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PRESS RELEASE

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MUST HIGH-SPEED 2 GO THROUGH THE CHILTERNES?

Rail campaign group Railfuture have welcomed the government's announcement of a high-speed route to the Midlands and the North. "We support the concept of high-speed rail, which is something we've been pushing for for a long time" said Ian McDonald, one of the group's directors. "However, it's important that this investment does not come at the expense of other important schemes such as rail electrification."

"We'll be studying the government's scheme and we plan to propose our preferred route in due course. We're confident that we can suggest alternative options which are less environmentally damaging than going through the Chilternes"

The group has outlined a number of general principles for planning a new high-speed network in Britain. These include ensuring that trains run to city centres instead of out-of-town Parkways, including onward connections to European destinations and building to allow European size trains.

"It remains to be seen whether the present and future governments will grasp the nettle to invest in this project. We hope they do because it should produce a reduction in carbon emissions and hopefully significantly reduce domestic flights"

Railfuture's general principles for high-speed rail are:

1. The first project (HS2) should consist of a high-speed route from London to the Midlands.
2. A route to the north should **NOT** be via Heathrow or "Heathrow North"

on the Great Western Main Line. However separate improved and new routes to Heathrow (Central and T5) are desirable.

3. The London terminus must be Euston or St Pancras or very close by.
4. Services from the north should be able to run easily on to mainland Europe, via a connecting line (or terminus reversal).
5. All major city centres close to the route(s) should be connected directly, or where necessary by short improved stretches of the existing network. The group would be opposed to a plethora of Parkway stations being provided instead.
6. The new lines should be conceived principally to provide additional route capacity, rather than just simply for the sake of high speed.
7. The new routes and their city-centre connections should be designed to accommodate European size trains
8. An outline blueprint for a national network for the longer term should be planned, similar to those in France, Spain and Germany.

Notes for editors:

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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.

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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