

THE RT HON. ANDREA LEADSOM MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Mark Thurston
Chief Executive Officer
High Speed Two (HS2) Ltd
One Canada Square
London
E14 5AB

26th November 2018

Ref: AL/TG/1811

Dear Mr Thurston,

At the All-Party Parliamentary Rail Group meeting on Tuesday 20th November, I understand that you spoke about lessons that have been learnt from phase 1 of HS2, and how these can be implemented moving forward.

My Parliamentary Assistant, who attended on my behalf, tells me that you informed the APPG that, ahead of the review of the business case for HS2 next year, a number of changes to the project may have to be considered in order to keep it within budget and on time – something my colleague the Secretary of State for Transport has made clear is imperative.

These changes included possibly lowering the speed that trains will operate at on the line by around 50 km/h, reducing the number of trains from 18 per hour to 14, and changing from a slab track to a ballast track.

Given that the business case for HS2 was first predicated upon speed, then on capacity, then finally on improving connectivity with the north, can I ask how these changes – separately and cumulatively – would impact on the viability of the project? When MPs voted in favour of the *High Speed Rail (London - West Midlands) Act 2017*, it was based on a clear understanding of what HS2 would deliver. My constituents are naturally concerned that changes to the project could undermine the business case, negatively affect the benefit-cost ratio, and reduce the value for taxpayers' money.

As the constituency Member of Parliament for South Northamptonshire, I would welcome your assurance that HS2 Ltd can deliver HS2 on time and on budget without impacting the business case or affecting the basis upon which it was agreed by Parliament. I would also be grateful if you confirm that if changes are made you will be providing an updated review of the business case and value for taxpayers' money.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrea Leadsom".

The Rt Hon. Andrea Leadsom MP
Member of Parliament for South Northamptonshire

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