

ANDREA LEADSOM MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

24 November 2011

Dear Sir

We welcome the Government's intention to improve our transport infrastructure and agree that the aspiration to promote growth, be environmentally friendly, narrow the North South divide, increase capacity on the West Coast Main Line and improve connectivity between our major cities and airports is desirable. However, we do not believe the High Speed 2 (HS2) project can achieve these aims.

We share the concerns of the Transport Select Committee who point out that Manchester and Leeds will not benefit from any capacity relief for 20 years; that the claims that HS2 would deliver substantial carbon reduction benefits do not stand up to scrutiny; and that it is disappointing that a major strategic scheme is being designed and assessed to a large extent based upon the value of travel time savings which are not universally accepted.

We also share the concerns of the Transport Select Committee with regard to the connectivity of HS2. We fear that existing commuter services will suffer as a result of HS2 and call on the Government to provide a more explicit and comprehensive statement about likely patterns of service on the classic network once HS2 is operational. The costs and benefits of routing HS2 via Heathrow should be set out more clearly and there should be a clear statement about the status of possible complementary schemes such as those which would link Heathrow by rail to Gatwick or the Great Western Main Line.

Finally, we agree with the Transport Select Committee in recognising that HS2 may have a substantial negative impact on the countryside, communities and people along the route and call for this to be better reflected in the business case.

We believe that promoting growth, dealing with the North South divide, increasing capacity and improving services on existing lines and delivering better connectivity can all be achieved faster and with better value for the taxpayer by taking steps such as rebalancing the proportion of standard-class carriages, increasing line speeds on the slow lines, longer trains, and grade separation at strategic junctions.

The aims of the Government are absolutely right but a comprehensive transport strategy is needed that takes into account rail, aviation and road connectivity.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andrea Leadsom".

Andrea Leadsom MP

On behalf of: Chris White MP, Fiona Bruce MP, Steve Baker MP, Frank Field MP, Kelvin Hopkins MP, Roger Godsiff MP, Archie Norman, Geoffrey Robinson MP, Mark Pawsey MP, Ronnie Campbell MP

Member of Parliament for South Northamptonshire