



Department
for Transport

Department for Transport
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Our Ref: F0018280

Mr J Crowley

request-645649-79b95864@whatdotheyknow.com

8 April 2020

Dear Mr Crowley,

Freedom of Information Act Request - F0018280

Thank you for your request for information which we received on 12 February 2020. Your request is being dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You asked for the following information:-

‘On the 11th of February the Prime Minister stated that Wales would benefit from HS2 due to the Crewe link (Source: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2020-02-11/debates/9160CC0E-C4BB-4D51-8CD9-93EB9D76F644/TransportInfrastructure>).

On what basis does the government believe the Welsh economy will benefit from HS2? In answering this question, could you provide the most recent economic modelling/business case/economic case for HS2 regarding benefits and losses to Wales as a result of the project. In addition to this, could you also release the DfT's most recent forecasts, and the models underlying them, involving the benefits and losses to the Welsh economy as a result of HS2.’

Passengers in North Wales will benefit from HS2 connections at Crewe, providing shorter journey times to London as well as improved cross-country journey times to cities such as Manchester and Birmingham.

Passengers travelling from across North Wales will directly benefit from inter-connecting onto HS2 at Crewe, with significant reductions in journey times to London. We are accelerating delivery of the route to Crewe so that passengers experience the benefits earlier.

HS2 will free up capacity on the existing West Coast Main Line which could be used for additional services, including to Wales.

The Government has revived the High Speed Rail (West Midlands to Crewe) Bill in order to deliver Phase 2a as soon as possible and so that preparation works for that section of the project can move forward. We have committed to getting HS2 to Manchester so intend to press ahead with this work to avoid further delays. The route from Crewe to Manchester is broadly agreed.

The new station at Old Oak Common delivered as part of HS2 Phase One will include interchange facilities between HS2, Great Western Main Line and Crossrail services. Our current indicative train service specification that has informed the design of Old Oak Common station assumes that all Great Western franchise and Heathrow Express services will stop at the station. This will enable passengers from Wales and other destinations currently served by Paddington bound trains to interchange with HS2 services to the midlands and north of the UK.

HS2 has huge potential to support growth across the UK including Wales and will promote regeneration, boost skills and generate new jobs for people across the region. Our procurement process is open to all bidders with the relevant experience and required credentials and ensures value for money for the taxpayer.

HS2 Ltd has a continuing programme of engagement with local businesses, attending events arranged by local Chambers of Commerce and other networks to ensure that the procurement opportunities of the project are spread across all four nations of the United Kingdom. To date, 26 Welsh companies have provided goods or services to the project, including 16 Small and medium sized enterprises (SME)s.

Along with the Phase 2b business case in 2017, HS2 Ltd published an accompanying paper 'Economic case advice for the DfT' which contained a table breaking down benefits by region.

A revised business case for phase one of HS2 is due to be published in the near future and any relevant information contained therein is exempt under section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. A public interest Test is attached at annex A.

If you are unhappy with the way the Department has handled your request or with the decisions made in relation to your request you may complain within two calendar months of the date of this letter by writing to the Department's FOI Advice Team at:

Zone D/04
Ashdown House
Sedlescombe Road North
Hastings
East Sussex TN37 7GA
E-mail: FOI-Advice-Team-DFT@dft.gov.uk

Please send or copy any follow-up correspondence relating to this request to the FOI Advice Team to help ensure that it receives prompt attention. Please also remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Please see attached details of DfT's complaints procedure and your right to complain to the Information Commissioner.

Yours sincerely,

High Speed and Major Rail Projects Group

Your right to complain to DfT and the Information Commissioner

You have the right to complain 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. In addition a complaint can be made that DfT has not complied with its FOI publication scheme.

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

Annex A

Exemption in full	
Section 22 information intended for future publication (1) Information is exempt information if— the information is held by the public authority with a view to its publication, by the authority or any other person, at some future date (whether determined or not), the information was already held with a view to such publication at the time when the request for information was made, and it is reasonable in all the circumstances that the information should be withheld from disclosure until the date referred to in paragraph (a).	
Public interest test factors for disclosure	Public interest test factors against disclosure
<p>There is a general public interest in promoting transparency, accountability and in the public understanding of matters affecting the HS2 project.</p> <p>The HS2 project is a nationally significant infrastructure project and disclosure will help inform the public in which there will be a general interest.</p> <p>There is a further general public interest in the transparency of the economics of the HS2 project and disclosure of the information might help to inform further public debate on the matter.</p>	<p>Disclosure of the information at this juncture would provide an incomplete and potentially misleading picture to the public.</p> <p>Disclosure at this point would not therefore be helpful in appropriately informing the public on this matter.</p> <p>The modelling and analysis since 2017 have included a number of changes in the assessment of the project, including updated forecast assumptions from the Office of Budget Responsibility.</p> <p>The Department, intend to publish the revised business case for phase one of the project when it has fully compiled and assessed it.</p>

Decision

On balance the public interest arguments for withholding the information outweigh those for disclosure. The Department regard it as being sensible to have information contained in business cases fully checked and assured so that when it is published it will appropriately inform the public and help ensure there is effectively public debate. Withholding the requested information to allow for publication is in line with the Department's practice. The publication of information that is fully and effectively assured will allow fair access to the public that have an interest in this matter.