



Department
for Transport

Viscount Simon
House of Lords
London
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From the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon

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21 APR 2016

Dear Lord Simon.

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 your remarks you questioned whether HS2 was the right scheme for the UK – we believe the case for HS2 is clear. Phase One of HS2 will not only provide additional capacity between London and the West Midlands, but also to Manchester and Glasgow via through-running services. It will free up capacity on the West Coast Mainline that can be used for local services or freight. Once Phase 2 is complete, it will be a national network and create even more capacity and ever better links, connecting eight of the UK's ten most populous cities with direct links and reducing journey times. It will help create jobs, growth and development, and help to rebalance our economy.

A full 'Y' network, with Phase 2a acceleration, represents high value for money, delivering £2.20 of every £1 spent. We cannot afford not to invest in HS2.

With regards to the High Speed UK (HSUK) scheme, this is a very different proposal and as such is against the principle of the Bill as established at the Second Reading debate in the House of Commons.

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

I hope this answers the points mentioned sufficiently.

Yours sincerely,

J Ahmad of Wimbledon

LORD AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON