

Chiltern Countryside Group presentation to the HS2 Select Committee July 2015

The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

**A natural, national asset to protect
now and for future generations**

The Chilterns

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

at work and play

- a natural asset for all generations



The Chiltern Countryside Group

founded 2008

'To preserve the peace of the Chilterns'



Select Committee visit King's Ash



Landscape of the Chilterns

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Good and future proof transport planning

Any new transport route should adopt the following criteria:

- **Be an integrated part of a national transport policy**
- **Provide regional, national and international connectivity, for eg with HS1 or other gateways**
- **Meet proven need**
- **Demonstrate good use of taxpayers' money**
- **Be built to the highest possible international standards of construction**
- **Be built with minimal damage and impact to the environment and local communities**
- **Should avoid National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which hold statutory protection of the highest level through the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000**

Clearly, HS2 fails on all these counts.

Where we are now

Poor initial planning on route location means:

- Significant mitigation is required to minimise, or at least contain, the devastation on sensitive and nationally protected landscapes caused by those failings
- HS2 trains will not be silent so loss of tranquility, a key resource, for the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- A design route through the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with 2 x 500 m long viaducts, a 900m long up to 16m high embankment and a tunnel portal emerging in ancient woodland

The Environmental Statement - is it credible?



The Promoter's Response Document (pt 14 p7) quotes from the Environmental Statement (2.6.33 vol 3):

'effects...on the special landscape qualities, natural beauty and landscape character will reduce such that it is not considered to be significant...'

Does this sum add up?

60 years = 100s of years.

Ancient woodland and long views



Green spaces of peace and tranquility are good for our wellbeing



The AONB – in part, or wholly valuable?



Grim's Ditch – an irreplaceable scheduled ancient monument

- Grim's Ditch is a Scheduled Monument 350m long. CCG research using Historic OS maps shows it was 650m long. HS2 will destroy 150m. Its position on valley slope gives greater understanding of Grim's Ditch function.
- All sections of Grim's Ditch are "*integral to a general understanding of the monument*": Historic England.
- ES acknowledges it '*lies within a wider rural agricultural landscape...not likely to have changed notably through history*' and its severing '*will remain apparent*' by year 60
- Purpose of scheduling monuments is to '*help preserve them..in the state in which they have come down to us today*' Dept. for Culture, Media & Sport

Clearly the present plans for HS2 will fail to meet this purpose.

Noise and Tranquility in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

**A special case for a special place,
but so far, a failure to address that**

- PRD inadequate in addressing concerns
- No specific noise assessment for the protected landscape of the AONB.
- Quality of experience when visiting the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is a major factor and tranquility an essential and integral part of that experience
- Unacceptable mitigation measures
- No evidence to support view (ES, PRD p24) that '*trains would be quieter*'.

What heritage will HS2 give to future generations?



For the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a landscape recognised as having the highest natural quality, only mitigation of the highest order will give the protection it merits.

The Chiltern Countryside Group respectfully requests the HS2 Select Committee to use its powers to require the Promoter to design and construct the new High Speed 2 railway line within a fully bored tunnel throughout the whole of the Chilterns AONB.

The Chilterns

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Now and for the future

