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PRESS RELEASE

10 January 2012

DISMAY AT FLAWED ROUTE OF VITAL NEW RAIL LINE

Pro-rail campaigners have expressed dismay at the government's announcement of the "flawed" HS2 scheme. Mike Crowhurst, chairman of the campaign group *Railfuture* said "it's disappointing that the government cannot see the flaws in this route. We desperately need the capacity the new lines would bring, but equally we need to get it right."

"Firstly, there's no case for 250 mph (400km/h) trains when every other European high-speed line goes at 200 mph (320 km/h) or less, even though they travel greater distances. There's a huge environmental and energy cost in building and running an extremely straight extremely fast line, and the time savings are negligible. It's also incompatible with any desire to reduce CO₂ emissions."

"We think it needn't serve Heathrow. HS2 can only really replace short-haul domestic flights, and most of these don't go to Heathrow. The diversion to Heathrow and/or old Oak Common forces the choice of route through the Chilterns, which is controversial and environmentally damaging."

"We are arguing for a route following the M1 and M6. Taking Heathrow airport and Old Oak Common out of the equation allows a route along the M1 corridor. This is already developed, so there won't be a public outcry as there is with the Chilterns. The only arguments put forward against the M1 route are speed and the need to serve old Oak Common, both of which we reject. If there's a good reason not to use the M1, we want to know what it is."

"Then there is the issue of connectivity. It won't serve Coventry, and it doesn't go to Birmingham New Street. Anyone arriving at the Birmingham high-speed station will have to walk to New Street to catch connecting trains. This is not only inconvenient, but negates some of the time savings of high-speed rail."

Railfuture is a signatory to the Right Lines Charter, which sets out guiding principles for doing high-speed rail well. "It's sad that the government has ignored the expert advice of such a broad spectrum of organisations" he added.

Notes for editors:

Right Lines Charter: <http://rightlines.org.uk/>

Railfuture's submission to the HS2 consultation:
http://www.railfuture.org.uk/tiki-download_file.php?fileId=296

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Railfuture is Britain's only completely independent voice on railway development. We are not affiliated to or sponsored by any political party, trade union, or private industry. We are funded almost entirely by our members.

Railfuture campaigns for Britain's railways to play a larger role for passengers and freight, calling for an enhanced and expanded network, including high-speed rail, along with light rail.

Rail is a vital part of an integrated efficient transport system serving a modern, vibrant, environmentally sustainable economy. We are pro-rail but not anti-road. *Railfuture* maintains that investment in rail travel and rail freight is vital to the future of the UK economy and environment.

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