Key Additional Information

HS2 Engagement

During this period, we took the decision to postpone all public face-to-face engagement events and meetings. We have, however, put in place alternative ways of communicating and engaging with communities.

We have kept in regular contact with all MPs and local authorities along the route to update them on our approach to engagement with local residents, how we are working with our contractors to review construction activities and ways to keep in contact with us.

We have moved our usual face-to-face stakeholder meetings to online meetings. This has been working well and stakeholders have appreciated our commitment to keeping them informed.

We have run several online engagement exercises, including engaging on the technical design of the railway, using new and accessible ways to share information online and collect feedback from communities and stakeholders.

Please see https://www.hs2.org.uk/in-your-area/ to find out about HS2 and the area you live, and https://www.hs2.org.uk/documents/collections/local-area-engagement-plans/ for the ways that HS2 Ltd will engage with people and communities that are affected along the route.

My problem with HS2 is the possibly very costly maintenance and downtime of outdated infrastructure inc. OHLE and loading gauge, utilising route and branch instead of single running line hence poor futureproofing, does not connect more regions, does not cater to different services inc. international and non passenger services ie Camden Rail Link, does not plan for much higher speed commercial operations ie Mach 1. I wish to ask you how can we continually improve HS2 infrastructure if itself is difficult to upgrade, expand and evolve into something more versatile?

As previously mentioned in the covering letter, this is not a request for information as held by a public body, however we are answering this outside of the Act.

Railways have a history of adapting as technology improves and no more so than using cleaner, greener fuels in future. As an example, the First Great Western Railway journey from Paddington to Bristol was once **4** hours, it is now possible to do this in under **1hr 40m.**

High speed lines work best when they are more than 300km long and with the fewest stops possible. Unlike airports they are designed to serve into city centres, connecting with other railways and modes of transport where possible. Slow trains, frequent stops

and slower speed junctions disrupt high-speed traffic, thus diluting the benefits of quickly getting large volumes of passengers from one city-centre to another.

HS2 will mix domestic services with high speed services on phase one of the build with services running at speeds above 300kmh from London to Birmingham, with minimal stops, then make their way onto the conventional network where speeds are lower and stops are more frequent, much like the South-Eastern service on HS1[1] running onto the Kent lines.

HS2 track alignment is being designed to allow trains to run up to 400kmh in future, and if a case is made for them to do so. Currently no high-speed line in the world runs faster than 360kmh. To run at Mach 1 will need a completely different design and is beyond the capabilities of a railway as we know it.

HS2 is being designed with the largest running gauge possible, so it will not be restricted to one type of vehicle in future, therefore the gauge won't out-date. The signalling system that is being installed is the same as the ones installed already in some parts of Europe, and one that the European railway community are all working towards achieving in the future, to achieve boundary-less rail travel (in terms of signalling system at least) and maintain consistency in standards and practices. Communications networks are also being designed with future capacity in mind.

So with a long-term view on the future of traffic control systems, a track alignment capable of supporting future speeds of up to 400kmh, future built-in capacity of communications networks and phase one services being able to continue journeys on the West Coast Mainline, future-proofing is being designed in, rather than having to upgrade the line and add to it in future, which would be very difficult and costly to achieve.

HS2 should not be seen as an isolated railway, but a large cog in the UK Transport Strategy, meaning that it is possible for rail travel to expand and become more versatile without relying on one piece of infrastructure do that. In terms of technologies and capabilities of the future, we will have to see what this holds, but it is not un-common for rail systems to be renewed upon life-expiry with more up-to-date equivalents, keeping the railway protected against obsolescence.

[1] https://www.southeasternrailway.co.uk/tickets/more-ways-to-travel/high-speed