

Chiltern Countryside Group

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STATEMENT

Law and policies of recent years, which now conserve and enhance the nation's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, must be applied to achieve better protection from HS2 than was achieved from HS1.

The Channel Tunnel Rail Link Act was enacted in 1996. HS1 was accordingly designed and the Channel Tunnel Rail Link Act enacted, before law and Government planning policy statements specifically concerned with AONBs' status, and conservation and enhancement had been issued.

Such law and planning policy statements are the following:

- a) Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) Part IV.
- b) National Planning Policy Framework (2012) *paragraphs 14 (and Footnote 9), 115 and 116*. This replaces Planning Policy Statement 7 (*paragraphs 21, 22 and 23*) which was issued in 2004.

A recent further statement on AONB status is given in the Natural Environment White Paper (2011) *paragraph 4.35*.

Accordingly, at a similar stage of design some twenty years later, the legislation and policies introduced post HS1 must be applied whilst seeking the conservation and enhancement of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and seeking protection from the scheme's impacts in all aspects. Such an application must achieve better protection of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty from HS2 than was achieved for AONB land from HS1.

September 2012

Chiltern Countryside Group HS2 Position Statement

The Chiltern Countryside Group believes HS2 should not proceed.

If HS2 should go ahead, then the Group believes that it should be designed and operated to the highest possible environmental standards in all respects.

To satisfy this requirement CCG believes that the route should be designed in a fully bored tunnel under the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.