

Pro-HS2 research group Greengauge 21 says it thinks the rest of the country will benefit more than London from the high-speed link.

In its [evidence](#) to the [Independent Transport Commission](#), the organisation cites better connectivity to the 'gateways for global commerce', the main international airports and also the Channel Tunnel for access to the European HSR network.

Judge for yourself, but this prediction seems to be a statement of faith more than anything else. What counts are door-to-door journey times. It is questionable whether HS2 is the best way of achieving improvements, as it is the local networks that are just as important.

One reason for the appeal of the south-east is its proximity to Europe by road, which is the most frequent freight mode. Improved rail services could help to relieve the motorway network by taking some traffic off. Improved intermodal freight would help the north somewhat.

The simplest way of rebalancing the UK economy would be through the tax system, so that it favoured areas of disadvantage, with a bigger contribution coming from areas of geographical advantage. A lot of these things balance out anyway as rents and house prices reflect the advantage of location. If HS2 really does what its supporters claim, it will push up commercial rents and house prices away from the London area, thereby making it a giveaway to property owners at the expense of the taxpayer.