



Transport Committee

Rt Hon Mark Harper MP
Secretary of State
Department for Transport

By email

10 April 2024

Dear Mark,

Handsacre Junction

Thank you for [your letter](#) of 11 March providing further information about the Department's plans for Handsacre Junction and the history of design decisions relating to that site.

The Committee remains concerned about the plan for HS2 to connect to the West Coast Mainline slow lines at Handsacre. While I acknowledge your assurance that this will not limit how many HS2 paths can connect onto the WCML, I would be grateful if you could set out the Department's assessment of the effect of this decision on:

- a) available passenger and freight paths for services already using the WCML;
- b) the resilience of this part of the network; and
- c) the functionality of Rugeley Trent Valley Station.

We would also be grateful for further information about:

- d) What appraisals or other studies were conducted as a consequence of the 2015 decision to accelerate delivery of Phase 2a which led to the plans for connection to the WCML at Handsacre being changed to use the slow lines;
- e) For what reasons the recent analysis by the Department, Network Rail, West Coast Partnership and HS2 Ltd has come to different conclusions than those reached to support the original plans about the importance for capacity of connection to the fast lines; and
- f) What appraisal has been made of the potential costs and benefits of now reverting to the fast-line connection design.

Kind regards,

Iain Stewart MP
Chair of the Transport Select Committee

cc Huw Merriman MP, Minister of State for Rail