

# HS2 fails to start the 'Midlands Engine'

The 'Midlands Engine' concept is based upon a political desire to derive a 'local connectivity dividend' from the HS2 proposals for both the East and West Midlands. However, any such dividend is fatally compromised by the astonishingly poor connectivity that HS2 will achieve within the Midlands region – see opposite.

HS2 will only serve 4 stations in the region i.e. the Curzon Street terminus in central Birmingham, Birmingham 'Interchange', Toton near Nottingham, and Crewe. Of these, only Crewe is directly linked to the existing rail network. Of equal concern is the fact that every major population centre of the East and West Midlands, with the single exception of Birmingham, is bypassed by HS2, and will suffer reduced intercity services along existing main lines. It should not be forgotten that HS2's remit was to serve the entire West Midlands conurbation, not just central Birmingham.

Given these failings, it is difficult to see how a Midlands Engine based upon HS2 will deliver any benefit for the region.

All these problems can be avoided through full integration with the local rail network. High Speed UK will bring high speed intercity services to all major cities of the East and West Midlands, and the necessary upgrades to the local networks and connections to the high speed line will provide both the capacity and the opportunity to create a 'Midlands Ring' that will interlink all the cities of the region. The Midlands Ring is illustrated in the diagram opposite.

The Midlands Ring is reliant upon the following infrastructure works, all necessary for a well-balanced national intercity network:

- 4-tracking of the existing Rugby-Birmingham main line. **1**
- New Soho Junction-Tame Bridge link. **2**
- Restoration of Walsall-Lichfield route. **3**
- 4-tracking of CrossCountry main line through Burton. **4**
- Restoration of north side of Derby 'teardrop'. **5**
- 4-track HSUK HS line in Leicester area, and Rugby spur. **6**

The superior connectivity and capacity of HSUK's Midlands Ring will create far greater economic benefit for the Midlands Region.

