



Department for Transport

From the interim Permanent Secretary

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20 June 2025

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP

Chair, Public Accounts Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

[Sent via email]

Dear Sir Geoffrey,

Cost breakdown of the HS2 bat mitigation structure at Sheephouse Wood

Thank you for your letter dated 5 June in relation to the Sheephouse Wood bat mitigation structure being built near Calvert in Buckinghamshire.

We recognise the significance of the structure and welcome the Committee's scrutiny. We recognise this was discussed in December 2024 during the HS2 oral evidence session and in correspondence since then. We are aware of some media reports from March 2025 which speculated that the cost of the structure had risen significantly. It is our understanding that these reports reflect the same cost estimate but adjusted by the journalists themselves to account for inflation since 2019.

As set out in Dame Bernadette Kelly's letter on 31 January, the estimated total cost of the Sheephouse Wood Bat Protection Structure remains as c. £95 million (2019 prices). At the time of writing, the breakdown of the cost remains as above-ground elements being c. £70 million, with the remainder c. £25 million of the cost being additional below-ground civils works required to accommodate the structure.

These costs are further broken down as follows:

Description	Q3 2019 prices
Design	£5.3m
Preliminaries including management staff, temporary works, fuel, storage areas, site facilities and EKFB fee	£14.9m
Concrete, reinforcement, formwork for substructure strengthening (below ground) and approach ramps NOTE: <i>this is additional below ground strengthening works to accommodate the bat structure on top. It does not include the below ground dig & replace, piling, foundations, reinforced structural concrete and engineering fill (aggregate) that would have been required even if there was no structure.</i>	£12.5m
Concrete, reinforcement, formwork and ancillaries above ground – forming the base for the precast arches	£9.6m
Waterproofing and ancillaries	£1.3m
Manufacture and installation of arches, infill ventilation panels, including lightning protection and ancillary works	£49.7m
Instrumentation and monitoring	£1.8m
Total	£95.0m

As noted in Dame Bernadette's previous letter, the total cost of the railway in the section which includes the bat structure is c. £168 million (2019 prices) for all civil works alongside Sheephouse Wood. This figure is the total cost of the civil works for all of the railway assets. These costs are broken down as follows:

Element of total cost	% Proportion of total estimated cost (£168m Q3 2019)
Direct works, includes:	
Services (incl. instrumentation & monitoring)	1.0%
Sheet piling and bored piling	4.3%
Materials (incl. off-site manufacture)	28.1%
Earthworks bulk excavation (excl. imported material)	1.5%
Bat Mitigation Structure construction (incl. indirect costs)	36.6%
EKFB costs (incl. design, risk, fee, package 4, EKFB direct works and fuel)	28.6%

In your letter you also ask for all costs to date. As you know, sub-contractors in the HS2 supply chain will typically be supplying materials and services which are deployed across the construction of the railway in this area. This means that their price and payment will span multiple activities – for example, hired plant equipment will be used across all elements of the works, not just on the bat structure. This makes it difficult to isolate costs incurred to a specific asset like the bat structure. The cost to date (incurred and committed) for this section of the railway, encompassing the full £168 million scope is c.£91m (2019 prices).

As you are aware, we are undertaking a fundamental reset of the whole HS2 programme to break the unacceptable cycle of cost increases and schedule delays.

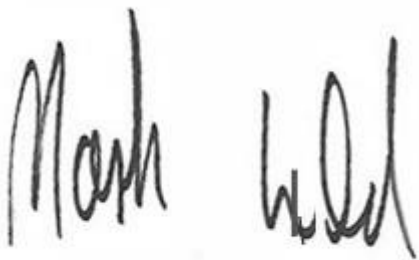
We are committed to transparency and keeping the Committee abreast of any changes in relation to the bat structure and the wider programme.

We hope that this information is helpful to the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jo Shanmugalingam', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jo Shanmugalingam
Interim Permanent Secretary,
Department for Transport

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Wild', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark Wild OBE FREng | HS2 Ltd