

HS2: dead on arrival

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As the [FT notes](#) today:

The Green party is calling for the billions of pounds earmarked for HS2 to be diverted into a nationwide upgrade of local transport as part of its longstanding opposition to the contentious [high-speed rail project](#).

Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley said the £88bn scheme, which has been beset by delays and cost overruns, made no economic sense. He said the line would do little to resolve the lack of public transport across much of the UK.

I agree with this, completely.

HS2 is a plan for an era that no longer exists. It is about saving ‘executive’ time in getting to London. It has always been about indifference to the countryside. It has always ignored the fact that it is a plan to support the south-east. And it has always glossed over the fact that it is a subsidy to those already wealthy, who are the only people who will be able to afford its fares, which are bound to be even more absurd than those already charged on West Coast routes.

We do not need HS2.

We do need freight capacity to get lorries off roads.

We do need local rail capacity.

We need that local rail capacity to be more widely spread.

We need electrification of the Midland main line.

And throughout to South Wales.

And across much of the North, where our rail system is a disgrace.

Scotrail needs major upgrading.

But we do not need another vanity scheme.

So I support the Green's logic here.

What I do not support is their suggestion that the money 'saved' can be spent somewhere else. This is not true. Not spending is not saving. The money in question does not exist if it is not spent. The real issue is how can the resources that would have been wasted on this project be better used in the Green New Deal?

Some of my list is noted above.

Bit it's also worth saying that the Green New Deal spend needs to be more than an HS2 a year. I have shown that this is possible. The need is to do it.