Reasons to support
High Speed Rail

1. High speed rail will provide extra rail network capacity to deal with increasing demand

Demand for rail is rising. In 1994, rail passengers travelled fewer than 18 billion miles; in 2009 this rose to almost **32 billion miles**[1]. This trend is expected to continue, with Network Rail projections suggesting that, by 2036, patronage on long distance journey types has the potential to grow up to:

- 78% on East Coast Mainline
- 77% on Midland Mainline
- 89% on West Coast Mainline[2].

The Solution

High Speed Rail will address congestion on the rail network and provide extra capacity to handle increasing demand. The new infrastructure will 'free up' space on existing rail lines. For example, there will be **1,000 spare seats** per direction per day between Doncaster and Leeds. These benefits are expected to total **£800m** as extra capacity enables workers to access more productive jobs[3].

Extra capacity could provide s**ubstantial new journey opportunities** along the Midland Mainline. New services connecting areas not currently served by direct trains to London could be established, spreading the benefits of High Speed Rail.

[1] www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/rail/pi/highspeedrail/faq

[2] Network RUS: Scenarios (Network Rail 2009)

[3] Technical business case work on high speed rail (Arup 2011)

2. High speed rail will improve rail journey times across the UK

Journey times across the UK's rail system are slower today than they were 15 years ago; with average speeds between our largest cities at just **80mph**[4]. These are expected to continue to slow as the network becomes more congested and has to juggle with competing demands.

London to Sheffield currently takes roughly the same time as London to Manchester or Leeds despite being considerably closer to London than these cities. Therefore average speeds on the Midland Mainline are currently not fast enough from South Yorkshire to London.

The Solution

High Speed Rail is expected to deliver up to 18 trains per hour (during peak hours) between London, Europe and the North with speeds of up **250mph**[5]. This would cut journey times between Sheffield and London by 40% giving a journey time of just **1 hour and 15 minutes**[6]. Journey times to other regions would also be substantially faster with Leeds and the East Midlands being potentially just a 20 minute journey away from South Yorkshire[7].

[4] Why the critics got it wrong (Greengauge 21)

[5] www.hs2.org.uk/about-hsr

[6] Economic Case for High Speed Rail to Leeds and Sheffield City Region (Arup and Volterra 2011)

[7] Technical Business Case Work on High Speed Rail (Arup 2011)

3. High speed rail will help strengthen the UK's northern economy

Disparities in economic performance exist between regions in the UK. Despite being close geographically, the poor transport links between northern cities means they operate as **functionally separate economies** [8]. For example, the service between Nottingham, Sheffield and Leeds runs at an average speed of just 36mph taking almost 2 hours to complete an approximately 70 mile journey. This is simply not acceptable considering recent research has set out the importance of improved connectivity between cities in the north of England to help **rebalance the economy** [9].

The Solution

High Speed Rail has shown, and is expected, to deliver significant economic benefits to the regions it serves. Along the Eastern arm of the Y network, the total wider economic benefits are expected to be worth **£4.2bn (£400m direct to** Sheffield City Region). It can also act as a catalyst for physical regeneration in the areas around stations on the network. The 'regeneration effect' of HS1 unlocked almost **£20bn** worth of investment [10].

[8] Technical business case work on high speed rail (Arup 2011)

[9] Ward, M. (2011) Rebalancing the Economy: Prospects for the North, The Smith Institute

[10] Economic Impacts of High Speed 1 (Colin Buchanan & Partners Ltd and Volterra)

4. High speed rail must be part of an overall strategy for rail that maximises the benefits to businesses and the public

The complete Y-network is not expected to be completed until 2032 at the earliest. This is too long to wait for better rail connectivity and capacity. Also, there are currently no commitments to join the Midland Mainline to the first phase of HS2 whereas there are with the West Coast Mainline. Our region runs the risk of missing out on improved journey times as train paths get taken up by the western route.

The Solution

High Speed Rail must be part of an overall strategy for rail. We see the following as essential steps ahead of High Speed Rail, in order to maximise its benefits to the public and businesses:

- Midland Mainline speed improvements – already committed to as part of CP4 and due for completion in 2014 [11]
- Midland Mainline electrification from Bedford to Sheffield which is considered a priority scheme by network rail [12]
- Increasing maximum speeds on the East Coast Mainline to between 125mph and 140mph in conjunction with the Agility Trains programme. These could enter service between 2016-18
- Electrifying the line between Birmingham and Leeds via Derby, Sheffield and Rotherham - potential completion in 2024.
- Joining the Cross Country and Midland Main Lines to the first phase of HS2 upon its completion.

[11] CP4 Delivery Plan, Enhancements programme: statement of scope, outputs and milestones (Network Rail 2010)

[12] www.networkrailmediacentre.co.uk/Press-Releases/THE-LONDON-TO-SHEFFIELD-ROUTE-SHOULD-BE-ELECTRIFIED-SAYS-NETWORK-RAIL-129b/SearchCategoryID-6.aspx

5. High speed rail is a long term investment that represents excellent value for money

It has been argued that as the UK is currently in a recession the government needs to cut annual spending and should not be investing in new infrastructure.

The Solution

High Speed Rail is a long term investment and represents excellent value for money. The initial phase (London to Birmingham) will **generate £1.6** for every **£1** spent. However, the further north High Speed Rail goes the stronger the economic case gets. The benefit to cost ratio of the route beyond Birmingham on the Western and Eastern Arms is **2.6** and **5.6** respectively [13]. Over its lifetime High Speed Rail will pay for itself. A 30 year concession could be sold for **£6-7bn**, tax receipts during the concessions are estimated to be worth **£1.5-2bn** and then a second concession could be sold for a further **£1.2bn** [14].

[13] Technical business case work on high speed rail (Arup 2011)

[14] Selling HS2: Delivering a return on governments investment (Greengauge 21)

6. The ‘Y’ network offers the best overall solution

The Y-network is not the only route to have been considered. But alternative routes have tendered to by-pass Sheffield City Region, or serve it via a ‘spur’.

The Solution

We are satisfied that government has considered all the options available to improving our country’s rail network and concluded that a High Speed Rail **Y-network is the best option**. Upgrading existing rail infrastructure will only offer the same or lower increases to capacity for similar costs without the significantly improved journey times that High Speed Rail can provide [15]. Building a new conventional line **will only save about 9%** of the costs of the high speed line and would also cause the overall benefits to **fall by 33%** [16]. Finally the direct route to Leeds via Sheffield would deliver far greater productivity benefits **(£2.3bn)** compared to the less direct route via Manchester **(£0.4bn)** [17].

[15] HSR London to the West Midlands and Beyond: HS2 Demand Analysis (February 2011)

[16] HS2 Ltd (2011). Economic Case for HS2 – The Y network and London – West Midlands

[17] Economic case for high speed rail to Leeds and Sheffield city region (Arup and Volterra 2011)