



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

11th June 2020

New Content,

RE: HS2 & THE ENVIRONMENT

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of the HS2 project and concerns relating to its potential impact on the environment; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

On the recommendation of the independent *Oakervee Review* commissioned last year, the Prime Minister has now given the go ahead to HS2, alongside major improvements to local transport networks up and down the country.

Ministers believe that HS2 will play an important role in the UK's transition to a net-zero carbon economy by 2050 and that HS2 will offer some of the lowest carbon emissions per passenger km - at seven times less than passenger cars and 17 times less than domestic air travel in 2030. HS2 is also expected to help reduce the number of cars and lorries on the roads and cut demand for domestic flights. It is estimated that the total carbon emissions produced by both constructing and operating phase one for 120 years would be the same as just one month of the UK's road network.

HS2 was also the first major transport infrastructure project in the UK to commit to achieving 'no net loss' in biodiversity and if this is to go ahead, I am pleased that a green corridor will be created alongside the railway. This will involve the planting of seven million new trees and shrubs, including over 40 native species, along the phase one route from London to the West Midlands.

It is welcome too that an overall £70 million funding package has been made available to enhance community facilities, improve access to the countryside, and help improve road and cycle safety in towns and villages along the HS2 phase one route.

There are approximately 52,000 ancient woodland sites across England, and of these, 43 will be affected by this phase and phase 2a of HS2. It is worth noting that more than 80 percent of the total area of these 43 sites will be untouched by HS2 and remain intact.

Furthermore, I have been assured that HS2 is using a combination of approaches to compensate for the ancient woodlands lost during construction. This includes translocation of soil to other woodlands to improve their biodiversity, planting new woodland and restoring existing ancient woodland.

The HS2 Woodland Fund – overseen by the Forestry Commission – funds projects to support the creation, restoration and enhancement of woodland on private land, or in partnership with



multiple landowners. Ministers have advised that £1.6 million of the £5 million provided for the fund for phase one has gone towards supporting approximately 121 hectares of new native woodland creation, and the restoration of 174 hectares of plantations within ancient woodland sites.

A 'Permit to Clear System' applies for all birds during the nesting season. This involves an ecologist with appropriate qualifications assessing existing survey data and then verifying this with surveys of the site in advance of the vegetation clearance taking place. Once the area has been confirmed to be free of nesting birds, then clearance can commence.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,
Tom

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**