



UK

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HS1 Channel link leaves £4.8bn debt, says MPs

Taxpayers have been saddled with a £4.8bn debt from the Channel Tunnel high-speed rail line (HS1) so far, a report by a committee of MPs has said.

The Public Accounts Committee blamed over-optimistic forecasts about the number of passengers using the service.

It predicted that the final bill for the London to Folkestone line would rise to £10.2bn by 2070.

The Department for Transport (DfT) said passenger forecasting had improved significantly since work 20 years ago.

International passenger numbers on HS1 are a third of the original 1995 forecast and two-thirds of the DfT's 1998 forecast, it stated.

'Costly mistakes'

Committee chairwoman, Labour MP Margaret Hodge, said: "There was real over-optimism on the number of passengers they thought they were going to get.

"In fact, it's a third of the figure they originally thought because they didn't think about what the cheap airlines would do in competing, they didn't think about what the ferry boat industry would do, and they just got it wrong."