



HOUSE OF COMMONS

4th March 2020

Dear local residents,

Thank you to those who have contacted me about HS2.

On the recommendation of the independent Oakervee review commissioned last year, the Prime Minister has given the go ahead to HS2, alongside major improvements to local transport networks up and down the country.

HS2 will form the backbone of the UK's transport network, delivering a significant increase in rail capacity, with hundreds of thousands of extra seats. It will also cut journey times, bring our biggest towns and cities closer together, enhance North-South connectivity, boost productivity in our region, and, crucially, help to spread prosperity more evenly across the country.

I would, however, like to assure you that this is not an either/or decision between HS2 and improving the rest of the existing rail network, in particular our local services. HS2 is, in fact, integral to giving the Midlands the fast connections we need.

More broadly, 'High Speed North' will be established to ensure an integrated, effectively sequenced plan to make sure the North and Midlands have the East-West and North-South rail capacity and connections we need.

I am also particularly pleased about the Government's determination to see a line drawn under the failures of HS2 Ltd.'s management, transparency and cost control to date. A dedicated Minister with specific responsibility for oversight and accountability of HS2 has been appointed and they will present regular reports to Parliament to enhance transparency.

HS2 Ltd.'s role will also change. The complex Euston station element will become the responsibility of a new body, as will the design and construction of Phase 2b. This will enable HS2 Ltd. to focus its energies on delivering Phases 1 and 2a successfully.

I also note that some local residents have concerns about HS2's impact on the environment. You may be interested to know that the Oakervee review found that, on balance, taking into account both construction and operation, HS2 appears likely to be close to carbon neutral, and that it could encourage people to travel by rail instead of by car or flying.



That said, I also agree with the review's recommendation that HS2 Ltd. should continue to look for ways for it to be more carbon efficient, particularly in construction in the short-medium term. Moreover, I support the recommendation that HS2 Ltd. should look to reduce its forecast greenhouse gas emissions for the construction and delivery of Phase 2.

More broadly, I welcome that a green corridor will be created alongside the railway, which will include:

- 9km² of new woodlands featuring 7 million trees and shrubs – over double the amount affected by HS2; and
- 4km² of wildlife habitat – over 30% more habitat than HS2 affects.

With regards to ancient woodlands, HS2 Ltd.'s has said that:

“There are over 52,000 ancient woodland sites in England. Of these, 43 will be affected by the route between London and Crewe. We are working to ensure that over 80% of the total area of these 43 ancient woodlands will remain untouched by HS2.”

You can read more information about HS2's approach to woodlands here:
www.hs2.org.uk/building-hs2/environment-sustainability/hs2-and-woodlands

I hope that this information is reassuring. If you have any further concerns about this, or any other issues, please do get back in touch.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane Hunt'.

Jane Hunt MP