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for Transport

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From the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State  
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*Dear Richard*

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.

The Government is committed to delivering High Speed Two – a project that will bring our economic centres closer together allowing the whole country to benefit. We have brought forward Phase 2a of the scheme to now open in 2027 and bring the benefits to Crewe and the north west sooner, and we will continue to work towards delivering a full 'Y' network to spread the benefits further, including to our great northern cities and Scotland.

In terms of Euston, we support the future redevelopment of Euston Station, as do Network Rail who are committed to exploring how their mainline station can best integrate with both the HS2 station, and the potential Crossrail 2 station in future. A Euston Station Strategic Redevelopment Board has been established to consider how the HS2 station most effectively fits into the wider regeneration of the area. Members of the Board will include HS2 Ltd, Transport for London, the Greater London Assembly, Network Rail and Camden Borough Council. The revised proposals for the development of the HS2 station take account of the need to minimise disruption to the operation of the conventional station and to enable oversite development taking into account the aspirations of the Euston Area Plan (EAP).

We have also confirmed that funding is available to progress initial feasibility work for the preparation of an outline masterplan for Euston station - which includes the "classic" element of the station - to support and provide context to the detailed planning application for the HS2 element of the station currently scheduled for Summer 2018.

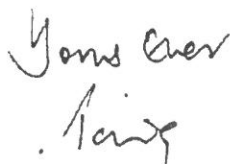
With regards to your question on the sourcing of steel for HS2, whilst there will of course be fair and open competition for tenders on HS2, we are already working with UK suppliers to make sure they are in the best possible position to win contracts.

With regards to your concerns as raised by the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee (PAC), we recognise that more needs to be done to improve the way we communicate and listen to people affected by the project, and we are pleased that the PAC Committee recognises the progress that has been made since the publication of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's report. Over the last two months, HS2 Ltd have held six public information events attended by more than two thousand people. Five more are planned over the next two months and HS2 Ltd are in the process of appointing 11 local community engagement managers who will work directly in the communities they serve. However, this is only the start. HS2 Ltd will continue to work to deliver the responsibility given by the government, Parliament and the communities affected by the HS2 project.

Finally, I have written separately to you and other Noble Lords in relation to the powers of the HS2 Select Committee, including the appropriateness of that Committee appointing an independent adviser on rail matters.

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

I hope this answers the points mentioned sufficiently.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yous Ever' on the top line and 'Ahmad' on the bottom line.

**LORD AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON**