Extracts from the HS2 Report to Government with Conservation Board comments

The following are extracts from the HS2 Report to Government. It has been prepared by the Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB). The Board has a statutory purpose to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The government's planning policies prevent major development in AONBs. This can be overturned subject to satisfying a national interest test whereby there is proven national benefit.

The Conservation Board is opposing the construction of a high speed railway through the Chilterns AONB and is not satisfied that the national interest case has been met. These extracts from the HS2 Report show that there is no persuasive economic or environmental case. The Report fails to include all the costs and does not assign a notional valuation to the dis-benefits in the way it does to supposed benefits. Neither does it assign a value to the damage to the environment.

The impact on the environment is under-stated and, notably, an Environmental Impact Assessment has yet to be published. The impact on carbon dioxide emissions is likely to be neutral at best and, if all carbon emissions associated with its construction are included, may actually result in a net increase in carbon emissions.

Section of Report	**Quote from Report and CCB comments**
3.3.5	"More than 80% of passengers using HS2 would be going to London itself."
3.3.10	"The total market for accessing Heathrow from the West Midlands, North West, North and Scotland is currently around 3.7 million trips. Our modelling suggests relatively little of this would shift to HS2." **(CCB note- there are 67 million passengers using Heathrow pa)**
Figure 3.3b	Cost of a Heathrow link could be up to £4.1bn, which does not include a risk or optimism bias **(CCB note - which could add approx. £3bn)**
3.8.4	"We estimated the cost of the high speed [rail connection between Euston and St.Pancras] to be at least £3.5 bn." **(CCB note - a surface transit link would cost approx £1bn)**
3.8.12	"Under any scenario the number of international passengers on HS2

	is likely to be fairly limited."
3.10.20	". Over certain WCML route sections there would be some time lost against today's services." **[CCB note- Manchester- Glasgow ?]**
Fig 4.1d	27% of passengers would be new. **(CCB note - i.e. passengers who would not otherwise have made the journey)** **(CCB note - It is believed that less than 2% of car travellers using the M1 would switch)**
4.1.14	"The cost of this infrastructure (without) a HS1 link, a direct Heathrow link connection or rolling stock is estimated at between £15.8billion and £17.4 billion."
Fig 4.1j	The cost of rolling stock would be £2.8 bn **(CCB note - the inference from the report is that costs would be met from the public finances)**
4.2.4	"..we estimate that HS2 would generate benefits of some £32bn and increase net rail revenue by £15 bn over the course of a 60 year appraisal period."
4.2.4	"Around two thirds of the benefits come from people using the classic-compatible services to and from places further north than Birmingham."
Figure 4.2b	£28.7bn of benefits are notional savings to rail users based on time saved, convenience and no overcrowding £3.6bn of benefits are from business efficiency and growth.
4.2.5	"Business Travellers would gain the most in value from HS2."
4.2.5	"Overall each person using HS2 would benefit by an average of around £8 per trip." **(CCB note – this is basis for the notional valuation creating £28bn of benefit to the nation – Fig 4.2b))**
4.2.8	"It is difficult to analyse exactly where the benefits of HS2 would accrue.
4.2.11	"While the majority of transport users would benefit from the introduction of HS2, some passengers could experience longer or less frequent services… "
4.2.11	"Also some services could see increased crowding with more passengers using rail and underground services to connect to HS services."
4.2.16	"Calculating Wider Economic Impacts is not clear cut from such a large infrastructure project as HS2. Labour market impacts are minimal since HS2 is unlikely to benefit a significant numbers of commuters."

4.2.16	Wider economic Impacts based on DfT's draft guidance would add a further £3.6bn to the benefits of HS2 (over 60 years). **(CCB note - dis-benefits are not costed)**
4.2.17	"These estimates are subject to considerable uncertainty. "… there would be relatively small agglomeration benefits. The estimation of Wider Economic Impacts is driven by decongestion benefits to local road users as well as the benefit of released capacity." **(CCB note- it is not clear how HS2 will help local road congestion)**
4.2.19	"We have also considered the impacts of changes in spatial patterns of economic activity that might result from HS2." ".. what evidence exists suggests that this is largely relocation of existing firms rather than creation of new firms – which suggests the impact on national productivity is likely to be limited."
4.2.20	"The evidence we have seen suggests, overall, Wider Economic Impacts are likely to be a relatively small part of the business case for HS2 at a national level…" "However at a local level the impacts could be much more significant."
4.2.24	"The impact on carbon emissions is both complex and highly uncertain. There are effects from the operation and use of HS2, and also from its construction (embedded carbon)." **(CCB note - in Section 4.2.35 there is an inexplicably low estimate of up to 2.12 million tonnes of construction related emissions)**
Fig 4.2c	Net change in CO2 emissions over 60years. Estimate is saving of 4.6m tonnes. **(CCB note - it is not clear if this includes carbon emissions from construction and the embedded energy in construction materials. The gain is entirely dependent upon modal shift from aircraft)**
4.2.32	"Whether the introduction of HS2 leads to an overall increase of decrease in emissions is almost entirely dependent on the impact of changes in demand on aviation emissions. There is considerable uncertainty around this and actual changes in emissions will depend on how airlines respond to reduced demand." **(CCB note - See 3.3.10)**
Fig 4.3a	Net Benefits £32.bn (notional) Total Costs £25.5bn (actual) Revenues £15bn (actual) **(CCB note - the notional benefits appear to refer to a network reaching Glasgow and Edinburgh (see 4.2.4) but the costs only to build HS2 to Birmingham. If this is correct the business case assessment should be negative)**
4.3.6	"There is, however, a wide range of impacts, including environmental

	impacts, that cannot be monetised and hence are not captured by the BCR (Benefit Cost Ratio) It is nonetheless important that these are given due weight."
4.3.7	"The most significant non-monetised costs are likely to be environmental, associated with the landscape and biodiversity impacts associated with the scheme. These are likely to be large, in part because of the scale of the scheme and therefore the amount of land affected, but also because the line of the route crosses the Chiltern Hills." **(CCB note- What price the damage to the Chilterns and the wider natural and cultural environment?)**

n.b the figures are confusing as some relate to a network reaching Glasgow and Edinburgh but others only to Birmingham or Leeds and Manchester. As there are no flights between Birmingham and London the carbon emission figures presumably apply to a network going at least as far as Glasgow and Edinburgh.

The costs of construction are only for a network as far as Birmingham. It is not clear to which network the notional national benefits figures apply but section 4.2.4 states that two thirds of the benefits accrue to passengers using the classic-compatible (i.e. HS trains on conventional tracks) to the north of Birmingham. In which case the business case has been based on comparing costs of building a network to Birmingham with benefits of a HS2 network to Leeds and Manchester and HS trains going as far as Glasgow and Edinburgh on existing track **(as such a basic error seems unlikely clarification is being sought from HS2 – 25.3.2010)**

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