

PRESS RELEASE

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BUSINESS SUPPORT FOR SCOTTISH HIGH-SPEED RAIL

A survey of leading businesses has shown strong support for the greater economic benefits created by inclusion of Edinburgh and Glasgow in a high-speed rail network.

The survey, by the Scottish Council for Development and Industry (SCDI), forms part of the Scottish case, published today by a Partnership Group, which includes SCDI.

Gareth Williams, Head of Policy, SCDI, said:

"A high-speed rail network including Glasgow and Edinburgh would help to maximise the long-term economic and environmental benefits of this investment for the UK, which is underlined by the broad support from businesses, cities and civic organisations, not only in Scotland, but from the core English cities on the HS2 route.

"The survey of leading businesses by SCDI for the business case demonstrated overwhelming support for high-speed rail connections, particularly for the reduced journey times, increased productivity and potential to travel by rail rather than air for some journeys, which would only be fully achieved with a network including Edinburgh and Glasgow.

"High-speed rail needs to be part of an overall strategy for cross-border connectivity and, for SCDI, the opportunity to reduce pressure on capacity at the London airports and safeguard slots for economically-vital flights from Aberdeen and Inverness is an integral part of this business case.

"The Scottish Government has now committed significant funding to this project and to improve rail access to terminals in Edinburgh and Glasgow for the rest of Scotland. We welcome the involvement of the Scottish Secretary, and hope that this will lead to a firm commitment by the UK Government to funding the connections with Scotland and a fast-tracking of work on planning."

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Notes to editors

SCDI is Scotland's leading independent economic development organisation representing 1,200 companies, SMEs, public sector bodies, charities, trade unions and faith groups.

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