

LATEST East Coast managers not hungry enough

Posted 7th April 2013 | [3 Comments](#)

UKIP set to make HS2 an issue in local elections

8

In the run up to next month's county council elections, new controversy is surrounding plans for HS2 as UKIP claims the project is going ahead on the orders of the European Union.

Michael Fabricant, a Vice Chairman of the Conservative Party, has hit back after West Midlands UKIP MEP Mike Natrass said his party was the only one "listening to the people and standing up for Britain by saying no to the EU-inspired HS2".

Mr Fabricant, who is MP for Tamworth, said: "I am no supporter of HS2 as it carves a devastating route through Staffordshire. But when I heard that UKIP are claiming that HS2 is being constructed under orders from Brussels as a consequence of the TEN-T directive, I just had to check this out as it just didn't ring true."

Transport secretary Patrick McLoughlin responded by disputing the UKIP claim: "HS2 is a vital project that will help promote economic growth by providing the long-term transport capacity our country so manifestly needs," he said.

He continued: "The decision to proceed with HS2 is of national importance and not a consequence of the TEN-T directive from Europe. It is plain wrong for UKIP to claim otherwise and they should stop misleading people."

Further south, a disenchanted Chiltern Conservative has announced he is defecting to UKIP, with party leader Nigel Farage claiming more will follow suit.

David Meacock, district councillor for Chalfont Common, handed in his resignation from the Conservative party saying the government were "toffee-nosed buffoons" and criticised the handling of HS2 proposals.

Cllr Meacock claimed his position as a Tory had become untenable. "I cannot in all honesty continue to ask the local electorate to support the Conservative Party when it is so determinedly hell-bent on destroying our cherished Chilterns," he said. "That's a bit like asking turkeys to vote for Christmas."

He said he would now stand for UKIP in the Buckinghamshire County Council elections on 2 May.

UKIP leader Nigel Farage said: "The HS2 project will be an absolute blight on our landscape, and David Cameron is fanatical about pushing it through despite the strength of public feeling against it."

But Andrew Garnett, chairman of the Chesham and Amersham Conservative Association, responded: "UKIP have been dishonest about their position over HS2," he said. "In 2010, they supported three high-speed rail links in their manifesto."

Editor's note

• TEN-T is not a directive but the European Commission's abbreviation for the designated Trans-European Transport Network, which comprises transport infrastructure, traffic management systems and positioning and navigation systems, and associated projects. In Britain it includes the East Coast, Great Western and West Coast Main Lines. The list — shown on the accompanying map — of 30 TEN-T Priority Projects (<http://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/infrastructure/ten-t-implementation/priority-projects/>) includes 'West coast main line: COMPLETED 2009.' The 'high speed axis' of Paris-Brussels/Brussels-Köln-Amsterdam-London (PBKAL), which includes HS1, is also listed and there is a priority to upgrade road and rail links between Dublin, London, Paris and Brussels. Reference to this upgrade includes HS2 as subject to 'studies.'

In the listing 'TEN-T Core Network: Country by Country' last issued on 19 October 2012 (<http://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/infrastructure/connecting/doc/revision/tent-core-network-country.pdf>) the European Commission says of HS2: "The consultation process in the UK is ongoing and results will be known soon; for the moment, no inclusion in the core is therefore possible." However, the GWML from South Wales and Bristol to London and links between Edinburgh and Glasgow are both shown as 'upgrading.'

[Return to top](#)

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Melvyn Windebank, Canvey Island, Essex

UKIP doing what loves and that is mis-information !

One has to ask why in the country that invented railways and had engineers way ahead of their time like Brenel and Stevenson they think Britain should have a 2nd class railway compared to the rest of the world?

They are simply using HS2 as a way of getting Tory votes which is a bit rich given the amount of money Nigel Farage has gained from Europe!

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even outside the EU!

Tony Pearce, Reading

The question is what impact UKIP will have if they do well in th elections. Would this cause a rethink in Conservative support for HS2 ? If the Greens do well in addition then the other parties may see a chance to gather votes.

Adam, Birmingham

At least Michael Fabricant had the foresight to do his research unlike Mike Natrass, David Meacock and the other UKIP sheep

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