



The Red House  
10 Market Square  
Old Amersham  
Buckinghamshire  
HP7 0DQ

22 November 2012

Rt Hon Patrick McLoughlin MP  
Department for Transport  
Great Minster House  
76 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DR

Dear Secretary of State,

**Re: Publication of information on the extent of generalised property blight from HS2 required for the public consultation on compensation**

I am writing to you concerning the information that you hold about the extent of generalised property blight resulting from HS2.

As you will be aware, HS2 Action Alliance is a national group, with thousands of registered supporters across the country, campaigning against the current HS2 proposals and pushing for a fair deal on compensation. Many of our supporters are concerned about the information provided by the Government in the context of the current consultation on compensation.

In order to make informed judgements about the schemes and their parameters, on which you are consulting, the public need to know the extent of property blight and hence the degree to which it is addressed by your proposals.

Please could you therefore publish:

- (i) The results of your investigation and analysis of the extent of blight, ideally in the form of readily understood iso-loss contours on maps (showing the bands of specified levels of property value reduction, analogous to isobars for weather)? Blight is clearly not just determined by a measuring tape but affected by topography, ambient noise levels, as well as buyers long recognised aversion to being near to certain sorts of infrastructure.

- (ii) Any reports or assessments undertaken by the Department for Transport, HS2 Limited or any consultant working for either body which measures the extent of generalised blight along the route of HS2.
- (iii) The criteria against which you leafleted specific properties concerning your current compensation proposals, and the number of properties that were leafleted?
- (iv) The distances from the centre line, locations and degree of loss (where known) of the properties that have been accepted to date under the Exceptional Hardship Scheme (EHS).

It is, in our view, crucial that this information is made available for consultees to enable them to give an informed response.

The extent to which your proposals are generous (as you assert), leave individuals suffering significant losses (as Philip Hammond promised would not happen), and address all blight (as Justine Greening said they would) should be judged against the evidence, which you have not yet made available.

The costing of your current proposals, £1.3bn on property purchase (ie gross expenditure not net cost), implies about 2,500 properties purchased at the existing average EHS purchase rates. Not only is this less than 2% of properties within 1km of the surface line, or 250m of a tunnel, but implies a 'budget' of about 600 or so properties being purchased under the proposed hardship scheme over the next 15 years ie a similar rate of purchase as under the existing EHS, about 40 properties a year.

We believe that generalised blight is considerably more extensive than is contained within the safeguarding area in urban areas and 120m of the line in the countryside. We believe that the EHS scheme has generated some high quality (if sparse) evidence as to the relative location and degree of serious loss in property value. This information should be published as it is clearly relevant to making an informed response to the consultation. We cannot see how it could mislead if all the salient factors are published

With a closing date for the consultation at the end of January, I hope for an early response.

Yours sincerely,



Hilary Wharf,  
Director, HS2 Action Alliance

cc Cheryl Gillan, MP  
David Lidington, MP  
Andrea Leadsom, MP  
Alison Munro, HS2 Ltd