



The platform

Insights from HS2 online panel



Task:

- Think about a short journey that takes you a few minutes to walk, perhaps to the station, shops, or gym. It can be any short journey that you do on foot on a regular basis. Thinking about this journey, how far do you think it is?
 - More than 400m (450 yards)?
 - About 400m?
 - Less than 400m?
- Now use Google Maps to calculate the actual distance of this journey. How long is it in metres or yards? Is that as expected, longer or shorter?
- The length of HS2 trains is going to be up to 400m (450 yards) in length. Thinking about how this compares to your regular journey and the length of current trains, what help would you need to find and get to your HS2 seat? Also consider factors such as carrying luggage and travelling with children.

Task 9, posted 18/06/2014

Awareness of journey length

- How people estimate distance varied widely as did degrees of accuracy.
- Just under half are accurate when estimating.
- It was a fairly even split between those who overestimate or underestimate.
- Some are extremely inaccurate.
- Most people think in miles or yards, not metres.

*"It comes up as half a mile, what I expected, although I note that Google Maps did not use the alley that I use, so perhaps my guesstimate might shave some time off this."
(Estimated 0.25 – 0.5 miles)*

*"I worked it out to be 240m. Shorter than expected."
(Estimated 0.50 km)*



*"0.5 mile, as I expected."
(Estimated 0.5 miles)*

*"0.6 miles, so that's more than I thought."
(Estimated 0.25 miles)*

*"400 yards. It is longer than I expected."
(Estimated 300 yards)*

Impact of long trains and platforms

- Long HS2 trains prompt passengers to re-think their journey, from arrival to boarding.

1

Checking in luggage

- Option to check in bags early, centrally or at platform, for faster boarding.
- In-carriage luggage to be stowed quickly and securely.

2

Navigating the station

- Clear, simple, consistent signage. Use of colour coding and apps to help.
- Tickets to clearly state where to find seat.

3

Travelling to the platform

- Moving walkways to reduce travelling time.
- Adequate time to reach platform and find seat.
- Ability to use equipment e.g. pushchairs, trolleys, mobility scooters.

4

Finding the correct part of the platform

- Separate platform entrances for different carriages.
- Platforms clearly marked with where each carriage will stop.
- Seat numbers displayed prominently on carriages.

5

Boarding quickly and easily

- Wider doors and walkways to reduce congestion and bottlenecks.
- Boarding in sequence.
- Moving seats and doors.

Technology to assist throughout the journey

Staff available in case help is needed

1

Checking in luggage

- Checking in luggage would make for quicker and easier boarding but should be optional. Multiple on board storage areas for larger bags would avoid bottlenecks. There could be long trip carriages with ample luggage space and 'short trip' ones with limited bag space.

Drop-off options

- Central station locations
- Designated baggage carriages
- Crates on the platform

At seat storage

- Allow adequate leg room
- Able to secure and lock it
- Not too high. Easy to reach

"If I had luggage I would like a check in service similar to that at an airport so you don't have to worry about it until you got off the train... it would save me having to carry my luggage around, especially if it is going to be a long distance from the entrance to my seat." (Commuting, Nottingham, 18-30)

*"I'd like luggage to be sorted before you get on the train through some sort of locker system. There should be room [for bags] at your seat that doesn't compromise the comfort of your or other peoples' journey. Under seat storage is a nightmare, it eats up leg room."
(Business, Birmingham, 18-30)*

"If we must stick to the original carriage template and can't check luggage in to a central repository, why not have short or long trip carriages, the latter with extra, secure luggage space. Ideally the space would be at the end of each carriage so negotiating narrow walkways would be at a minimum." (Leisure, Glasgow, 51-60)

"If there were a separate luggage carriage passengers would get stressed boarding. How about crates to put luggage in securely when arriving at the station, loaded by station staff and for collection on arrival." (Business, Birmingham, 51-60)

Navigating the station

- Navigating the station can be confusing and stressful, particularly under time pressure. There were a number of suggestions to improve the experience:

Colour coding

- Colour coded routes and walkways.
- Colour coded platforms and carriages.
- Passengers ticket colour matched to the information they need for quick reference.

Clear signs

- Simple, not too much text.
- Readable by partially sighted people.
- Consistent across journey and stations.
- Arrow directions clear and simple.

Instructions on tickets

- Tickets clearly state location of seat.
- Description to include platform, entrance, walkway numbers or letters.

Technology

- Use of smart technology throughout, from the station to the platform.
- Apps and interactive screens to guide passengers to their seats.

3

Travelling to the platform

- Facilities to help passengers reach further away platforms:
 - Moving walkways a popular solution, familiar from airports and escalators or lifts.
 - Clear colour-coded signs indicating where to depart.
 - Walkway to scan boarding pass and deliver passenger to destination.
 - Equipment (pushchairs, trolleys, mobility scooters) to use or book.
 - Staff assistance, for example by porters that could be pre-booked.
 - Adequate time built in to reach the platform before departure.



"[At Euston], they didn't release platform numbers until the train was in. A herd of people would go bombing down the slope to the platform. It was dangerous and stressful. You'd be running along the platform trying to find a standard class seat that was free while the closest first class ones stood empty. I'd really like is time to find my seat and board." (Business, Nottingham, 31-40)

"Some sort of moving walkway system which scans your ticket and directs you to the right walkway, depositing you near to your train door." (Business, London, 61-70)

"Travelators like at airports - again colour coded to feed off from the main one to the different embarkation points. It will be really important to minimise a lot of walking, to have well placed check in points easily accessible from other transport." (Business, London, 51-60)

"It might be useful for pushchairs to be available to borrow to walk the length of the concourse and platform. You could book support in advance (no charge) and receive a text message telling you the name of your assistant and where he or she can be located." (Business, Nottingham, 31-40)

4

Finding the correct part

- Passenger suggestions for finding the right place to wait on a 400m long platform:

Separate entrances

- Multiple platform entrances, perhaps carriages A-C, D-F.
- Passengers directed to relevant entrance by separate walkways, lifts or escalators.
- Individual turnstiles for each carriage.

Clear platform markings

- Clear signs on platforms where carriages will stop.
- Carriages always in the correct order.
- Marked zones for different needs (assistance, large luggage).

Clear carriage markings

- Large, clear carriage numbers.
- Location of seats displayed on the outside of the carriage.
- Number of free seats in carriages shown.

Note: colour coding of entrances, zones and carriages was a popular solution but clear numbers and letters will be needed to ensure accessibility, for example for colour blind passengers.

“Entry points displayed at each walkway - within the station - clearly marking out each section of the train would be useful. This would split commuters more equally across multiple entry points when making their way to a platform rather than everyone using the first walkway they come across. You could have separate turnstiles for each carriage.” (Commuting, Birmingham, 31-40)

“I’d like to see platforms labelled to line up with each carriage to show where to stand ahead of the train’s arrival. It is frustrating to find yourself nowhere near your booked carriage. You have to walk for quite a distance, jostling past crowds of people queuing to get into their own carriages.” (Leisure, Nottingham, 41-50)

“Seat numbers clearly shown on the outside and inside of carriages, even showing spare seating.” (Business, Birmingham, 51-60)

Boarding quickly and easily

- Difficulty boarding congested trains, bottlenecks and blocked walkways were common frustrations. Suggestions to improve flow were for:

- More and wider doors
- Wider walkways
- Boarding in sequence
- Moving doors and/or seats

"Perhaps seats on moving tracks so empty seats are closest to the entrance to the carriage or perhaps "worm-saddle" doors that move along the carriage to be where people need to get on or off. At present we assume a railway carriage will have access at either end like current high speed services do - how else could a carriage be designed to permit access? Gull-wing doors perhaps."(Business, Birmingham, 51-60)

"Wider walkways would be good so you could have two way travel down them. On normal trains I am always hitting people by accident with my bags as well as trying not to lose my daughter." (Leisure, Sheffield, 18-30)

"the monorail at Alton Towers, passengers are directed to bays, 4 or 5 at a time directed by big signage and staff. You could load the first lots of coaches with people who need special seats and help with boarding, the last sets could be for people not wanting specific seats" (Commuting, Manchester, 18-30)

*"Some airlines get passengers to board in sequence. What fouls things up is people sitting near the exits insisting on boarding first and then keeping other passengers waiting whilst they sort themselves out".
(Business, Birmingham, 51-60)*

*"More doors to make getting on and off quicker and safer."
(Commuting, Newcastle, 41-50)*

High level of technology expected

- Passengers anticipate technology will run through their HS2 experience. There was a strong desire for phone apps and interactive TV screens to guide them.

"I would like easy to use technological prompts to get to my seat (this could be through projected arrows on the station floor, in different colours, aiding you to the relevant platform, seat or compartment). Interactive prompts could predict distance to the train compartment, how long I have left until the train leaves, projected from my walking speed. Could be a lot of room to personalise this with an app that could personally direct me to my seat using a visible colour system used alongside the interactive walk-way-floor map." (Commuting, Nottingham, 18-30)

"I would like a digital image of the train to appear on a screen and highlight the carriage or section of the train my seat is in. Once I enter the carriage I should be able to call out my name and the system should recognise it and direct me to my seat. If I had children, I would just call their names out. If I had luggage with me, I would get the digital screen to identify whereabouts on the train this would need to be stowed and when I get there I would call out my name and it would guide me specifically." (Commuting, Birmingham, 31-40)

"Like Google Maps on iPhone, an app that you key in your seat number and it will show you the route to your seat and you follow it. I can see a problem though trying to do that whilst lugging a heavy suitcase or carrying young children. Hmm! Maybe we need to find a different way of doing a similar thing for those who don't have the luxury of a free hand." (Business, London, 51-60)

"An app linked by Wi-Fi to each specific carriage and seat that would beep and flash when you had reached the correct location for your journey." (Business, Birmingham, 51-60)

"I think you might have to use some kind of GPS, I have a child with me, bags and backpacks. You have minutes to get to your seat, this is going to be hard without it." (Leisure, Sheffield, 18-30)

But not without a personal touch

- It is important staff are on hand to help and provide a personal experience

“Adequate staffing is a must for anyone who needs assistance. With the exception of my “helper” for boarding, I don’t think I’ve ever seen any staff on the platform or in the train at boarding points; they all seem to be hiding somewhere until the journey is well underway and tickets need checking.”
(Leisure, Glasgow, 51-60)

“Maybe something like the Amazon Kindle fire, you can call for assistance from a screen and get someone real to help you find your seat.” (Leisure, Nottingham, 31-40)

“A friendly member of staff would be nice if I am not feeling up to using technology or have any queries. It would add that extra value and appreciation.”
(Commuting, Nottingham, 18-30)

“Definitely staff checking tickets on the platform and on the train indicating where to board as you really couldn’t have someone tracking up and down the train trying to find their seat.”
(Commuting, Sheffield, 18-30)



“Part of the platform is for people who may have difficulty accessing the train and there will be assistants there. You could book support in advance (no charge) and receive a text message telling you the name of your assistant and where he or she can be located.”
(Business, Nottingham, 31-40)

“It would be good to have people around, who are clearly identifiable, approachable and keen to help....in fact being proactive.” (Business, Leeds, 61-70)

“It may be beneficial to have people to supply information in different locations around the station as it provides a personal experience.”
(Commuting, Nottingham, 18-30)

“The alternative would be actual human beings guiding people to seats and solving any issues but the cost this would incur would be significant.”
(Leisure, Newcastle, 18-30)

Task:

- When boarding HS2 would you expect there to be a set of doors on the platform before you meet the train doors? An example of this is the Jubilee line on the London Underground. The platform doors are closed when the train is not at the station but open for boarding or disembarking when the train is at a standstill in the station. Would you see this as beneficial or not?

Task 32, posted 16/01/2015

Unexpected but beneficial concept

- Most had not seen these doors on platforms and as such had not expected or considered them for HS2. However, once aware, passengers considered them an essential addition to HS2 stations, primarily for increased safety.

“As I didn't know of this, I wouldn't have expected it, but having now been made aware, it seems like a very good idea for HS2 to espouse.”
(Leisure, Glasgow, 51-60)

“I think the main benefits would be with regard to safety. Passengers would be unable to get too close to the tracks or train as it approaches.”
(Leisure, Nottingham, 41-50)



Platform barrier doors: safety first

- Safety was the main benefit of platform doors but passengers also welcomed the associated convenience and comfort of the doors. The only concern was the risk of a fault delaying passengers boarding or disembarking.

Safety

- To stop people getting on the track, intentionally or by accident.
- To stop passengers getting too close to the tracks, particularly when platforms get overcrowded.

Convenience

- Passengers know where to stand to board trains.
- Providing doors indicates where carriages will stop.

Comfort

- Reduce the wind caused by trains when they pass through the station.
- Gives the platform a 'modern' and futuristic feel.

"I agree as well on the safety aspect, the idea of 300 tons of train flying past you just feet away used to give me nightmares as a kid, if you were to invent the train for the first time today there is no way you would be allowed to have open platforms."(Business, Liverpool, 41-50)

"It makes the station look far cleaner and more modern. From a safety point of view it is much better than others and enables you to know where to stand and wait. This would be good for HS2 if travelling with lots of baggage, children or are less mobile." (Leisure, Nottingham, 31-40)