

Your ref: TG/2001
Our ref: MP-20-264

Mr Tommy Gilchrist
Senior Parliamentary Assistant
Office of the Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom,
MP for South Northamptonshire
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

17 January 2020

Dear Mr Gilchrist

Re: Overhead Catenary Systems

Thank you for your letter of 6 January 2020 about consultation on the design of the Overhead Catenary System (OCS).

As you stated in your letter, the illustrations provided by HS2 Ltd as part of the Common Design Element (CDE) consultation included the OCS. The OCS was included to put the CDE designs in context as it would be unrealistic to show viaducts without the OCS. However, as the OCS does not require further approval under Schedule 17 of the Act, it is not intended to agree the OCS as a Common Design Element with the Phase One Local Planning Authorities.

As I set out in my letter dated 20 September 2017, the design of the OCS will be monitored by the HS2 Independent Design Panel through a series of design presentations. This is to make sure that the design of structures and other related design aspects of the HS2 railway systems will, in so far as possible, meet local aspirations.

We have provided periodic updates to the HS2 Independent Design Panel and the Phase One Planning Forum on the approach to procuring and designing the OCS. The last such update to the Phase One Planning Forum was on 22 November 2018 and we will provide a further update at an appropriate point in the OCS procurement programme.

The design of the OCS structures used on the open route section will be defined as part of the OCS design and build contract following the appointment of the Railway Systems Contractors, which is now forecast to take place in late 2021. The HS2 Railway Systems works information and contract requirements will require the Railway Systems Contractors to consider aesthetics and local sensitivities as part of their design development process.

I trust the above information has been of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark Thurston', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark Thurston

Chief Executive

High Speed Two Limited