

FREEPOST DESIGN REFINEMENT 2A

26<sup>th</sup> October 2016

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: High Speed Two Phase 2a: West Midlands to Crewe - Design Refinement Consultation**

I emphasise from the outset that I am opposed to the HS2 line as proposed. I am not opposed to the need for additional rail capacity. When I was a Parliamentary candidate, I supported the proposal by the previous Government to build a 'Stafford bypass' on the West Coast Mainline through my constituency. I have also supported the substantial improvements to the Norton Bridge junction.

HS2's problem is that the line is designed to take trains travelling at a speed which will never be reached in a relatively small country such as the UK. It therefore foregoes the opportunity to use tilt technology and thus follow the natural contours of the land and avoid settlements and difficult geographical and geological features where possible.

It is clear at present, however, that there is a parliamentary majority currently in favour of the HS2 project. It is therefore vital, as the local Member of Parliament, that I do everything I can to ensure that our community is properly served through mitigation of, and compensation for, the effects of HS2. It is in that spirit, therefore, that I am responding to the consultation.

**Question 1 – Crewe Tunnel Extension. This proposed change consists of extending the Crewe Tunnel south by approximately 2100m and re-siting the tunnel portal south of the A500 and Weston Lane.**

As this proposal will not have a direct impact on my constituency, I will not be making any specific comments about it. However, I refer you to my introductory comments.

**Question 2 – HS2 to West Coast Main Line connection spurs south of Crewe. This proposed change consists of moving the spur lines that connect HS2 to the West Coast Main Line (WCML) south of Crewe, further south and extending their length.**

As this proposal will not have a direct impact on my constituency, I will not be making any specific comments about it. However, I refer you to my introductory comments.

**Question 3 – Railhead and potential maintenance facility near Stone. This proposed change consists of building a temporary construction facility (railhead) in-between the proposed HS2 route and the M6, with the potential that its use could then be changed to become a permanent maintenance facility.**

Whilst the proposed railhead will be in the neighbouring constituency to my own, it will have an impact on people living in my constituency and I comment as follows.

I refer to the detailed submission of the Member of Parliament for Stone, Sir William Cash MP, which I support.

The impacts of HS2 on property and affected communities are likely to be significant, not just during operation but also through many years of construction. The impact on the local road network is likely to be felt most during construction, with delays caused by constructing road diversions and increased construction traffic on local roads. It is vital that HS2 consults widely with the Highways Agency and

Staffordshire County Council to ensure that any road closures or restrictions are co-ordinated to keep disruption to a minimum.

In the Stafford & Stone area, HS2 proposes to cross all of our major links to the north of England, i.e., the M6, A34, A518, A51. Also, a popular local diversion for the A34 and A518, the B5066 will be moved at Hopton. ***It is vital that works are not taking place on more than one of these routes at the same time.*** From a national perspective, any plan to restrict traffic on the M6 and A34 at the same time, even overnight, would cause complete traffic chaos, as local experience will testify. I am yet to receive assurances that the plans for construction will ensure that the road network will be kept flowing.

The plan for HS2 is based on a proposal to provide economic prosperity and create employment. It is vital, therefore, that Staffordshire's residents and businesses can utilise the highway network with little delay as a result of increased HS2 related traffic during and after construction.

Thank you for the opportunity to take part in this consultation.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Lefroy MP  
Member of Parliament for the Stafford Constituency