

ANDREA LEADSOM MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Robert Syms MP
Chairman
HS2 Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

22nd October 2015

Ref: AL/TG/1510

HIGH SPEED RAIL (LONDON – WEST MIDLANDS) BILL Additional Provision 3

Petition Response – Andrea Leadsom MP

Dear Chairman,

I write to you in my capacity as the Member of Parliament for South Northamptonshire on the *High Speed Rail (London – West Midlands) Bill* to petition the Select Committee on Additional Provision 3, relating to the changes proposed at Euston station. I have been advised, by the Clerk of Private Bills Neil Caulfield through my Parliamentary Assistant Tommy Gilchrist, that the HS2 Select Committee will accept petitions on Additional Provisions from Members of Parliament in the form of a letter, rather than as a further formal petition. For this, I am most grateful for the consideration of the Select Committee in allowing me to write to you in such a manner so as to save time.

I would first like to express my thanks to the Select Committee, and to yourself in particular Chairman, for the continued work that is being undertaken on behalf of my constituents along the proposed line of route, especially in the areas of mitigation and compensation. It has been widely recognised that the Select Committee is sympathetic to those residents in constituencies such as South Northamptonshire who are affected by the proposals for HS2, and I am grateful on behalf of my constituents for your unremitting understanding of the issues. The opportunity for my constituents to speak before the Select Committee and to present their positions has been invaluable, and I understand that a number of changes have been proposed as part of Additional Provision 4 as a result. Indeed, the reconstituted compensation scheme *Need To Sell*, which has replaced the unpopular Exceptional Hardship Scheme, has proven relatively

Member of Parliament for South Northamptonshire




successful and the increased uptake is evidence of this; however, there is clearly still progress to be made. Several of my constituents have experienced difficulties in a number of areas, particularly in relation to the requirement for properties to be marketed for a minimum period of three months, and the expectation on the part of HS2 Ltd that offers fifteen per cent lower than a realistic unblighted asking price should be accepted by the vendor [*HS2 Property Schemes for the London-West Midlands HS2 Route: Need to Sell Scheme – guidance notes and application form* | 3.1.16 Criterion 3 – Effort to sell | pg. 8]. Awareness, in general terms, of these compensation schemes would appear to remain low and I continue to be approached by constituents who enquire about their eligibility under the various compensation provisions available to them.

Turning to Euston my constituents have expressed concerns over the proposals for the redevelopment of the station, both during the construction period and once HS2 becomes operational. Commuters, including many of my constituents, seek further reassurance on exactly what the development framework will look like if and when construction eventually begins.

Several of my constituents have questioned whether the changes to the Euston rebuild proposals have now undermined the business case for HS2, given that the costs for the redevelopment of the station have more than doubled from an estimated £1.2 billion in January 2012 to a budget of £2.5 billion in February 2015. The business case for HS2 assumes that there will be thirteen trains an hour throughout Phase One and eighteen trains an hour once the full network is operational. My constituents query how the business case can be maintained and delivered if the planned reconstruction work at Euston will take place over many more years, and without the platforms to manage the thirteen trains an hour through to 2026 whilst maintaining the so-called 'classic' Network Rail services on the West Coast Main Line.

Another associated concern raised with me arises from the impact of HS2 on existing rail services, specifically the reduction in the number of classic Network Rail platforms from eighteen to thirteen, which is a permanent reduction in the capacity of the existing route. Connected with the loss of platforms is the reduction in the number of approach tracks into Euston for existing rail services – down from six to four during the construction phase. My constituents have concerns regarding the assurances that have been provided by HS2 Ltd that, whilst there will be some disruption on the West Coast Main Line during the construction phase, the timetable that is in place today will be in place until the HS2 route becomes operational. I should be grateful if HS2 Ltd could provide some further detail on exactly what they will be doing to minimise any delays to National Rail services on the West Coast Main Line, and whether HS2 Ltd are proposing any sort of compensatory scheme for commuters who do experience delays, above and beyond that contained within each operator's Passenger Charter.

Another concern that my constituents have raised with me is the capacity of London Underground to handle the expected increase in passenger numbers joining the network from Euston during the morning three hour peak, which HS2 Ltd are projecting to rise from 9,900 in 2012 to 41,340 in 2041. Given this increase, and that the passenger dispersal from Euston depends very much on the capability of the rest of the transport network, my constituents would

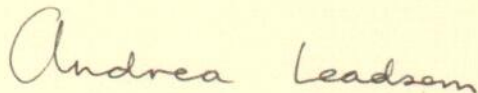


like to know what steps the promoter is taking to ensure that London Underground can keep moving after completion of the project. It is vital that there is coordination between HS2 Ltd, Network Rail, and Crossrail 2 in this area, and Transport for London has already stated that the delivery of Crossrail 2 is critical for the successful realisation of the HS2 project, once Phase Two is completed by 2033.

The final point that I would like to raise is the dissatisfaction of a number of my constituents with the communication from HS2 Ltd. I am acting on behalf of a number of directly and specially affected constituents in South Northamptonshire who regularly make representations to me that HS2 Ltd are both slow at responding to particular queries and deliberately obtuse in their answers. In particular, the issuing of a locus standi objection to Chipping Warden & Edgcote Parish Council that was then withdrawn after my Parliamentary Assistant, Tommy Gilchrist, intervened to ask HS2 Ltd to reconsider. I am extremely grateful to you, Chairman, as are those who were impacted by the locus standi objection, for allowing the petitioners in Chipping Warden & Edgcote Parish Council to re-petition the Select Committee on their areas of concern.

Once again, I extend my thanks to yourself and to the Select Committee as a whole for all of the hard work that you are undertaking, and I look forward to receiving a full and detailed response to the various concerns that I have raised on behalf of my constituents in South Northamptonshire.

With best wishes,



Andrea Leadsom MP
Member of Parliament for South Northamptonshire