

Extract from 15 November 2016 proceedings

1. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Thank you, my Lord. I am just going to make a brief statement which will be of relevance to Ms Wharf following the hearing last week. Following that appearance on 8 November, Mr Mould discussed the points the Alliance raised with the Secretary of State for Transport's principal policy advisers on HS2 land and property matters led by Mr Thomas Barry at the Department for Transport and HS2 Ltd. **The Department for Transport shares the Alliance's view that, given the evolving maturity of the NTS scheme and the feedback received on its operational effectiveness, there is a case to amend the NTS guidance on criterion five, compelling need to sell, along the lines articulated by Ms Wharf on behalf of the Alliance.** It is very important to note that where the guidance is amended to provide examples of how successful applications met the compelling need to sell criterion, this should not be considered to be an exhaustive list. It will remain the case that each application will be treated on its own particular merits to decide if it meets the scheme's criteria, including the demonstration of a compelling need to sell.

2. As your Lordships and Ladyship will be aware, the Government has today announced a preferred route for the Phase 2B section of HS2 and alongside this route the Government has announced a public consultation on property measures for Phase 2B. The Government proposes that the starting point for the compensation and discretionary assistance schemes for Phase 2B will be those that operate on Phase One and Phase 2A routes. Whilst the consultations focus on the 2B route, it will be open to all who want to have their say on the measures being proposed and as part of that consultation process, and in the light of the arguments presented by Ms Wharf on 8 November, the Department for Transport officials and Mr Barry confirmed that his office will be in touch with HS2 Action Alliance to invite them to a meeting to take that further. The purpose of the meeting will be to provide the Alliance with an opportunity to set out its detailed comments into the operation of the discretionary schemes, including those raised in front of this Committee on 8 November. That meeting will allow the Government to properly understand the issues the Alliance has raised and to ensure that they are properly and comprehensibly examined. I am instructed that Mr Barry's office and the Department for Transport will be in touch with HS2 Action Alliance in the next week or so with a view to holding the meeting early in the New Year. The consultation itself referred to above ends on 9 March 2017.

3. THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr Strachan. Ms Wharf, you must feel considerable satisfaction to have got so swift and favourable a response to at least one of the points you were submitting last week and now you are going to take us back to South Heath and the portal?