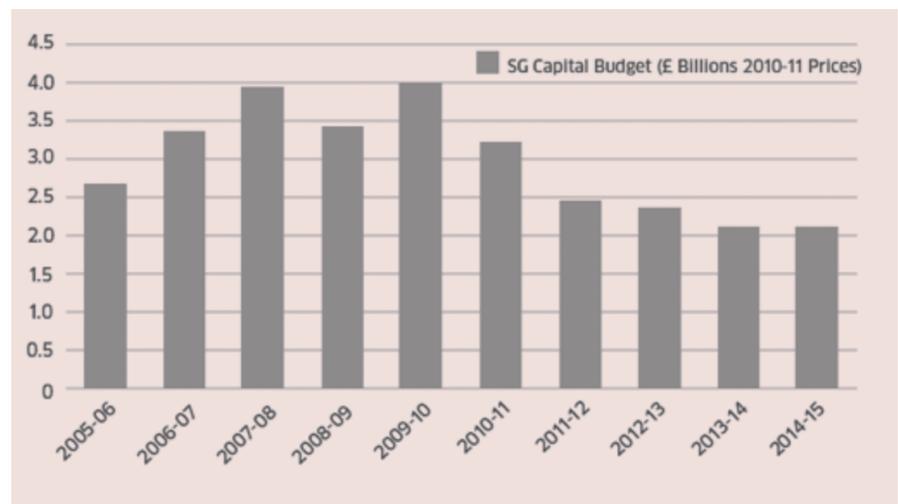


- **HS2 REPRESENTS A HUGE INVESTMENT TO BENEFIT VERY FEW SCOTTISH RAIL TRAVELLERS – 92% OF ALL RAIL JOURNEYS IN SCOTLAND BEGIN AND END IN SCOTLAND.**
- **THE FUNDS THAT SCOTLAND WILL CONTRIBUTE TO HS2 WOULD BE BETTER USED TO IMPROVE ITS OWN TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE.**
- **HS2 HAS THE POTENTIAL TO SIGNIFICANTLY DISRUPT AND REDUCE CROSS BORDER SERVICES.**



THE CASE AGAINST HS2: A BAD DEAL FOR SCOTLAND

The Coalition Government plans to construct a new high-speed line known as HS2. The first stage, from London to the West Midlands is expected to open in 2026 and the second stage, connecting Manchester and Leeds is expected to open in 2033. There are no firm plans in place for a high speed line to continue to Scotland however, Scottish political support for the English phase of HS2 is vital if the line is to be approved.



Source: Scottish Government

The financial implications for Scotland mean the project has to be in its national interest. Most obviously, Scotland, like every other part of the UK, will be contributing through its taxes to a total construction cost of £33 billion, with an additional £8 billion for rolling stock. This dwarfs expenditure on other high profile projects such as the QE class aircraft carriers (£7 billion), the NHS computer system (£12 billion) or the Millennium Dome (£1 billion).

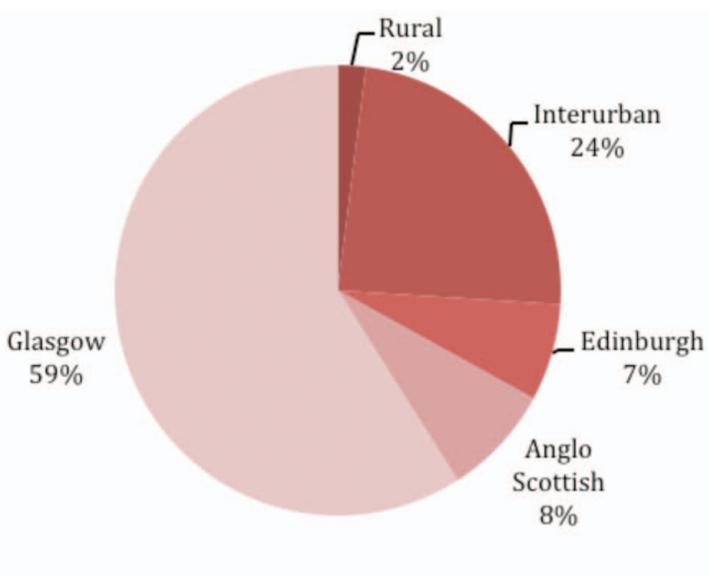
Scotland's taxpayers will be making a substantial contribution to fund HS2. At a cost equivalent to £51 million per Westminster parliamentary constituency, the total Scottish contribution will be around £3.64 billion. To put this figure into perspective, the Scottish Government's entire capital budget is just over £2 billion per annum – and falling.

So what will Scotland get for its £3.64 billion investment? It won't get a high-speed rail line, as HS2 only goes to Leeds and Manchester. However new trains which will be capable of running fast on the high-speed line in England will then run on the existing west coast main line for the remaining leg of the journey to Scotland.

HS2 claim they will be able to provide journey time savings of around an hour compared to what's currently on offer.

These services will require new, specially designed trains, which HS2 Ltd's own figures state will cost £52 million per set, making it among the most expensive ever made. Depending on untested new trains represents a substantial risk for Scotland. Due to design restrictions, they will not be able to tilt like the existing Pendolino trains (which currently run on the West Coast Main Line) and will be slower on certain sections of track. They will also require power supply upgrades and alterations to stations and other structures along the route, all of which will mean significant disruption and additional cost. Aside from confirming that major changes will be required to stations in Glasgow and Edinburgh, neither HS2 Ltd or Network Rail have produced details on the level of disruption which can be expected.

Scottish passenger rail journeys
Source: Network Rail



This would mirror the upheaval expected at Euston, which will be rebuilt to accommodate HS2 over an eight-year timespan. The UK Department for Transport has confirmed that this will mean major service disruptions during construction. So Scotland can hope, at best, for a new service knocking an hour off journey times to England in return for a contribution of over £3 billion. How many people will use it? Given only 8 per cent of Scottish rail journeys are cross border, the answer is: not many.

The Westminster Government's enthusiasm for HS2 also means funds are not available for other routine, low-cost changes to existing cross border services. If implemented, these could provide journey time savings of up to 30 minutes. Steps like progressively raising permitted top speeds, replacing level crossings with bridges or underpasses and installing loops to permit slow freight trains to be overtaken by passenger services would reduce journey times, while costing a fraction of the amounts required for high-speed rail.

Proposals to extend HS2 from Leeds and Manchester to Scotland appear even more misguided. Extending the line north has been estimated as costing between £8-£13 billion. Given the total annual rail capital budget in Scotland is around £350 million per year, the construction costs alone would prove ruinous. The carbon reduction impact would be limited, given that emissions from all domestic aviation only account for around 1.6 per cent of the UK's total emissions and HS2 would not be an alternative option for travellers from places like Aberdeen, Dundee or Inverness.

At a time when limited funds are available for compelling transport projects in Scotland, it makes no sense for Scotland to be contributing over £3 billion to HS2. Improving existing cross border fast lines would reduce journey times and allow sufficient funds for the projects needed to give Scotland a truly integrated and sustainable transport network. Plans such as extending electrification to Stirling, Dunblane and Alloa and funding Glasgow Crossrail and improvements in the Far North could finally be implemented.

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