



We care for the Chilterns

Andrew Stephenson MP
Minister of State
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

21 July 2020

Dear Mr Stephenson

HS2 Ltd and the Chilterns Tunnel

Further to my letter of 27th May to Chris Rayner and his response dated 22 June, I would like to draw to your attention to, that in this response Mr Rayner states 'I understand that you would like a response to your specific points, however we have not reached the point where such details have been confirmed.' This highlights our concern that operational safety issues have not been resolved, while the preparations for tunnel construction with a twin-bore are progressing rapidly. Failing to agree the provisional operational safety design before construction starts leaves no opportunity to consider alternative designs proven to be safe, such as

- a three-bore tunnel used in the Channel Tunnel
- regular accesses to the open as used in the Frecciarossa 13km tunnel

Should the provisional operational safety procedures prove unsafe (as we believe) then there would be no option other than to substantially reduce the speed and frequency of trains, as pointed out to us by Tim Smart, HS2's Chief Engineer, a number of years ago. This would destroy the already weak Cost/Benefit Ratio.

The ORR have confirmed via an FOI request that they have not been consulted on a provisional operational safety case.

I have attached a schedule setting out the key issues relating to a provisional safety case.

As Mr Rayner intends to file any further correspondence, I ask you as the responsible Minister to ensure that the Operational Safety Review is completed and agreed with the before the tunnel design is finally agreed to ensure that HS2 does not become a hugely expensive White Elephant.

Should the review demonstrate that the design needs to be three bore, we would ask that you consider extending the tunnel to the north of Wendover.

In addition, there would be operational benefits in that the tunnel could be virtually level rather than undulating as it does with the current design.

Our Geological Advisor, Dr Haydon Bailey has identified that under the chalk of the Misbourne Aquifer, there is a mixture of chalk and clay marl. Tunnelling in this would enable a three bore tunnel to north of Wendover to be tunnelled more quickly than tunnelling through the Chalk aquifer which is rich in flints.

Yours Sincerely

John Gladwin

Trustee

Cc C Gillan MP, R Butler MP, J Morrissey MP, ORR

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