



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

House of Lords
Session of 2015-2016

HIGH SPEED RAIL (LONDON-WEST MIDLANDS) BILL

Notice of Objection
to the
locus standi of

HS2 Action Alliance Ltd (HS2AA),

**WITNESS STATEMENT OF
RT HON CHERYL GILLAN MP**

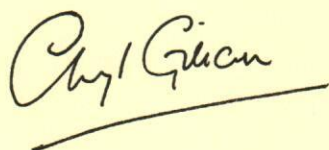
- 1 I, Cheryl Gillan, am the Member of Parliament for Chesham and Amersham, which is a constituency in the Chiltern Hills in Buckinghamshire.
- 2 I have known HS2AA since it was founded over six years ago, and have remained close to their activities. It is an organisation that has tackled a range of issues in a professional manner to further the interests of its members and residents affected by HS2. HS2AA takes an evidenced based approach to its activities, hiring specialists when needed, and fundraising to maximise its effectiveness.
- 3 I am aware that HS2AA's initial priorities were not to oppose HS2 wholesale, but to seek better compensation, as they sought my assistance on this at an early stage (April 2010). Appropriate mitigation, should HS2 happen, has been a central concern throughout HS2AA's existence. I am concerned about the challenge to the locus standi of HS2AA because this is a constantly changing process, and it is therefore essential that the Committee is made aware of the changes that are continually taking place, and how they affect constituents on both a local and a route-wide basis. Any evidence coming from HS2AA would not be identical to that given before, which reflects the dynamic nature of this project.
- 4 I know first-hand from my own constituents that are affected by HS2, that many individuals rely upon HS2AA pursuing particular issues on their behalf eg on compensation, noise, and environmental mitigation. I have highly detrimentally affected constituents particularly in the South Heath and Potter Row areas, but also in Great Missenden, The Lee, Little Missenden, and the Chalfonts. Many issues affecting people are not easy for individuals to tackle, and HS2AA, with access to experts and wider resources, have done this in many ways, for example:
 - a. through commissioning reports from relevant experts, especially on complex topics;
 - b. researching, preparing and co-ordinating numerous consultation responses;
 - c. challenging HS2 Ltd and DfT where appropriate (and if necessary following this up in the courts);
 - d. co-ordinating activities with other environmental groups;
 - e. championing better compensation arrangements;
 - f. complementing the locally-focused petitions of many of my constituents by petitioning a range of route-wide issues to the Commons – I, myself, contributed by appearing for HS2AA in their compensation session (in November 2014).

- 5 I recognise that many of my constituents are expecting that HS2AA will again be able to take route-wide issues on their behalf.
- 6 I also know from my parliamentary colleagues and other parliamentary activities, referred to below, that HS2AA supports their constituents too.
- 7 As Chair of the MPs' cross-party Compensation and Mitigation Forum on HS2, we regularly meet to discuss the impacts of HS2 throughout the line, exchange information, bring issues of common interest, and identify how constituents may best be supported. There are some 17 parliamentary constituencies through which HS2 passes on Phase 1 alone. I, therefore, have been well placed to understand how HS2AA have helped people in other constituencies by taking route wide issues on behalf of residents. In the context of this committee, HS2AA have:
- a. championed a Property Bond approach to compensation (which we discussed in detail at our Forum with a previous Secretary of State (Rt Hon Justine Greening MP) when my predecessor, Andrea Leadsom MP, was Chair. This approach was also discussed with Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP. They have also input into the current compensation schemes such as Need To Sell to improve and make them fairer;
 - b. at our last meeting, HS2AA organised an expert on noise to contribute – the same expert that contributed to HS2AA's petition on behalf of residents to the Commons Select Committee. As the Commons 'Final Select Committee Report' noted, residents remain concerned about noise, especially the pass-by noise (LAm_{ax});
 - c. a researcher for the MP for North Warwickshire brought matters of common concern in how the compensation schemes were operating and valuations were being done. HS2AA arranged for these issues to be petitioned on behalf of all affiliated groups, in their compensation petitioning session to the Commons Select Committee.
- 8 I have also worked with HS2AA on developing and promoting the concept of an Independent Regulatory Body, which I put forward as an amendment to the Bill. It was supported by a number of MPs in the 3rd Reading debate on HS2 in the House of Commons (including Rt Hon Dominic Grieve QC MP, Graham Brady MP, Keir Starmer QC MP, Tulip Siddiq MP, and Rt Hon Caroline Spelman MP). I am aware that this is part of HS2AA's petition to the House of Lords
- 9 I was part of a team that visited the European Commission to discuss HS2AA's EIA concerns along with other MPs including the Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee. HS2AA were again acting in the interests of individuals who are unable to challenge the government's approach by themselves.
- 10 I sit on PACAC (the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee) that in January 2016 called for evidence on the treatment of complaints and how HS2 Ltd engages with communities. However, I took no part in the production of the report, as it affected my constituents directly. PACAC received representations from HS2AA on behalf of those it represents. From their evidence, I am aware of the concerns up and down the line, in both urban and rural areas. This material is relevant to the need for an Independent Regulatory Body, as the trust and transparency that should be a hallmark of any public body like HS2 Ltd have not yet been achieved. Bernard Jenkin MP, PACAC Chair, reported that "*there is still a culture of defensive communication and misinformation within this public body and that is not acceptable (March 2016)*".
- 11 HS2AA has been a representative voice for affected individuals, and has appeared before various Committees and bodies and in legal challenges. This includes Select Committees in both

Houses eg Environmental Audit Committee, Paving Bill Committee, Lords Economic Affairs Committee, Transport Select Committee. They have also briefed non parliamentary organisations such as the National Audit Commission.

- 12 My concern is that if HS2AA are not granted locus then some of my constituents, and some of those of my colleagues, will be denied a voice on matters of route-wide concern, as they are expecting HS2AA to petition such issues on their behalf.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Cheryl Gillan". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Rt Hon Cheryl Gillan MP

2 June 2016