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London to Edinburgh in just THREE hours: Now HS2 could be extended to Scotland to slash journey times further

- HS2 will link London to Birmingham, and then Leeds and Manchester
- But ministers have asked officials to examine extending line to Scotland
- London to Edinburgh currently takes almost five hours on existing lines
- First legislation for HS2 passes Commons after just 17 Tory MPs rebel

By [Matt Chorley, Mailonline Political Editor](#)

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Train passengers could travel from London to Edinburgh in just three hours under plans to extend the high speed rail to Scotland.

Ministers today launched a study into the economic benefits of HS2 continuing northwards from Leeds.

The move comes after the government saw off the threat of a Tory rebellion to see the first legislation for the £42billion scheme clear the Commons.



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Flying Scotsman: Extending the High Speed 2 line to Scotland could cut journey times between London and Edinburgh to just three hours, compared to almost five hours at present

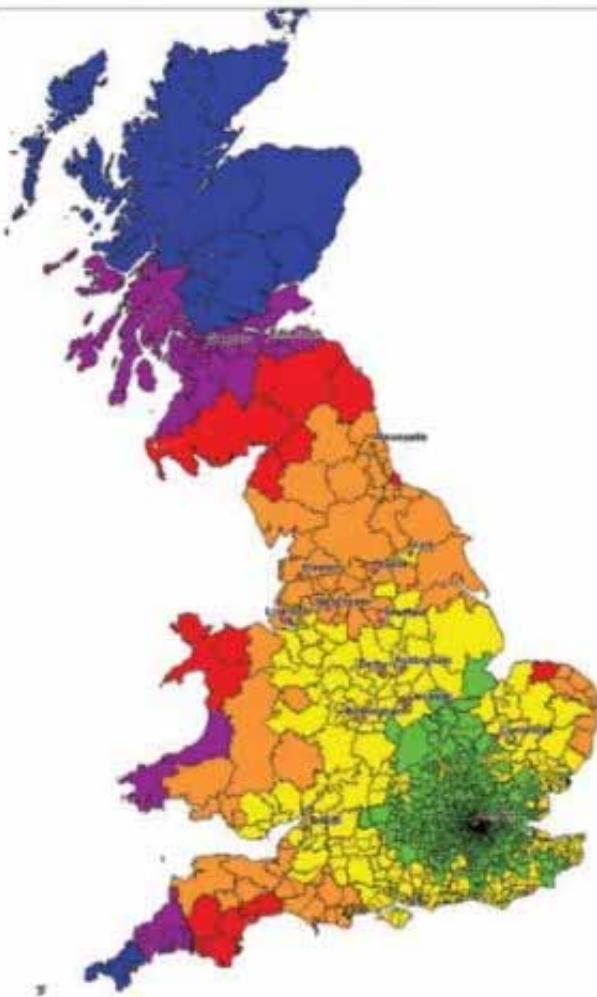
The first phase of HS2 will see a high-speed line cutting through Tory heartlands in the Chilterns from London to Birmingham with a completion date of 2026.

The line will then split to link to Manchester and Leeds, in a second phase due to open by 2033.

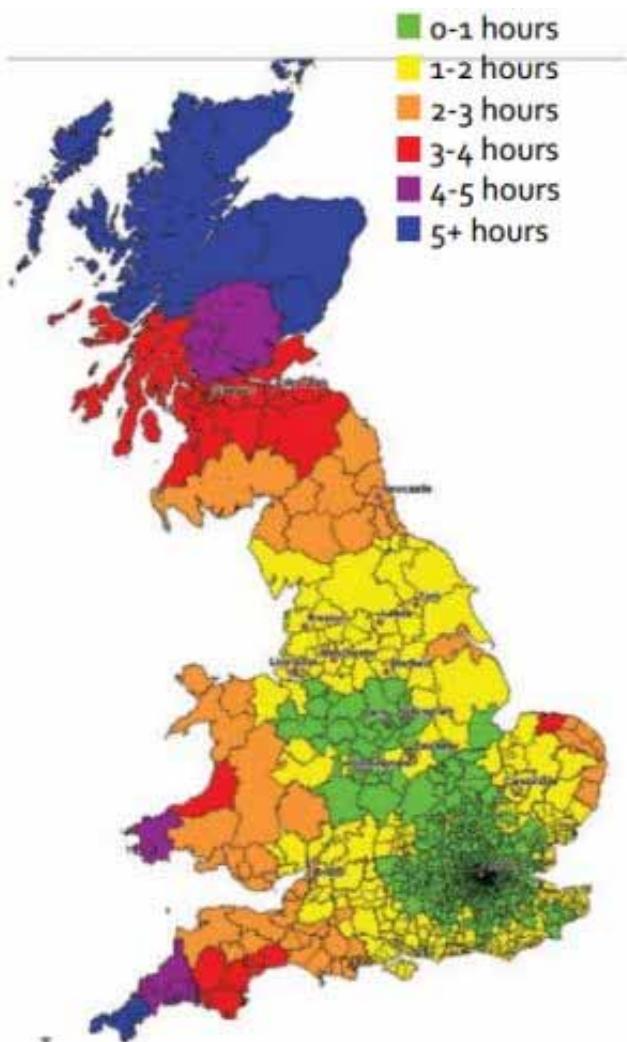
Journey times between London and Glasgow/Edinburgh will already be cut reduced from four hours 48 minutes to four hours as a result of the first phase, and will fall further to three hours 38 minutes when the phase two is up and running.

The UK Government has ordered HS2 Ltd to look at ways to cut journey times between northern England and Scotland for both passengers and freight.

This will include looking to cut journeys from Glasgow and Edinburgh to London to three hours or less.



'Do minimum'



HS2 Phase One and Two

Speed: A new case for HS2 published this week showed how travel between London and the North will be cut dramatically, but Scotland will no benefit as significantly unless the line is extended

Transport minister Baroness Kramer said: 'Our goal for HS2 is for a truly national network that will bring the UK and its cities closer together. We are driving forward HS2 because the benefits it will bring are huge.'

'Without it we face a crisis in capacity on our rail network. But it is also about connectivity, across the UK 18 cities including Glasgow and Edinburgh will be better connected because of HS2.'

She went on: 'Scotland will already benefit from day one with reduced journey times to and from London and once the full network is open these times will be reduced by up to an hour. However, we want to see if more can be done and so we are commissioning this study.'



© PA

Study: Transport minister Baroness Kramer said she wanted HS2 to be a 'truly national network'

Scottish Secretary Alistair Carmichael said: 'Today's announcement is good news for Scotland. The goal of delivering a genuinely national network with high-speed services shows this Government is serious about promoting economic growth right across the UK.'

'The completion of the HS2 Y-network will help boost the Scottish economy by an estimated £3 billion. Employment opportunities in the planning and construction of HS2 could also benefit Scotland's strong engineering base.'

'Tourism on both sides of the border will also be supported as the UK is opened up to faster travel. Today's announcement looks at the options for what might be done to improve journey times to and from Scotland still further.'

Scotland Office, Network Rail and Transport Scotland will generate a list of options. Improvements could include extending high speed lines, making upgrades to existing lines, or a combination of the two.

HS2's final report will be submitted to the Department for Transport next year for ministers to consider.

Last night 17 Conservative MPs rebelled in a House of Commons vote against the motion to approve the High Speed Rail (Preparation) Bill. But it was passed by 350 to 34 giving a clear government majority of 316.

This will allow ministers to spend money planning the route in detail and buying up property from residents and businesses along the proposed track for the first phase.

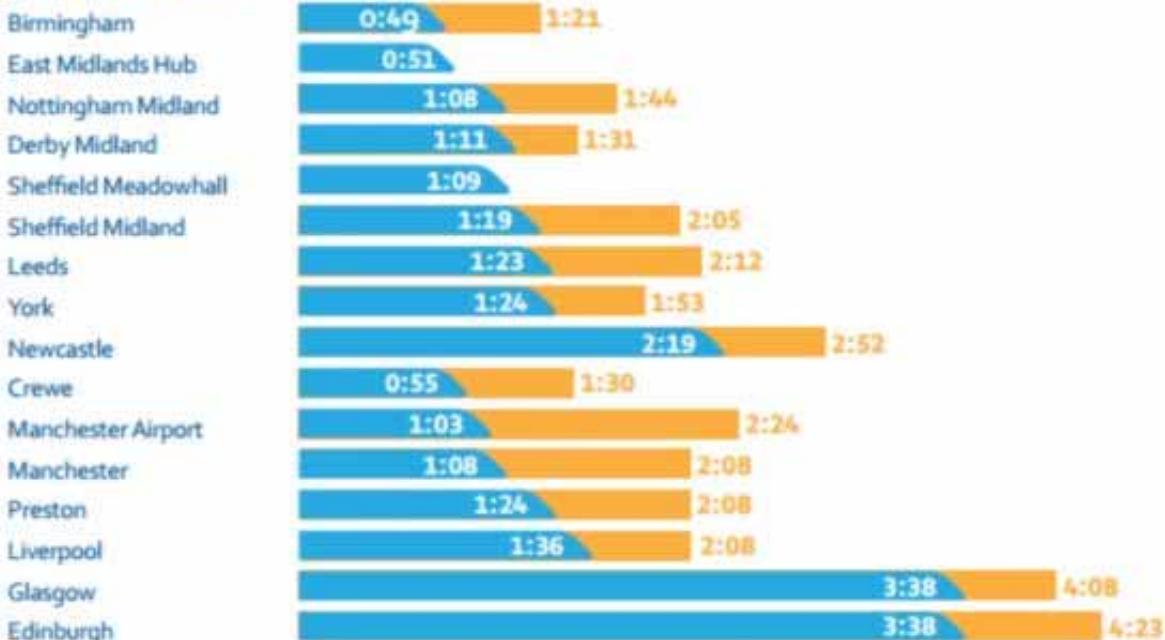
The bill will now go to the House of Lords for further scrutiny by peers.

The rebellion is smaller than the 21 Tory MPs who voted against the Bill at second reading. Labour's threats to oppose the bill evaporated last night when they finally hinted they would back it, if the government could rein in the spiralling costs.

Journey times

HOURS:MINUTES
HS2 JOURNEY TIMES CURRENT TIMES

London to



Benefits: Under current plans, when both phases of the HS2 scheme are complete, journey times between London and Edinburgh will fall to three hours 38 minutes

HS2 was hailed as an 'essential' railway by David Cameron ahead of the vote.

'We need some national consensus about this,' he said during a visit to construction firm Carillion in Wolverhampton. 'I'm absolutely sure it is an essential piece of work.'

HS2 was needed to alleviate the discomfort for the thousands of commuters who had to stand for hours every day, he said.

'The fact is our West Coast mainline is full. Every day between Birmingham and London there are thousands of people standing on trains that need to be able to sit down and work.'

'The question is do we build an old style rail line or one of these new-fangled high speed ones like they are building in China and France? I think we should go for high speed. The cost of high speed is only 9pc more. I hope Labour will see sense and stop talking about pulling the plug.'

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will, gillingham, United Kingdom, 4 days ago

More waste from the pig trough.

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stephen brogden, london, United Kingdom, 5 days ago

The tory like spending money when there is none just like the o2 was tould it will not be a white elthent but look what happen millions spent on it sat a few years empty cost to much bought for a £1 in the end and you think youll have a seat when this toy is built Well dream on you wont be able to afford the price of a ticket and it still wont be built on time.

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stephen brogden, london, United Kingdom, 5 days ago

this will be another big hole money thrown at it no matter what like the o2 and that was sold for a £1 after millions paid and yes afew years stood empty.You think you wont be standing your having alaugh ant you time it comes on line you wont beable to afford the price of a ticket and we are going to pay for it another tory toy that will end up costing but as useal they will blaime who ever in power.

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NG, France, 5 days ago

I have lost all faith in the government, its ability to spend money in all areas apart from that which will actually benefit people never ceases to amaze me. I know its a coalition part run by lefties but 2015 will be worse than 1997

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There is a storm, Coming, United Kingdom, 5 days ago

Only the TOFFS want this and for the plebs to foot the bill, not to mention it will destroy many habitats in Britain and villages. CaMORON needs hanging.

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[Glynn13](#), Churchill, 5 days ago

We need a few more (Scottish) MPs on our side.

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[Ivan](#), Eur done for., United Kingdom, 5 days ago

What is the point in taking the line to Aberdeen? The oil is running out and the place will soon go into decline.

7
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[grunpy old](#), another planet, 5 days ago

Labour would never ever form another Gov in Westminster without the Scots mp contingent, the last government top jobs were 90% Scots.... and look what a mess they made of Great Britain in 13 years.Scots shpuld stop moaning about being ruled from Westminster as they are responsible for voting in the last Labour government you have been ruled by Scots 13 years,

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[NC](#), Alba, 4 days ago

Really!! As Scotland elects only 10% of the total number of Westminster MP's you do no have to be a genius to work out that a substantial amount of English voters were "responsible for voting in the last Labour government".

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[Ivan](#), Eur done for., United Kingdom, 5 days ago

Beeching was right at the time. In taking the action he did he actually saved the railways and in many cases the 'closed' still exist as preserved and steam railways. There have been much more recent strategic errors namely removing locomotive hauled trains which could haul 14 coaches and replacing them with 4 or 5 carriage sets as Virgin have unfotunately done.

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[I-give-up](#), Planet Earth, United Kingdom, 5 days ago

60 years after Beeching destroyed the railways in this country we are now "re inventing" them. Beeching was wrong then (as has been proved) and the government are wrong now (as will be proved). Most people cannot afford to travel by train now, who will be able to afford it in 10 years time or so, that's right only the rich and the greedy M.P's.

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