



Transport Committee

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA

Tel 020 7219 3266 Email: transcom@parliament.uk

Mr Mark Thurston
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High Speed Two (HS2) Ltd
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20 May 2020

Dear Mark,

High Speed Two next steps

I am writing on behalf of the Committee to thank you for appearing at our evidence session about HS2 on Friday 24 April 2020 and for your subsequent letter of 6 May.

The Committee will maintain scrutiny of the HS2 project, with a rolling programme of oral evidence sessions over the course of this Parliament, including sessions outside Westminster. We look forward to HS2 Ltd's close co-operation in this work going forward.

Transparency

Transparency about the progress of the HS2 project is essential to ensure proper accountability and robust decision-making. In your evidence, you committed, on behalf of HS2 Ltd, to be open and transparent with Parliament where there is a risk that your company may fail to meet a milestone target it has agreed to, or indeed when it has failed to meet such a target (Q28). This is a vital commitment to ensure public trust in the competence and conduct of HS2 Ltd. We would be grateful if you could please set out in your reply what steps you intend to take to deliver on this commitment.

Governance and culture of HS2 Ltd

The Prime Minister, on 11 February 2020, announced plans to change how HS2 Ltd is managed, including the Government's intention to create new delivery arrangements for Euston station and Phase 2b. We understand that representatives from the Department for Transport and HM Treasury will be appointed to HS2 Ltd's Board. We would be grateful if you could set out what other changes are being made to the management of HS2 Ltd, including the preparations you are making to support the transition to the new governance arrangements for Euston and Phase 2b.

HS2: workforce issues

Thank you for the information in your letter of 6 May about HS2 Ltd's workforce, including HS2 Ltd's contractor and permanent staff ratios, your relationship with trade unions and the National College for Advanced Transport & Infrastructure. With such large sums of public money being spent on HS2, it is essential that the project costs, including staffing costs, are subject to proper scrutiny. We are grateful for the information you have provided on the contractors and permanent staff employed by



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HS2 Ltd. We would be grateful if you could please provide the equivalent information for the full project.

Social distancing during the coronavirus pandemic

We are pleased to hear that the health, safety and wellbeing of your staff and the communities along the route are your top priority and that construction is only taking place where it is possible to do so within the guidelines set by Public Health England and the Construction Leadership Council. We are aware that some communities along the route have expressed concerns about contractors using local facilities and not heeding the Government's advice on social distancing. We would be grateful if you could set out the steps you are taking to ensure that your contractors follow the Government's advice in order to allay the understandable fears of local communities during this pandemic.

Engagement with local MPs

Some communities in towns and villages face serious disruption while the line is being built. It is important that there is a regular dialogue between HS2 Ltd and the representatives of those areas affected by HS2's construction. We are pleased that you promised to meet with MPs whose constituencies are on the route to address the concerns of local communities (Q34). We will be keen to learn in future how many of these meetings have been held.

Thank you once again for appearing before us and we look forward to receiving a response to the requests in this letter. We would be grateful for a response by **Tuesday 9 June.**

Yours sincerely,

Huw Merriman MP
Chair of the Transport Committee