

Brit109  
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## **JAPANESE BULLET TRAINS WILL NOT IMPROVE RAIL TRAVEL WITHOUT TRACK INVESTMENT**

**The use of Japanese bullet trains on the UK's out-date rail network will be like 'driving a Formula One car on a country lane' warns Britpave, the transport infrastructure group.**

The Department of Transport has placed a £7.5 billion order with Japanese manufacturer Hitachi for up to 1,400 rail carriages. The Hitachi trains will be up to 17 per cent lighter, use 15 per cent less energy and will accelerate more rapidly, cutting 12 minutes off the current journey time from London to Edinburgh. The trains will replace the aging 30-year old Intercity 125s.

However, there is a fundamental problem. The benefits of the new trains will not be fully realised if they are run on UK's out-dated ballast rail tracks. "The reason why the Japanese rail system is so smooth and punctual is that they have invested in a modern rail track system", explained David Jones, director of Britpave. "Running the Hitachi bullet trains on the UK track will be driving a Formula One car on a country lane".

Instead of ballast track, the Japanese have invested in concrete slab track which they have found provides unrivalled long-term performance, no unplanned maintenance, increased levels of safety and comfort and impressive whole life cost savings. "Where there are ballast tracks in Japan, the amount and cost of their ongoing maintenance required to ensure the high performance of the bullet trains is phenomenal compared to the concrete slab track", said Jones.

He continued:"No matter how shiny and new the trains are if they are run on an out-dated ballast track system then the delays, weekend closures and unplanned maintenance disruptions will continue. We need to get the basics right by investing in a track system that can deliver long-term performance".

**Ends**

### Notes to editors

1. Britpave, the British In-situ Concrete Paving Association, promotes the better and greater use of concrete for transportation solutions. Its members include major contractors, specialist equipment and material suppliers, consulting engineers and interested trade associations. Together they provide a single voice for the in-situ concrete paving industry. For further information see: [www.britpave.org.uk](http://www.britpave.org.uk)
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