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## **PRESS RELEASE**

**9 November 2011**

### **RAILFUTURE HIGH-SPEED CONFERENCE FINDS COMMON GROUND**

*Railfuture's* high-speed conference finds that there is more in common than previously thought with everyone agreeing that high-speed rail cannot be considered on its own and public transport generally needs to be improved first. The well-natured and less-polarised event organised by pro-rail campaigning organisation *Railfuture*, which is independent of the government's HS2 proposals, heard four speakers on all sides of the argument and a presentation by *Railfuture* on the changes it would like to see to HS2 to deliver greater benefits for less cost.

Each of the speakers gave a one-minute summary of the conference at the end of the day. These are available as videos on *Railfuture's* web-site and are transcribed below.

#### **Professor Andrew McNaughton of HS2 Ltd., speaking at the conference in a personal capacity**

"I think this has been a fascinating *Railfuture* conference. I enjoyed being on the panel sitting with people with different views.

"Actually what it boiled down to was a couple of things. Firstly there is no such thing as black and white. There are a range of views that people have. But actually we have more in common than we have separating us. One of the problems in the past has been the polarisation of views which reduces things to being too simplistic.

"The future of this country, its economic wealth, and the part that transport plays is absolutely vital and is not something that can be reduced to people just making silly claims one way or the other.

"I am completely convinced that the government's plans are the best plans and I only became involved in high-speed rail because I said 'we're only going to do it once if we do it at all. So if we do it once we need to do it as best as we can both for the people who use it and for the people it will pass by.' I am absolutely determined that we will achieve this."

#### **Stephen Joseph, campaign for Better Transport**

"This *Railfuture* conference has been really interesting, allowing a reasoned debate between a lot of different points of view about high-speed rail.

"I think it's clear that a lot of the people involved have more common ground than has sometimes been presented. But I think it is also clear that everybody is agreeing that high-speed rail needs to be

part of a much broader package involving the rest of rail and transport and also with land-use planning and economic development we've got to have that kind of broad strategy otherwise high-speed rail will just be a rich man's railway."

**Jonathan Tyler, Passenger Transport Networks, timetable researcher for high-speed rail**

It's been an extremely interesting day. I think it is right that we've had a much more carefully nuanced discussion of all the issues than has been happening at some of the events. I stick to my position that the present proposal coming for HS2 Limited is a blockbusting one-off proposal altogether too separated from the railway and public transport network as a whole.

"What I am essentially campaigning on is for us to be thinking in all-Britain national networks and developing a much more even quality of service across the whole country. There may or may not be a role for new railway alignments in that, but the crucial thing is to improve the quality of inter-city links, which are currently pretty awful in some cases away from the London man lines. My model is the Swiss model and I am doing everything I can to demonstrate how that can be applied in this country to our great benefit."

**Lizzy Williams, founding member of StopHS2, the national organisation against HS2**

"I am categorically opposed to HS2 on environmental grounds, economic grounds and priority grounds actually. I come from a construction background and in the proposal, which I looked at last year when it first came out, I found the paperwork extremely lacking, based on flawed data. It is not environmentally sound whatsoever. It is carbon neutral at best. I have come along today to talk to the *Railfuture* delegates at the conference in Bletchley Park about my concerns about HS2 and to try to encourage them to examine the detail and ensure that this level of investment in our country is spent prudently."

**Graham Nalty, who presented Railfuture's suggested changes to the government's HS2 proposals**

"I really enjoyed the conference because there were so many different viewpoints from so many different angles. There is a lot more discussion that we do need to have about high-speed rail and about the routes and stations in particular.

"I think high-speed rail is necessary for the country. We do need a lot more capacity but we do need better connectivity and we need to look at ways of achieving that. I do use rail for business and I find high-speed rail much better than travelling by air, so that I have some time to do work without the interruptions you get in the office. My vote goes definitely for high-speed rail but with good connectivity and good interchanges."

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