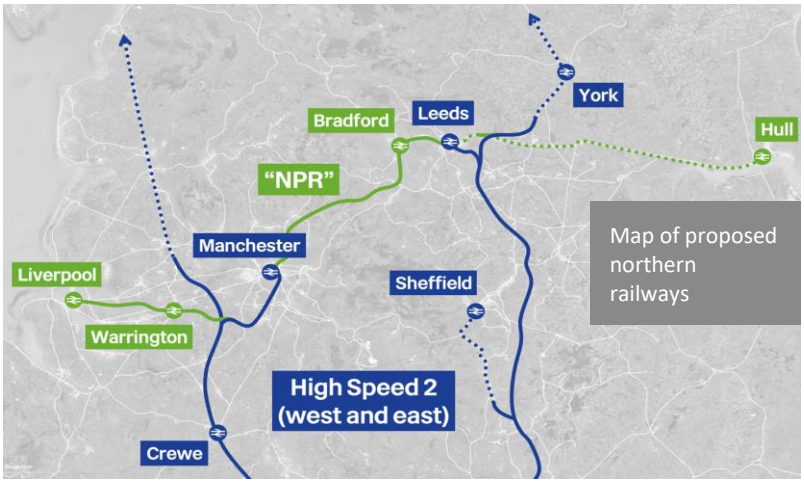
5 REASONS TO VOTE FOR E01 AND AMENDMENTS: GREEN RAIL STRATEGY FOR MIDLANDS AND THE NORTH

THE MOTION CALLS FOR:

- GPEW to support building new high speed high capacity railway lines from Birmingham to Manchester, from Birmingham to Sheffield and Leeds (HS2 northern legs) and between Leeds and Liverpool (called HS3 or Northern Powerhouse Rail).
- Amendment 1: GPEW to continue to strongly hold HS2 Ltd to account on **habitat and local resident impact** and **nature recovery plans**.
- Amendment 2: the freed up capacity on existing main lines to be used to **increase local and regional services** and **bring down fares** - the **local transport revolution** we need.
- Amendment 3: the new railway lines to be reclassified as England-only projects to give much-needed **additional rail funding for Wales**.

1) THE NORTH WANTS AND NEEDS NEW RAILWAYS

The north of England hasn't had a new railway line for decades.
The South East, by contrast, has been transformed by new railway lines like HS1 (Eurostar) and the Elizabeth Line, enabling more people to travel by low-carbon train rather than car or plane.



Map of proposed northern railways

The Elizabeth Line had many of the same problems as HS2: it was over budget, delayed and rated unachievable by the Infrastructure and Projects Authority - but now it's open it's an enormous success. **Passenger numbers have exceeded predictions and extensions to the line are now planned.** Cancelling the line halfway through would have been disastrous.

A 2023 Survation poll found that **50% of people in the north of England support building the Birmingham to Manchester leg,** and **only 23% opposed it**. The North deserves ambitious levels of investment in public transport. E01 will align us with the popular view as well as show our commitment to environmental and social justice.

DID YOU KNOW?

Every hour a train travels from London Euston to Glasgow and doesn't stop until it reaches as far north as Warrington??
Let's get these trains on to their own tracks and free up space for more local and regional services.

2) MORE RAIL CAPACITY ENABLES CHEAPER TICKETS AND MORE ACCESSIBLE JOURNEYS

Experts in the rail industry have said that if HS2 is not built in full, passengers will have to be priced off the railways to tackle congestion on the West Coast Main Line.
This is the opposite of what we need. Train travel is already too expensive in the UK - we need to make the greenest option the easiest and most affordable option.

New railway lines mean more capacity, which means train ticket prices could be lowered and more people could travel by train without risking overcrowding.
We also need **more capacity to make journeys more accessible** so trains can fit more wheelchairs, pushchairs, luggage and bikes.

Promoted by Greens4HS2 (Green Party) c/o Unit 129940, PO Box 15113, Birmingham, B2 2NJ

3) THE CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY

Land take of the M2 (Medway viaduct), left and centre, vs HS1, right.

We need to decarbonise transport ASAP. Organisations working out how we get there are calling for new railways to be built as quickly as possible:

- Centre for Alternative Technology “Zero Carbon Britain” (2019): 30% increase in distance travelled by rail, and a 20% decrease in overall distance travelled; rail freight more than doubles.
- UK FIRES “Absolute Zero” (2019): “require an enormous expansion in international rail capacity” and “growth in domestic and train-reach tourism”.
- International Energy Agency (2019): with the right policies “a new high-speed rail line can produce almost immediate net CO2 benefits by reducing air and car journeys”.

The HS2 northern legs have planning permission, the routes are decided and the land is bought. Any other new plans for northern main lines would take many more years to plan and execute - time that we don’t have in a climate emergency. Per km, electric train travel uses less land, less energy and fewer materials than electric cars - all of which benefits our ecosystems and wildlife.

4) BETTER ABLE TO HOLD LABOUR TO ACCOUNT ON AIRPORT EXPANSION

Labour have just approved London City Airport expansion. The Green Party response opposing this and advocating for rail travel was swamped with criticism that we were hypocrites. Why? Because we oppose HS2 which would help cut domestic flights by adding capacity and speeding up the train journey between London and Glasgow / Edinburgh - by far our busiest domestic air corridor..

The GPEW 2024 manifesto implicitly acknowledges that having fast trains routes makes eliminating domestic flights politically easier: “we would ban domestic flights where there is a train route of 3.5 hours or less.”

Let’s get HS2 built in full and get into position to press Labour to ban intra-GB flights!

5) GETTING UP-TO-DATE AND CONSISTENT POLICIES

Our Policies for a Sustainable Society - the bedrock of our policy - state *“The Green Party supports the principle of a new north-south high speed line which would reduce the number of short-haul flights in the UK.”* Our 2024 manifesto made no mention of HS2, our 2019 manifesto supported scrapping it.

As the HS2 line continues to be built, party policy has become increasingly contradictory and out of date. **Opposing HS2 in its entirety in 2024 means the country ends up with another railway line for the South and no new investment in the North.**

Many people and members - even those sceptical of HS2 - agree that this would be the worst of both worlds and that it's now time to press for it to be finished in full.

The Young Greens have already recognised this: they passed a motion to this effect in 2023.

Time for our policy to match reality on the ground!

REFERENCES

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