication of the March 2010 report. In the run up to the general election a cross-party consensus developed around the case for high speed rail.

- 5.2. GMITA has supported high speed rail in its lobbying over the past two years. GMITA has consistently made the case for high speed rail to Manchester being implemented only after the Northern Hub works are complete. (The Northern hub is the name given to Network Rail's proposals to address the most serious bottlenecks in the rail network in Manchester and elsewhere across the north.)