

Mr J Marriott

By email: request-253279-b69fboag@whatdotheyknow.com

11 January 2016

Dear Mr Marriott

FOI15-1459

I am writing in response to your concerns about HS2 Ltd's handling of your request for information which was submitted on 11 February 2015 and subsequent reminders, and your follow up request for information submitted on 14 December 2015. Your request has been considered under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) 2004.

Please accept my sincere apologies that you did not receive a response to your request. There were a number of personnel changes within the HS2 Ltd FOI team in 2015 and unfortunately your request was overlooked. We aim to respond within the statutory deadline and I am sorry that we did not achieve that on this occasion.

You requested the following information:

"I am seeking clarification regarding two statements made by Sir David Higgins at recent Parliamentary Committees when being questioned about HS2.

Extracts are from uncorrected transcripts.

Transport Select Committee 17th November 2014

Q14 Sir David Higgins:

"It is a bit of a circular discussion because a railway line where trains travel at 220 miles an hour as opposed to 120 miles an hour clearly has nearly twice the capacity because you can have twice as many trains on it."

House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee 13th January 2015

Q251 Sir David Higgins:

"Capacity and speed are linked, because, where you have a train line and trains travel at 200 miles per hour, there are 18 per hour and each one has 1,000 people on it, if you run it at 100 miles per hour, you are going to get half the capacity on that train line."

These two statements, which say more or less the same thing, appear to be completely at odds with safe operation. As trains travel faster they take a longer time to stop as under constant deceleration the stopping time increases in direct proportion to speed and the distance required increases in direct proportion to the square of the speed. If the time between trains has to increase at higher speed then capacity must fall.

Please confirm whether HS2 Ltd has any documentation or analysis which supports the statements made by Sir David Higgins. If so, please provide full details.

I can confirm that we hold some information in relation to your request. The information is contained in the briefing note provided to David Higgins prior to the Transport Select Committee session held on 17 November 2014. The information is extracted as follows:

"Speeds vs Capacity

"HS2 will achieve different objectives – speed, capacity, connectivity, and wider economic benefits. But they don't exist in isolation. Speed provides capacity – a 200mph train moves double the number of passengers a day than a 100mph train does. Benefits are complementary."

David Higgins was providing evidence to the committees discussing the broader strategic context for high speed rail. It might be helpful if I add that David Higgins was not asked to provide a detailed plan for the operation of HS2, this discussion related to the broader concept of how speed relates to capacity.

If you are unhappy with the way we have handled your request or with the decisions made in relation to your request, you may complain in writing to HS2 Ltd at the above address. Please also see attached details of HS2 Ltd's complaints procedure and your right to complain to the Information Commissioner.

Please remember to quote reference number **FOI15-1459** in any future communication relating to this request.

Yours sincerely

Jane Ivey
Freedom of Information Manager
High Speed Two (HS2) Limited

Your right to complain to HS2 Ltd and the Information Commissioner

You have the right to complain to HS2 Ltd within two calendar months of the date of this letter about the way in which your request for information was handled and/or about the decision not to disclose all or part of the information requested.

Your complaint will be acknowledged and you will be advised of a target date by which to expect a response. Initially your complaint will be re-considered by the official who dealt with your request for information. If, after careful consideration, that official decides that his/her decision was correct, your complaint will automatically be referred to a senior independent official who will conduct a further review. You will be advised of the outcome of your complaint and if a decision is taken to disclose information originally withheld this will be done as soon as possible.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF