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for Transport

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From the Secretary of State  
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*De David,*

Thank you for coming to see me on Monday 23 May, where we discussed a number of issues relating to your constituents. You kindly left me with a more detailed list, on which I undertook to provide a more detailed response.

### **Possible station at the junction of HS2 and the East-West Rail Line**

As discussed, there are no plans for an interchange station between HS2 and East/West Rail (EWR) at Calvert. While this may appear an attractive proposition to some I regret there would not be a business case for a station in such a remote rural location.

In the past we have considered intermediate stations in far more populous areas than this (even with the prospect of future housing growth). Our research demonstrated that the negative effect of reduced train paths serving our major cities far outweigh any localized benefits.

### **Independent cost review for Chilterns tunneling (and joint working group request)**

I appreciate that some of your constituents are calling for an independent review of the costs of tunneling proposals. As we discussed, this project has already been subject to significant levels of scrutiny, and I do not believe that a further review of this sort is appropriate nor justified.

While there is a difference of opinion on the precise cost of an extended tunnel, even the proponents of what is now the main alternative tunneling proposition in the Chilterns accept that it would cost at least £250m. The Select Committee in the Commons was well aware of these figures before determining that the case for the longer tunnel had not been made.

With regards to a joint working group, I noted your letter of 11 May 2016 and that Martin Tett, leader of Buckinghamshire County Council, also wrote to me requesting such a group. Robert Goodwill responded to this separately making clear that we do not believe a group as suggested is required.

### **Wendover Mitigation Package**

The Wendover Mitigation Package offered to locals last year was aimed to avoiding further tunnel extensions in the area. Unfortunately this was rejected locally, and under Additional Provision 5 to the Bill the Government committed instead an additional c£10m on a longer tunnel, a raised noise fence barrier to the south and additional noise fence barriers to the north of Wendover.

We have also offered further expenditure on other mitigation measures.

I understand that local residents are now requesting some elements of the package originally offered in addition to the tunnel extension. I appreciate your confirmation that they are not interested in the green bridge and car parking elements, and that their focus is on making sure that construction passes as smoothly as possible, as well as relaunching Wendover as a tourist destination afterwards.

Buckinghamshire County Council has raised similar points in its ongoing discussion with HS2 Ltd, including the possibility of using some of the funds already offered for mitigation for other purposes. I have asked HS2 Ltd to bear this in mind when conducting those discussions.

### **Chiltern Way Federation**

HS2 Ltd have taken professional advice and do not believe that the temporary or permanent effects of the scheme during construction or operation will necessitate a relocation in whole or in part of the Chiltern Way Federation's Wendover Campus.

However, HS2 Ltd do accept that reasonable adjustments may be required. They have provided assurances to the school on working together during construction, the identification and implementation of suitable mitigation measures and on the sharing of information so that the school can plan ahead, keep parents informed and better understand how works will be managed. HS2 Ltd have also set out a process for determining what targeted measures, such as increased insulation, would be beneficial. We would encourage the school to work with the project to resolve these issues.

## **Wendover Cricket Club**

You raised the issue of Wendover Cricket Club and their desire for two minibuses to assist with their move to a new site. HS2 Ltd is currently considering this request as part of their compensation claim.

## **St Mary's Church (Wendover)**

You mentioned the ongoing discussions with St Mary's Church about the noise impact on the building given its use as a concert venue. The Church has already been offered up to £250,000 for noise insulation, and this is despite the assessment that there is no longer likely to be a significant effect on the building following the improvements in AP5.

I appreciate that the Church remains concerned about what they see as the prospect that noise may be greater than predicted. However, HS2 Ltd have also offered to provide more funding (again up to £250,000) for further insulation in the unlikely event that these fears prove to be founded.

This offer is aimed at trying to reduce the amount of time that Select Committee in the Lords has to spend hearing issues that we believe to be unfounded, and can be easily addressed through other means. As such it is conditional on the Church, and associated petitioners, agreeing to withdraw their petition and not attend Committee.

## **More screening and early tree planting (Stoke Mandeville, Fairford Leys, Aylesbury and Hawkslade)**

As discussed, I am in favour of early implementation of screening where this would be appropriate and beneficial.

This is not always possible, particularly in some of the areas we talked about where constraints on the land available could result in construction work removing any examples of early planting. However, the project will look to employ the best balance between temporary screening of works and the earliest practicable implementation of longer term measures.

## **Need to Sell**

I was glad to hear that, in general, you believed that the Need To Sell (NTS) scheme was working well. I'm pleased to inform you that the government announced on 26 May some further improvements to the NTS scheme that should be welcomed by your constituents.

On the question of the three streets in your constituency that you asked to be considered as automatically qualifying for the scheme due to their proximity

of works, I believe such a move would present some difficulties. However, there is already the opportunity for any of the residents who wish to apply to set out any atypical circumstances that they would like considered. I believe that this provides the right means of addressing any particular concerns of this nature.

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Patrick

**THE RT. HON. PATRICK McLOUGHLIN**