



Department
for Transport

Lord Berkeley
House of Lords
London
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From the Minister of State
Andrew Stephenson MP

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Our Ref: MC/373529

18 October 2021

Dear Lord Berkeley,

Thank you for your email of 4 October, forwarding on an email from Michael Byng, about HS2.

My Department does not accept the cost estimates prepared by Mr Byng, which are referenced in his email dated 28 September 2021. Mr Byng previously provided cost estimates as evidence to the Oakervee Review and you will find commentary on these estimates in section 7 of the Review's report.

Further, the costs on the programme have been scrutinised by both Houses of Parliament at both legislative stages of the Phase One and Phase 2a hybrid Bills process. The HS2 project has also been subject to a number of Public Accounts Committee and NAO reviews, which hold Government officials to account for the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of public spending in relation to this project.

The Government remains committed to proceed with the delivery of essential North-South connectivity, increased capacity, shorter journey times and to deliver against our levelling up agenda. As part of this commitment, we have put in place new governance arrangements which significantly increased Ministerial oversight, transparency, and accountability of the HS2 project.

In line with the Prime Minister's commitment on reporting progress on the HS2 project, my Department is set to publish the third six-monthly update on HS2 to Parliament later this Autumn. I will continue to keep the public, and Parliament, closely informed on the progress of the project and remain determined to provide increased oversight, transparency and accountability.

We are committed to investing in the railway and have ambitious plans to continue to improve it for the future, with rail playing a key role in helping us to build back better after the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, we recognise that the fiscal environment is challenging and we cannot pre-empt the outcome of the Spending Review for the rail schemes listed by Mr Byng.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrew', with a horizontal line underneath.

ANDREW STEPHENSON MP

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT