



Department
for Transport

The Rt. Rev. the Lord Bishop of Coventry
House of Lords
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From the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon

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Dear Bishop Christopher.

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.

You asked about the Government's plans to keep in contact with local communities and businesses as the project is implemented to alleviate their anxiety, decide on solutions and enable better planning in the years ahead. 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.

You also wanted to know about the steps we are taking to connect HS2 to existing transport links. I can confirm that Phase 1 will have a link to the West Coast Main Line north of Lichfield to allow services to the North West and Glasgow. The interchange at Old Oak Common will provide an

interchange with Crossrail and the Great Western Main line as well as Heathrow, creating broad connections across different routes and access to a range of areas, while the new station at Birmingham International will provide links to Birmingham airport. This is part of our investment to secure a modern, integrated transport system.

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 is helpful and answers the points mentioned sufficiently.

Yours sincerely,

J Ahmad of Wimbledon

LORD AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON