



Resident's Environmental Protection Association  
The Old lamb  
Potter Row  
South Heath  
Bucks  
HP16 9LT

30 June 2015

Dear Neil,

### **Re REPA tunnel**

Thank you for our meeting last Friday. I am glad that we agree that it is highly desirable that we settle such matters as we can, and so not burden the Select Committee unnecessarily. We are now much clearer as to the key issues between us. These concern, in essence:

- The schedule: the tunnel boring and fit-out rates of progress
- Costs (in particular of tunnel boring and cuttings/earthworks)
- Non engineering costs/benefits (which you have said are not a matter for your team)

As far as the schedule is concerned, we have a difference in view as to what the evidence implies on tunnel boring rates; on fit-out you have explained how the 2015 schedule should be interpreted, but this still leaves important questions unanswered (on which we will write to you separately).

We were disappointed to learn that that the Guide to Tunnelling Costs is of little practical value to petitioners who are promoting tunnel options or wish to better understand the derivation of the costs that HS2 Ltd have given.

You accepted that that the Guide was caveated that it was neither suitable for long nor short tunnels. As all the tunnel options that have been requested in the Chilterns (and further south) involve tunnels which are longer than the specified 15km maximum, the Guide is, in your view, of limited value. You explained that where you had provided your own cost assessment (as for REPA) this over-rod anything that might be deduced from the Guide – despite the fact that your own numbers lacked the level of granularity of the Guide, are apparently inconsistent with the Guide, and appear to petitioners to be questionable in the context of other information on costs.

We find it hard to believe that the Select Committee wished you to provide information to petitioners that is not actually usable, or that they expected petitioners to be satisfied with being unable to scrutinise such summary figures that HS2 Ltd have provided to support their conclusions.

We raised one particular matter with you at our meeting where this problem is very pertinent. As you are now aware, there is a major difference between your quantification of the value of the avoided earthworks resultant from extending the bored tunnel (saving some £26m in the current Part 4 REPA report) and ours.

We have explained how we have produced our estimate, which is several times larger, and that it is based on unit costs (from the 2012 version of your report on costs and risks) and the excavated volumes that HS2 Ltd themselves have released to the Chilterns Conservation Board (set out at Appendix 5 of our June 2015 report). We have shown you precisely on which information we are relying. We asked you to tell us what the basis of your own quantification is (volumes and unit rates) but you declined at our meeting to let us have this information.

The difference between us on this issue is not trivial. If you decided that you agreed our numbers, it would in substance eliminate in greater part the additional cost that you attribute to our proposed tunnel extension. Plainly it is not a matter that we can sensibly fail to pursue, given that our estimate essentially rests on information that HS2 Ltd previously provided. If HS2 Ltd now believe that the information they previously provided is erroneous, it seems a modest request that they provide the revised information.

Can I therefore urge you to reconsider your decision not to explain the basis of your estimate?

If you still believe there is no need to provide the basis of your estimate, we shall ask the Select Committee's assistance in this matter. Obviously we feel that it is unreasonable for us to be expected to take on trust your quantification which is importantly at odds with the information you yourselves have previously released.

Transparency on this matter would allow us to resolve the issue between ourselves, and not have need to trouble the Select Committee.

Yours Sincerely

Hilary Wharf

Copies

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