



Department
for Transport

Lord Tunncliffe CBE
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0AA

From the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Tel: 0300 330 3000

E-Mail: Lord.Ahmad_PUSS@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Web site: www.gov.uk/dft

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Dear Denis

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 grateful for the continued cross-party support this historic project enjoys. I would like to thank you especially for sharing with the house your personal experience of building the Jubilee Line extension and how that has been such a stimulus for urban regeneration. Your experience demonstrates how the benefits to communities and the wider economy far exceed those that can be captured by our cost-benefit ratios.

In response to your question, we of course accept that the Government is ultimately responsible for the effective delivery of this railway, and for ensuring that our agent, HS2 Ltd, and any other public bodies, maintain the highest standards in all aspects of that delivery. As you rightly pointed out, accountability of public bodies is no more important than in responsible treatment of our natural environment. In this area as well as others, HS2 should be an exemplary project, setting the standard for major infrastructure projects to come.

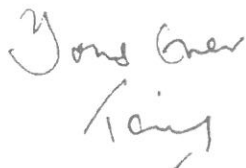
You asked about the Government's plans to keep in contact with local communities and businesses. We recognise that communication and engagement are critical elements of delivering the construction works. As such, we have given many commitments and undertakings to local authorities to consult with the communities who live and work along the line of the HS2 Phase One route. We have already consulted

extensively and will continue to do so through community events and direct contact where appropriate. Over the last two months, HS2 Ltd has held six public information events attended by more than two thousand people. Five more are planned over the next two months. In addition, HS2 Ltd is in the process of appointing 11 local community engagement managers who will work directly in the communities they serve.

With regards to the final question you raised, in relation to the powers of the HS2 Select Committee, I have written separately to you and other Noble Lords.

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

I hope this answers the points you raised sufficiently.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yous Gner' on the top line and 'Ahmad' on the bottom line, with a small flourish at the end.

LORD AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON