



STOP HS2

WHY ARE PEOPLE AGAINST IT?

- ★ HS2 is expected to damage or destroy 108 of the UK's ancient woodlands, when the need to act against climate change is clearer than ever.
- ★ Wildlife will experience yet more habitat loss, threatening a number of locally-endangered species with extinction.
- ★ Hundreds of homes have been seized through Compulsory Purchase Orders.
- ★ Construction is causing relentless noise & dust pollution in working-class residential areas.
- ★ The taxpayer-footed bill is now expected to be over £100 billion. Vast sums will line the pockets of the multinational companies awarded the lucrative building and engineering contracts. Meanwhile, a third of HS2 staff earn six-figure salaries. Chairman Allan Cook, who works three days a week, took home a salary of over £266,000 in 2019-2020.
- ★ Train companies already charge scandalous fares, yet HS2 tickets are expected to be up to a third higher than those of regular trains. At around £240 for a Manchester-London ticket, this is beyond what most can afford.
- ★ HS2 claims the project will ease overcrowding & speed up journey times. But overcrowding is mainly a problem on commuter rather than long-distance lines (trains at Euston being on average up to 60% capacity at peak times). It will also largely shave off minutes from trips that only the rich will be able to afford. Studies have shown that lengthening trains, removing some first class carriages, and making improvements to existing lines could significantly increase capacity where needed.

WHAT IS IT?

High Speed Two ('HS2') is the plan to build a 343-mile, high speed cross-country railway line. HS2 would pick up from HS1, which connects the Channel Tunnel to London, snaking to Leeds & Manchester via Birmingham.

Plans for project have been in the pipeline since 2009, and the final stages are not expected to be completed until 2040.

£33 billion was initially budgeted for the work, but the expected cost has since spiralled to over £100 billion. The project is being overseen by High Speed Two Ltd, a state-owned company.

WHO PROFITS?

A number of joint ventures ('JVs') have been awarded the largest contracts to build sections of the route, but hundreds of other companies have been eager to cash in: from building and signalling contracts, to legal and insurance services – and even psychologists to make sure the companies can work well together...

To get past the resistance, various bailiff and security companies have also been employed, including G4S and the notorious National Eviction Team (part of the High Court Enforcement Group).

HOW CAN WE STOP IT?

There is a diverse and growing resistance to HS2. The project is years behind schedule and there are rumours that the eastern leg to Leeds may be scrapped. Protest camps have been set up along the route of the line and people are using a range of tactics to oppose construction, from office occupations and tunnel digging, to theatrical marches and tree sits.

