



South Bucks
District Council



Buckinghamshire Authorities
c/o Buckinghamshire County Council
County Hall
Walton Street
Aylesbury
Bucks
HP20 1UA

27 February 2014

FREEPOST RTEC-AJUT-GGHH
HS2 Phase One Bill Environmental Statement
PO Box 70178
London
WC1A 9HS

Dear Sirs

Consultation Responses on behalf of Buckinghamshire Councils to the HS2 Environmental Statement London – West Midlands

Please find attached response to the recent Environmental Statement (ES) consultation. Please note that these submissions are made on behalf of all Buckinghamshire Councils who have worked collaboratively, namely:

- Aylesbury Vale District Council
- Buckinghamshire County Council
- Chiltern District Council
- South Bucks District Council
- Wycombe District Council

As such it is expected that any published report or summary of responses to these consultations will identify all five Councils. In the submissions that follow the phrase 'the Councils' is used to refer to all five Buckinghamshire Councils as listed.

The Councils are democratic bodies created by Parliament founded on a democratic basis with the ability and duty to represent the inhabitants of their areas. The Councils agree the overall comments being put forward in response to the HS2 ES insofar as these relate to issues applying to the scheme in its entirety, overall methodologies of assessment and issues that are specific to the respective Council areas.

Our response consists of:

- This covering letter
- An executive summary
- Comments on Volume 1
- Comments on ES topics
- Comments of Volume 3 Route-Wide Effects
- Comments on the draft Code of Construction Practice

Buckinghamshire Councils do not benefit at all from HS2. In fact, we will suffer up to 10 years of disruption during construction as well as the long term effects of a high speed line which will run through relatively unspoiled landscape, including an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This will undoubtedly result in economic loss for the county, as demonstrated in the Government's own recent KPMG report on the latest business case.

The Bill also authorises the temporary stopping up, alteration or diversion of highways, temporary diversion of traffic and breaking up or interference with any highway and temporary removal of street furniture (Schedule 4, para 6). There is no definition of 'temporary', so this is likely to mean years, for construction purposes. Reasonable pedestrian access to or from premises abutting the highway must be afforded. However, the power is not limited to highways within the bill limits and any highway could be affected.

The Government's recent business case itself is questionable and this must be judged against the significant environmental effects. The ES is still deficient and despite the promoter's efforts to simplify access to the topics, the cross referencing between volumes does not always lead to adequate answers.

The Councils remain concerned that HS2 Ltd seems intent on merely satisfying the minimum Environmental Standards rather than seeking to exceed them. It should be an expectation and requirement that should the project proceed, it will seek to achieve the best standard of mitigation and provide adequate recompense for all individuals and communities affected.

The ES is a very lengthy document but it is still silent on how and if it can mitigate some of the significant impacts the Proposed Scheme will create. At best it suggests it will monitor and manage certain aspects, or will provide the appropriate mitigation (with very little detailed information).

The Councils feel that this is not acceptable for such a high profile proposal and would be grounds for challenge if submitted by a developer or a promoting local authority under normal planning circumstances. The independent assessor is only required to summarise the results of this consultation and is not required to understand the implications or provide technical advice on how to incorporate recommendations from the consultation responses.

The Buckinghamshire Councils would like to extend an invitation to The Assessor to visit Buckinghamshire and see some of the potentially affected areas that we do not feel are adequately portrayed in the ES.

In light of the very detailed and considerable comments that the local authorities in Buckinghamshire have made, we consider that the ES is not fit for purpose and should be redone.

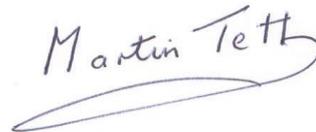
Yours faithfully,



Cllr Neil Blake
Leader, Aylesbury Vale District Council



Cllr Nick Rose
Leader, Chiltern District Council



Cllr Martin Tett
Leader, Buckinghamshire County Council



Cllr Adrian Busby
Leader, South Bucks District Council



Cllr Richard Scott
Leader, Wycombe District Council