

# The HS2 Case Study

(A Freshfield Foundation/nef Initiative)

8<sup>th</sup> October 2011

Dear Members of Parliament,

## **The HS2 decision-making process**

Ahead of the Parliamentary debate next Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> Oct, on High Speed Rail (HS2) we have written this open letter to draw attention to material weaknesses in the HS2 decision-making process. The Freshfield Foundation and The New Economics Foundation are registered charities with a broad interest in sustainable development. As part of a joint work programme The Freshfield Foundation has produced a report on the "HS2 process" (which we are sending with this letter). The main findings of the report are that:

**1. A long-term strategy for the railways was set out by the DfT in 2007.**

The strategy was laid out in *Delivering A Sustainable Railway* (DfT July 2007). This document and *The Eddington Transport Study* (HM Treasury 2006) are cited as the "policy context" for *High Speed Rail* (DfT 2010).

**2. Within 3 years the three largest political parties had committed to a policy (high speed rail now) that did not fit with the 2007 DfT strategy.**

**3. Even if proceeding with HS2 now did fit in with the 2007 strategy, the business plan is flawed.**

**4. Proceeding with HS2 now is not the right decision**

The recommendations of the report are that:

1. the current HS2 process and documentation is set aside
2. a cross-party enquiry is set up to look at ways in which UK Government decision-making processes might be improved
3. the 2006-7 transport strategy documents are updated
4. HS2 takes its place in the full list of options to be appraised

Yours sincerely,

The Freshfield Foundation  
The New Economics Foundation

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