



We care for the Chilterns

Lord Berkeley
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

6th April 2020

Dear Lord Berkeley,

HS2 – NOTICE TO PROCEED

We are writing to you again re HS2, as there now seems to be a real possibility that Notice to Proceed may be issued during the current crisis, without proper examination of the revised business case and demonstration of management competence which should accompany this. Such a decision would be completely unjustifiable, given the uncertain impacts of this crisis on the national finances, and future working and travelling habits.

You may remember that the Society has serious safety concerns regarding the Chiltern Tunnel, which we discussed with you in the Autumn of 2018. We have had a discussion with Rueben McDonald, Head of Safety at HS2 Ltd. We raised a number of questions for which we have never received a response. Also we have been attempting to obtain further information from HS2, in particular a safety report which they commissioned, using FoI legislation¹. We referred these requests to the Information Commissioner in July 2019, and although they began an investigation last November, we have yet to receive any response from the ICO. Clearly HS2 are unwilling to open up this issue for discussion, or to publicly defend their safety case for the tunnel.

An additional problem has recently emerged, regarding the supply of water needed for the Chiltern Tunnel TBMs. This is estimated at between 5 & 8m litres/day, and Affinity Water have stated that they are unable to supply this, due to ongoing problems with drought and over abstraction in the Chilterns.² No indication has been given as to where this water will come from.

Our original concerns – pollution of the Chiltern Aquifer, and the risk posed to the River Misbourne, still remain. Affinity Water are building a pipeline from their Chalfont St Giles extraction point to Amersham to be able to deal with the turbidity expected to occur with the tunnel coming close to that abstraction point.

Another issue has arisen with construction of the tunnel in that HS2 have established that there is a substantial amount of alluvial clay near the North Portal. The clay will not support the weight of the tunnel without substantial piling.

To summarise, it is not clear that the Chiltern Tunnel can be constructed within the cost budget, or what environmental damage would result from its construction, or whether the completed tunnel could safely accommodate the frequency of services which have been used to justify the business case.

¹ <http://www.hs2amersham.org.uk/Resources/FOI>

² <https://www.endsreport.com/article/1664254/why-hs2s-groundwater-impacts-scrutiny>

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Patron: The Earl Howe President: Michael Rush

In light of the above it would seem sensible to publicise these concerns, in an effort to delay any attempt to grant 'Notice to Proceed' until the current crisis is resolved, and adequate scrutiny can take place.?

Yours Sincerely



For and on behalf of the Chiltern Society

John Gladwin (Trustee)

cc: Lord Howe,
Chiltern Area MPs
Edward Malnick (Sunday Telegraph)

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