

## REGIONAL REPORT – UNITED KINGDOM – FEBRUARY 2010



## UK Project Management Round Up

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### **Project and Economic Outlook**

Welcome news for UK Project Managers came when the Chancellor of the Exchequer, **Rt Hon Alistair Darling**, announced the economy had returned to growth for the last three months of 2009, thus ending a recession that has been hailed as the worst the UK has known in the last fifty years. However, commentators remain concerned that the margin of expansion is significantly below that predicted by the Bank of England and doubts have been cast over the ability of the economy to recover this year. On the other hand, recent analysis claims the recession is not actually as deep as some in the 1980's according to the Times' Economic Editor, **David Smith**

There are some glimmers of hope on the horizon. In particular, manufacturers are reported to be moving production back into UK as performance issues over product quality, fluctuating commodity costs and rapidly increasing freight charges make it more attractive to turn to UK factories. A recent report by the Engineering Employer's Federation (EEF) and accountants BDO shows that 1 in 7 British companies surveyed had moved production back to UK in the past 2 years. Furthermore, 7 in 10 companies now believe UK is a competitive location for production compared with just 43% who held optimistic views two years ago.

### **High Speed Rail**

Against this weak economic background, news over the past month shows that increasingly, major infrastructure investment is planned. Leading the way is the

proposed High Speed Two programme which aims to bring fast rail travel along a major new railway line between Scotland and London.

High Speed Two, the company set up by the Department for Transport in early 2009, completed its first major task of delivering its report into options at the end of last year.



The proposed route, shown left, is not just aimed at decreasing journey times, although that is a significant benefit. The new line is planned to deliver over 9000 additional seats an hour into London, equivalent of 900 flights a day. The cost of the proposed programme at around £60Bn is to be offset by increased revenues of about £39.4bn of revenue generated but a reduction in revenue on the existing route of £16bn giving a net increase of £23.4bn, while another £31.4bn worth of benefits are shown in the business plan.

Additionally, other benefits that contribute to the business case include:

- 480m vehicle miles saved every year
- 50m hours or over 5,000 years of time saved by new line passengers
- 43.7m journeys per year would be taken on the new line – almost 2½ times the number on the intercity routes out of King’s Cross
- 3.8m less vehicle journeys per year, reducing CO2 by 39,000 tonnes
- 3.6m less air journeys per year, reducing CO2 by almost 250,000 tonnes
- Safety benefits equivalent to 19 lives saved per year through people using the train rather than the car

The Government response to the proposals is expected at the end of March 2010.

## Network rail Fund New Line

The first new rail route in a century between London and Oxfordshire is being funded by Network Rail. The national rail body is investing £250m in a new project to create a new main line from London to Oxfordshire - the first new rail link from London to a major British city since 1910 - which will deliver much faster services on the Chiltern route to Banbury and Birmingham. Designed explicitly to take cars off the road, the centre piece of the Oxford link will be Water Eaton Parkway in North Oxford. a high quality integrated transport hub linked to the A34, A40 and Oxford city centre.

The Chiltern Railways' project will see average journey times fall by 20%, so that journey times will reduce to just 92 minutes from its London Marylebone base to Birmingham Snow Hill slashing the present journey time by 25 minutes, and Banbury will be just 50 minutes away (presently 67mins).

Although the scheme will deliver huge benefits to hundreds of thousands of passengers, it is not without its critics. Environmental campaigners and residents fear the 250 mph line will ruin some of Britain's finest countryside. The area is famed for its rolling hills, ancient woodlands and wildlife including red kites and kestrels. It is also home to Chequers, the country residence of the prime minister, **ex Prime Minister Tony Blair** as well as **Jeremy Paxman**, the BBC television presenter, **Jeremy Irons**, the actor, and **Sophie Dahl**, the writer and former model, all live in the Chilterns.

Transport Minister **Lord Adonis** believes good design will limit any environmental damage. "This will be the year of high-speed rail," he said. "As a project it will define Britain for the 21st century.

Delivery will be in stages, with the main line journey time improvements being delivered from 2011 and the new line to Oxford, including Water Eaton Parkway, is expected to open by 2013, subject to Transport and Works Act approval.

## Professional News

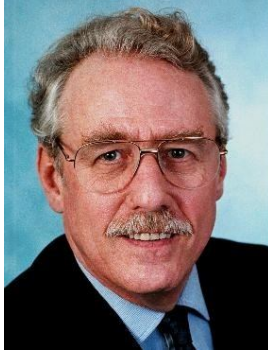
Leading UK professional society the Association for Project Management (APM) has launched an additional website [www.apm5dimensions.com](http://www.apm5dimensions.com). The new site also offers a preview of the new APM website, set for launch in Spring 2010. The site aims to provide a greater insight into the **Five Dimensions of Professionalism** including examples of how professional project management can benefit individuals, organisations and their projects.

The site will also provide visitors with all the latest news on project management professionalism including relevant articles from APM's *Project* magazine archive.

In Spring 2010, APM will be launching the new full APM website as a key hub of the profession's activities and communication. This is anticipated to build to become a professional community and a valuable resource for all those wishing to develop their professional competence

APM Members have been invited to comment on the British Standard on project management BS6079 - Principles and guidelines for the management of projects, recently released by The British Standards Institute (BSI) for public comment.

Although all are free to make comments direct to BSI, APM has been invited to submit a consolidated response on behalf of its members and this consolidated response will have greater weighting and influence. [click here to access more information on reviewing the document](#) and to send comments. APM membership is required to access this page. In order for APM to consolidate responses, comments are needed by 3rd February 2010

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