

HS2 fails the European Challenge

A requirement for a direct link from HS2 to HS1 was written into HS2 Ltd's core remit; but in 2014, after costs had risen to over £700 million, the HS2 to HS1 link was cancelled.

The problems of the HS2-HS1 link can be traced back to another requirement in HS2's core remit to provide an interchange with Crossrail and Heathrow services at Old Oak Common. This has dictated HS2's westerly approach route into Euston which in turn means that the only practicable route for the HS2-HS1 link is a very controversial one through the highly sensitive environment around Camden Lock and Camden Market.

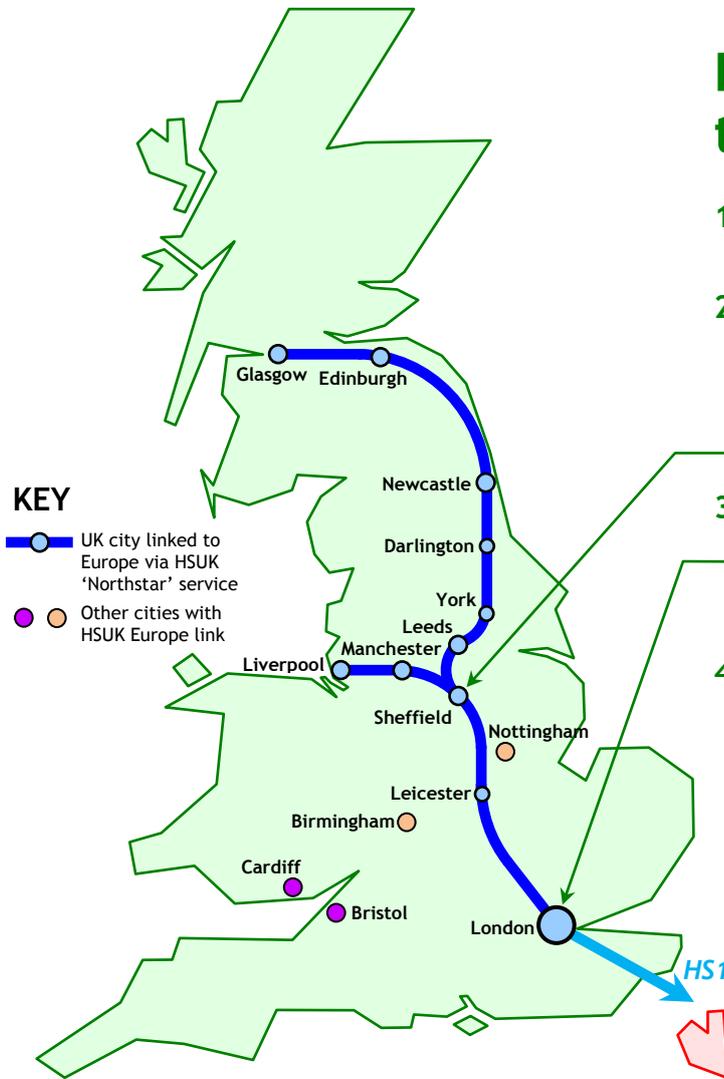
Regrettably, no-one within HS2 Ltd appears to have realised that the requirement for an interchange at Old Oak Common is in direct conflict with the requirement for a link to HS1. Routeing via Old Oak Common effectively means that HS2 can never be physically linked to HS1 and the prospect of improved rail links from the UK regions to Europe will be lost forever.

The problem of the HS2-HS1 link is solved by High Speed UK's better-engineered route to central London. HSUK follows the M1 and the Midland Main Line (MML), thus approaching Euston from a different, more northerly direction. At West Hampstead on the MML, HSUK domestic and European services will take different routes. The domestic services will access Euston through a new 3.4km long tunnel whilst the European services will simply follow the MML into the international platforms at St Pancras. HSUK's European services will reverse at St Pancras and continue to Europe via HS1 and the Channel Tunnel.

The diagram opposite shows a scheme for a direct service from Europe to all Northern and Scottish primary cities, possibly operating at a 2-hourly frequency.

The cost of HSUK's link to HS1 is estimated at about £2 million. Only minor works in the St Pancras 'throat' are required with no land take and minimal disturbance caused to local residents.

Direct HSUK services to Europe via HS1



1. Vital for connectivity of UK regions to Europe.
2. Practicable with efficiency of HSUK network - one train can serve all Northern & Scottish cities ○, with single split at Sheffield.
3. Possible with direct HSUK-HS1 link via Midland Main Line requiring no new-build infrastructure.
4. Separate trains required for Bristol/Cardiff ● and Birmingham/Nottingham ●

No Direct HS2 services to Europe via HS1

1. Link to HS1 key element of original HS2 remit.
2. Not practicable given the inefficiency of HS2's 'network', with each primary city on separate branch.
3. Not possible with cancellation of HS2-HS1 link.
4. No prospect of regional high speed services to Europe.

