

Industry associations welcome HS2 approval

By **Andy Hoskins**, published 14/02/20

Business travel associations have rallied around the government's decision to proceed with the contentious High Speed 2 rail project.



Prime Minister Boris Johnson confirmed the high-speed rail project will go ahead despite spiralling costs and “become the spine of the country’s transport network, bringing our biggest cities closer together, boosting productivity and rebalancing opportunity fairly across the country”.

The Institute of Travel Management (ITM) welcomed the decision, saying: “The overworked UK rail network badly needed investment and this commitment from the Government is a big step in that direction.

“It’s a serious affirmation not just of the potential in the Midlands but the North of England too.

The statement added: “We understand concerns over spiralling costs and the environment but the UK needs reliable and time-effective solutions to enable the workforce to be as mobile as their business requires them to be.”

The Business Travel Association (BTA) also praised the decision: “Investment in UK high speed rail links brings vital connectivity and capacity that not only makes business travel more efficient, but spreads skills and investment across the country.”

It continued: “Efficient, intermodal connectivity should be an integral part of all new high speed rail links. Whilst Birmingham and Manchester Airports will be directly connected to HS2, and Heathrow via Old Oak Common, there are other possibilities such as extending the Nottingham tram system to the HS2 stop at Toton.

In his announcement, the Prime Minister said: “HS2 will shift this country’s centre of gravity away from the capital and transform connectivity between our towns and cities.

“I am drawing a clear line under the mismanagement of the past – HS2 must be delivered more efficiently and cost-effectively so that communities feel its benefits more quickly, particularly those in the North.”

Work on phase one, the route between London and Birmingham, will start in April.

The government will revive legislation to deliver Phase 2a (Birmingham to Crewe) and is committed to Phase 2b, extending high-speed services from the West Midlands to the North.