

Edinburgh MPs call for High Speed Rail

LABOUR MPS UNITE TO CALL FOR HIGH SPEED RAIL IN SCOTLAND

Lothians MPs Sheila Gilmore, Mark Lazarowicz and Graeme Morrice have come together to call for the proposed High Speed Rail network to be extended to Scotland.

Speaking in a [House of Commons debate on Wednesday](#) the MPs highlighted that the extra capacity and shorter journey times would stimulate economic growth and reduce carbon emissions by encouraging people to switch from plane to train.

Under the Government's current plans an initial line from London to the West Midlands will be up and running by 2026. This will be extended to Leeds and Manchester by 2033/34. Trains will travel at speeds of up to 225mph.

✘ Speaking after the debate Sheila Gilmore said:- 'I welcome the Coalition's decision to press ahead with the previous Labour government's plans for high speed rail. Passengers in Scotland will benefit immediately as the high speed network will be linked to existing lines, meaning trains will continue up to Edinburgh and Glasgow at conventional speeds. Once the second phase is complete, the Edinburgh to London journey will be cut by an hour to 3 hours 30 minutes.'

Mark Lazarowicz called on the Government to extend the planned lines to Leeds and Manchester to Edinburgh and Glasgow:- 'To realise the full benefits of high speed rail, the second phase should not end at Leeds and Manchester, but continue on to Edinburgh and Glasgow. This would cut the journey to London to between two and three hours, allowing Scotland to take advantage of the economic strength of the South East. High

speed rail would also realise environmental benefits. If you account for travelling to and from airports and checking in, flying between Scotland and London takes 3 hours 40 minutes. If journeys were brought down to 3 hours or less people would switch from planes to trains. Given that aviation produces high rates of carbon emissions per passenger mile, high speed rail could play an important role in tackling climate change.'

Graeme Morrice expressed concern over whether the project would be built if Scotland were to separate from the rest of the UK:- 'As a United Kingdom, we have the critical mass to deliver this project and ensure it reaches into Scotland to Edinburgh and Glasgow. However I fear that if Scotland separated from the rest of the UK, the new line wouldn't make it past the north of England. While a future Scottish Government could build lines from Edinburgh and Glasgow to the border, the Westminster Government would have no incentive to shell out for the lines north of Leeds and Manchester. Only by remaining a United Kingdom and working together can we guarantee that Scotland will benefit from high speed rail.'