



Department for Transport

Lord Rowe-Beddoe
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0AA

From the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon

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Dear Lord Rowe-Beddoe

Due to the limited time remaining at the end of the Second Reading of the High Speed Rail (London to West Midlands) Bill, I was unable to respond to many of the points raised during the debate. I therefore write to outline my response to your comments where I was unable to do so during the debate itself.

I was sorry to hear that you were disappointed with the Government's response to the Economic Affairs Committee's report. However, I believe that the Government's written response was a comprehensive one. Regarding the specific areas of concern which you raised, please allow me to offer further answers below.

Liverpool and HS2

The Government recognises that Liverpool is a major city and a significant market. That's why we are rolling out HS2 and developing plans for Northern Powerhouse Rail. From 2026 when HS2 first opens, Liverpool will benefit from HS2 Services and a 28 minute reduction in journey times to London. In 2027, this saving increases to over 30 minutes. We understand Liverpool's aspiration for a direct connection to HS2, which could also provide a fast link to Manchester. This will be considered as part of the National Infrastructure Commission and Transport for the North's work.

HS2 will free up space on the existing network. This will release capacity, which could be used for more commuter and inter-regional services, and for freight where demand is growing - including from the Port of Liverpool.

Liverpool City Region continue to press for the best deal from HS2, and have submitted evidence to support this. No decisions have yet been taken on the Phase Two route other than the route to Crewe. We remain committed to delivering HS2 within the existing budget given the Government's wider commitment to manage public finances more effectively.

High Speed UK (HSUK)

The HSUK proposal was discussed during the House of Commons' Select Committee hearings. However, the HSUK proposal is against the principle of the Bill as established at Second Reading in the House of Commons. Alternative configurations and alignments (including those similar to HSUK) put forward by those who responded to the national consultation on High Speed Rail: investing in Britain's future' (February to July 2011) had been taken into consideration. This is set out in the High Speed Rail: Investing in Britain's Future – Decision and Next Steps report, published in January 2012.

Euston station

Terminating at Euston is the right strategic option. Most London HS2 passengers will want to travel to and from central London. Terminating at Old Oak Common would place huge strain on onward travel connections.

Our modelling shows that around 75% of people boarding HS2 in London during the peak will use Euston. In 2010 HS2 Ltd looked at the impact of terminating at Old Oak Common and found it would reduce Phase One benefits by over 15% and revenues by 10% with fewer people using HS2 as a result.

With regards to whether the HS2 station and approach could be within the existing Euston station footprint, HS2 Ltd has undertaken a review of providing HS2 platforms within the existing Euston station and the conclusion is that it is not feasible to do so. Such a scheme could not be built without closing most or all of the existing Euston station for an extended period during construction.

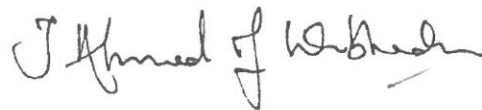
We are committed to a comprehensive approach to Euston station, both satisfying transport requirements and reducing adverse impact on the community as far as is practical. This is why we have established a strategic redevelopment board with attendance from HS2 Ltd, Transport for London, Camden Council, and Network Rail. This is also why we

have made the funding available for Network Rail to undertake the feasibility study on the redevelopment of the Network Rail Euston station.

I hope the above answers the points you mentioned sufficiently.

A copy of this letter has been placed in the libraries of both Houses.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'J Ahmad of Wimbledon'.

LORD AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON