High Speed Rail: Implications for carbon emissions and biodiversity - DTU Orbit (03/11/2019)

High Speed Rail: Implications for carbon emissions and biodiversity
Rail has traditionally been seen as ‘good’ for the environment, as it is fast and efficient with a low carbon footprint. With respect to HS2 in the UK, new environmental debates have arisen over the competing global objectives of reducing the carbon footprint of HSR and the need to maintain and enhance local biodiversity and habitat. This paper identifies, measures and comments on the longer term environmental consequences of major infrastructure decisions that have to be made today. Short term pragmatism is seen as the means by which these decisions are made, and this results in issues relating to the complexity and uncertainty in assessing future impacts being relegated to a secondary level of importance. Mitigation measures (and not alternative routes) are discussed, and the legacy value of HSR to future generations is based on notions of short term mobility and economic growth, and not on the lower levels of carbon emissions and biodiversity loss.

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