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HS2 link 'could cost every family £3,000 and defies economic logic': Senior Tories braced for revolt after estimated cost rises to £80bn

- The report released today increased pressure on David Cameron to abandon the scheme
- Several cabinet ministers, including Environment Secretary Owen Paterson, are known to have doubts
- Ministers hope the 250mph rail link will be running between London and Birmingham from 2026

By [Nick Mcdermott](#), [Daniel Martin](#) and [Tim Shipman](#)

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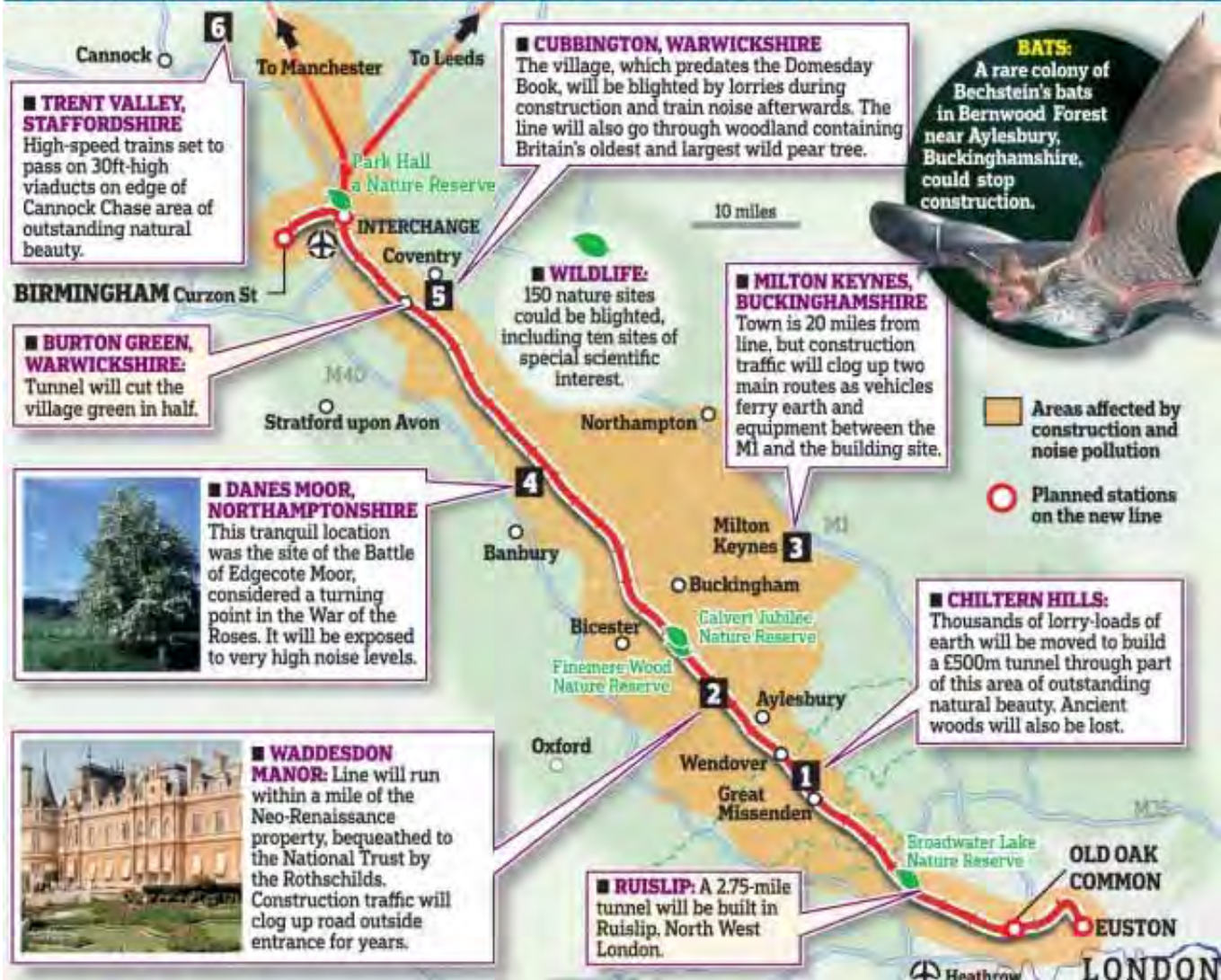
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The controversial new high-speed rail line will cost every household £3,000 and 'defies economic logic', an independent report has warned.

Senior Tories were braced for a revolt against HS2 after a study found its price tag had soared to £80billion, double the official estimate.

The report, released today, increased the pressure on David Cameron to abandon the scheme.

MIDDLE ENGLAND COUNTS THE COST OF THE HIGH SPEED LINE



Several cabinet ministers, including Environment Secretary Owen Paterson, are known to have doubts, and some senior Labour figures have publicly turned their backs on the project.

Last night former Welsh Secretary Cheryl Gillan, who has been campaigning against HS2 since leaving the Cabinet last year, warned party leaders that opposition was growing among backbench MPs and Tory grassroots.

Ministers hope the 250mph rail link will be running between London and Birmingham from 2026, with two further lines to Leeds and Manchester planned for 2032.

But conservationists said the environmental impact will be far worse than initially feared, with a 40-mile wide construction corridor blighting 500,000 lives.



A field in Cubbington, Warwickshire, where a plaque has been put up. The village predates the Domesday Book and will be blighted by lorries during construction and train noise afterwards

And a report published today by the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) found the project's costs have been vastly underestimated. It set the real price tag at £80billion, concluding it offers 'incredibly poor value for money'.

The planned route for HS2 cuts through Mrs Gillan's constituency of Chesham and Amersham, Buckinghamshire.

Last night she said the Government's determination to continue with the scheme could lose the Conservatives thousands of votes – particularly if Labour decided to oppose the project.

'I've always said this is a very unpopular policy in my constituency and among a large and increasing number of Conservatives,' she said.



Neighbours in Great Missenden gather to protest against the HS2 route through their village

'I don't think this is quite an election loser across the country yet, but if I were in Cabinet I'd be asking a lot of questions, because the more we look at this, the more unfeasible it is.'

A minister close to Mr Cameron told the Daily Mail: 'We're right to press on with this but if the political pain starts to outweigh the economic gain I suspect we'll find a way of delaying things.'

Last night a source close to Mr Paterson said: 'As Environment Secretary, Owen has reassured concerned MPs who have approached him that the full rigour of environmental regulation will apply to this project as to any other.'

The IEA report comes a month after Britain's business leaders called on the Government to review HS2 because of its spiralling cost.



Ministers hope the 250mph rail link will be running between London and Birmingham from 2026, with two further lines to Leeds and Manchester planned for 2032

The think-tank is now calling on ministers to cancel the scheme, suggesting taxpayers' money is being used simply to 'buy votes'. If the projected £80million was used for alternative road and rail schemes, it would benefit the economy by £300billion, it found.

Dr Richard Wellings, the report's author, said: 'The real tragedy is that if they want to spend our money well, they could get a massive return from other projects, whereas with HS2 the scheme itself will be loss-making. It is slightly better than digging a hole on the ground and filling it in again, but compared to alternative schemes it is very poor value for money.'

The original budget for HS2 was £33billion. It rose by £10billion this summer, but the IEA said this would inevitably spiral further due to route changes and extra tunnelling needed to placate opposition, as well as new stations and transport infrastructure.

The Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) is also warning that life in towns and villages up to 25 miles each side of the route will be disrupted for years.

And some areas will be blighted by noise of up to 95 decibels – the same as a Tube train.

A spokesman for HS2 Ltd said: 'The IEA's approach has clearly been designed to suit its aims and those of its funders to dismiss any major government project, something it has consistently done.'

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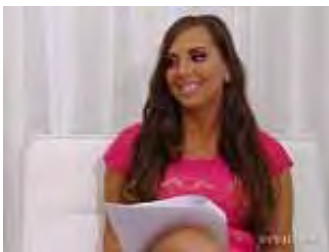
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Why not be innovative, like in America with the idea of a HYPERLOOP. whether this would be less disruptive or not I do not know, have not done any research, but lets build something that's not out of date before it comes out of the idea stage..... get the private sector more involved..... inward investment, invest in the future employment of our young people, spread the wealth a wee bit.

- [Petetimaloy](#) , London, United Kingdom, 20/8/2013 12:02

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One Liquid Flow Free Flow interchange approx 30,000,000. Cost rail HS2 80,000,000,000 and rising. If my math is correct, that would fix 2,666 interchanges into free flow ones so motorists never stopped! How many in your area?

- [Jozef Goj](#) , Richmond NSW, Australia, 20/8/2013 00:40

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Who is so important that we have to spend this amount. Into days age we should not be travelling to meetings , technology should be such that companies should be using that. Ant Company that does not use these methods and look after their cost deserve to go bust. Do you really think that the emerging economies are spending money on trains?? NO they are technology basis . WE are a small island we do not need it, and besides who will be able to afford to travel on it...can you image the cost???

- [Diane](#) , Norfolk, 19/8/2013 19:19

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John Andalucia - we already have HS1, that is nowhere near to capacity. The UK is a small country and we don't need another high speed railway running through it. I'd rather not join Spain with a load of white elephants like deserted and unfinished, airports, motorways, towns etc etc.

- [just me](#) , wherever, 19/8/2013 16:27

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If they everybody £3000 to spend it would give the economy a massive boost or if they used the money to build social and affordable housing would create many more jobs and boost the economy. I don't know who want to travel by train when you can fly for 1/3 the cost of rail travel.

- [TORYPARTY-EVIL -PARTY](#) , London, 19/8/2013 16:20

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What is the point of building a conventional railway line when it will be out of date before construction work begins.

- [Jim](#) , Manchester, 19/8/2013 15:58

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Spend the money on faster broadband networks and use the internet instead!!!

- [nojustanumber](#) , london, United Kingdom, 19/8/2013 15:56

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The level of ignorance displayed here with zero attention given to the economic and social benefits which the HS2 will bring is unbelievable. There will be a significant reduction in pollution and Britain will be able to compete at a level with other EU countries who have HS rail. Grow up and say YES to HS2 or confine yourselves to the backyard waste corner of Europe and stop whining!

- [John](#) , Andalucia, Spain, 19/8/2013 15:56

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This is another example of Cameron failing to listen to anybody and going blindly into a project that few if any really want. We are a geographically small nation and knocking a few minutes off here and there between London and the Midlands is sheer madness. Does Cameron really think that saving 20 minutes between London and Birmingham is going to justify the higher price I will have to pay for using HS2? Labour should really rattle the cage and oppose this ill thought out project.

- [Jo](#) , Lytham, 19/8/2013 15:49

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The only people who will be able to afford to travel on it will be those who can claim on expenses, yep the mps.

- [Julia](#) , Walton, 19/8/2013 15:45

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