

Cheryl Gillan MP
House of Commons.

Dear Ms Gillan,

Local Businesses and the Impact of HS2

Thank you for your letter (21 March) enclosing the response from the Secretary of State (16 March ref. MC/34816) to our report on HS2's impact on Great Missenden businesses. Thank you also for your letter of 2 April.

We would like to place on record our concern that the Secretary of State's response does not address the issues raised and does not, in fact, even mention the subject of the report: the indirect impact of HS2 on local businesses.

Ms Greening's reply appears to be a "stock" letter: it could have been used to answer a great number of other questions about the concept of HS2 and the recommended route. As such, it indicates the Secretary of State seems not to realise the effort that went into compiling "Great Missenden Businesses and the Impact of HS2" nor its purpose in defending the livelihoods of people she would probably normally regard as her natural political supporters, i.e. small businesses.

Further points have now been added to our report. Item 12 has been extended and items 13 and 14 are now included. The conclusions have been updated. Please draw the attention of the Secretary of State to these further concerns by presenting her with our updated report.

Please remind her that the Government's 10 January Command paper states:

"If a new high speed network is to be taken forward, it is absolutely crucial to take a full and proper account, not only of its significant benefits, but also its impacts on the environment and on communities." (Decisions and Next Steps page 29, paragraph 66).

Despite this commitment, we note (item 14 of our report) there is no evidence that there are any plans to assess the impact of HS2 on local businesses along the route (Parliamentary Written Answer 100513).

We would like to ask the Secretary of State what are her plans to assess the short and long term indirect impacts of the new high speed network on local businesses in areas which will not benefit from a local HS2 station? In order to capture the social impact of the route, we suggest the assessment should include the proportion of local total trade that would be lost, the proportion of local businesses which would survive, and the percentage of local jobs that would be lost as a result of HS2.

We note the Government says the EIA will look at HS2's impact on agricultural land classification, but will the EIA examine the severance and isolation of farms and other impacts on farming businesses from HS2 (Command paper - Decisions and Next Steps page 104, paragraph 6.36)?

With regard to our proposal for a fully tunnelled route through the AONB, HS2 has just published a report on tunnelling the Chilterns AONB and Arup's report on the same matter has just been made available. When we have finished considering the reports we will comment in due course.

Meanwhile we are disappointed that Ms Greening has rejected our offer to meet privately and visit Great Missenden as an example of a focus of business activity that we believe will be severely affected by the Government's plans. If Ms Greening will not meet local people directly, please will you invite her to accompany you to Great Missenden so she can see for herself our thriving business community and reflect upon the negative economic impacts of her decision?

In view of what we regard as the inadequacy of the Secretary of State's response so far to our concerns on the impact of HS2 on local businesses, we are making our report available to the Transport Select Committee and other interested parties.

Yours sincerely,

Great Missenden Village Association – Chair: Ernie Wickens

Great Missenden Parish Revitalisation Group – Chair: John Skrimshire

Cllr Seb Berry – Great Missenden Ward Chiltern District Council.

Marilyn Fletcher B.Sc. Ph.D.

18 April

cc.

Louise Ellman, Chair Transport Select Committee

Maria Eagle, Shadow Secretary of State for Transport

Caroline Spellman, Secretary of State, Defra

Richard Benyon, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Natural Environment

Mark Prisk, Minister of State for Business and Enterprise - responsible for small businesses

David Lidington MP

Andrea Leadsom MP

John Bercow MP

Dominic Grieve MP

John Randall MP

Christopher Pincher MP

Dan Byles MP

Michael Fabricant MP

Chris White MP

Jeremy Wright MP

John Redwood MP

Zac Goldsmith MP

Caroline Lucas MP

Dan Hannan MEP

Sharon Bowles MEP

Richard Ashworth MEP
Keith Taylor MEP
Nigel Farage MEP
Steve Rodrick, Chilterns Conservation Board
Chris Daniel, Taxpayers Alliance
Federation of Small Businesses
Ivan Moss, National Farmers Union
Country Land and Business Association
Ralph Smyth, Campaign for the Protection of Rural England
Jennifer Dunn, Countryside Alliance
Policy Exchange
Richard Wellings, Institute for Economic Affairs
Cllr Martin Tett, Bucks County Council
Cllr Nick Rose, Chiltern District Council
Cllr Mike Colston, Bucks County Council
Cllr Andrew Garnett, Chiltern District Council
Shirley Judges, Great Missenden Parish Cllr
Great Missenden Parish Council