

**Ian Webb**

By email: [request-517727-2d16e66f@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-517727-2d16e66f@whatdotheyknow.com)

01 October 2018

Dear Mr Webb

**FOI18-2101**

Thank you for your information request of 4 September. Your request has been considered under the Freedom of Information 2000 ("the FOI Act").

In your correspondence you requested the following information:

***"In the Select Committee's "Special Report" following its hearing of representations seeking the adoption of the "Whitmore to Madeley Single Tunnel" solution for the HS2a section running through the Parishes of Whitmore and Madeley in Staffordshire, it concluded in section 25 that (quote) "The evidence from HS2 was that the difficulty of passing under the River Lea, and the danger of water ingress, rendered the alternative tunnelling method unsafe". Please:***

- 1) provide copy of the evidence provided to the Select Committee that led to this conclusion***
- 2) explain why Whitmore and Madeley Parish Councils have never been informed of any such serious concern by HS2 engineers during our frequent contacts and meetings with them during the two years prior to these hearings'.***

I can confirm that HS2 Ltd holds some of the information that you have requested.

***1) provide copy of the evidence provided to the Select Committee that led to this conclusion***

Under Section 21 of the FOIA, information reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means is exempt from release - please see

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/21> for the full text of the exemption.

Copies of the Phase 2a topic documents for the House of Commons Select Committee can be found online at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-phase-2a-topic-documents-for-the-house-of-commons-select-committee>

Please refer to the Section H: Whitmore Heath to Madeley: Proposed Scheme & Single Tunnel alternative found at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/700879/Section\\_H - Whitmore Heath to Madeley Tunnel.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/700879/Section_H_-_Whitmore_Heath_to_Madeley_Tunnel.pdf), and I attach a copy of this (**Annex A**) for your convenience. You may find the link works more reliably with Google Chrome than with Internet Explorer.

This document was provided to Whitmore Parish Council as part of the exhibit exchange in advance of the Parish Council's appearance at the Select Committee.

The in principle case for the Whitmore Heath to Madeley tunnel was heard by the Select Committee on 23 April 2018; the transcript from this hearing, with evidence from Mr Smart, HS2 Ltd Chief Engineer, can be found at:

<https://www.parliament.uk/documents/23.04.18%20Evening.pdf>, and I attach a copy of this (**Annex B**) for your convenience. You may find the link works more reliably with Google Chrome than with Internet Explorer.

The transcript from the presentation on operational aspects of tunnels, construction and cost implications was presented to the Select Committee at a hearing on 27 March 2018. The evidence from Mr Smart, HS2 Ltd Chief Engineer, can be found at

<https://www.parliament.uk/documents/Noise,%20Tunnel%20and%20Traffic%20Presentations%20by%20Rupert%20Thornely-Taylor%20and%20Tim%20Smart%20HS2.pdf>, and I attach a copy of this (**Annex C**) for your convenience. You may find the link works more reliably with Google Chrome than with Internet Explorer.

The presentation can be found at:

<https://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-committees/hs2-phase-2a/Tunnel-Presentation-Tim-Smart-P6.pdf>, and I attach a copy of this (**Annex D**) for your convenience. You may find the link works more reliably with Google Chrome than with Internet Explorer.

***2) explain why Whitmore and Madeley Parish Councils have never been informed of any such serious concern by HS2 engineers during our frequent contacts and meetings with them during the two years prior to these hearings***

HS2 Ltd does not hold information in relation to this request. The FOI Act only covers any recorded information that is held by a public authority in relation to your request.

However, we are happy to provide the following information for assistance outside of the FOI Act.

HS2 Ltd's development of the Proposed Scheme and twin bored single tunnel option considered the risks involved with delivering each scheme. It included understanding the ground conditions in the Whitmore Heath to Madeley area. The tunnel options and constraints were explained by Mike Dalton, at a meeting of HS2 Ltd with Whitmore Parish Council on 6 February 2018. The difficulties of the changing geology and particularly the

glacial channel in the bottom of the valley were also briefly discussed, to explain that it would be a relatively complex area to tunnel through given the soft glacio-lacustrine deposits.

The Parish Councils were not alerted to likely water table issues because HS2 Ltd's proposed tunnelling methodology was predicated on a closed face earth pressure balance (EPB) machine where associated risks were dealt with. As such, HS2 Ltd's engineers would not have deemed it necessary to specifically cover the danger of water ingress. The use of an open faced TBM was proposed by a Petitioner as an alternative to HS2 Ltd's proposal. At the current stage of design HS2 Ltd consider the risks of unknown ground conditions and water ingress too high to consider using an open faced TBM.

As previously shared with the Parish Council on 13 July 2018, we also include a link to a document entitled *Summary assessment of ground conditions for Whitmore Heath Tunnel* for ease of reference. This report presents both desk based assessment and early results from the recent ground investigation in the Whitmore Heath area where tunnelling works are proposed:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/725573/C861-ARP-GT-REP-WS06-000001.P02\\_FINAL\\_REV.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/725573/C861-ARP-GT-REP-WS06-000001.P02_FINAL_REV.pdf), and I attach a copy of this (**Annex E**) for your convenience. You may find the link works more reliably with Google Chrome than with Internet Explorer.

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 address below. 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 **FOI18-2101** in any future communication relating to this request.

Yours sincerely

**Alistair Hobbs**

Briefings, Correspondence and FOI Adviser  
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