



From Lord Berkeley 07710 431542, [tony@tonyberkeley.co.uk](mailto:tony@tonyberkeley.co.uk)

Huw Merriman MP  
Minister for Railways  
Department for Transport

13 November 2023

Dear Huw,

### **Euston after the cancellation of much of HS2 REVISED**

Now that the dust is settling after the announcement of the cancellation of much of HS2 by the Prime Minister on 4 October 2023, I want to draw your attention anew to alternatives for Euston.

#### ***A better scheme for HS2 at Euston***

An alternative scheme for HS2's Euston station and approaches was proposed by the eminent engineer Sam Price and his colleagues to the House of Lords Select Committee in 2016, entitled Euston Express.

It enabled a much-reduced land take by locating both 11 HS2 and 21 WCML platforms within the width of the existing station, and also avoided the massive underground structures on the approaches which HS2 Ltd claimed were necessary to ensure the most reliable and frequent high-speed services to all their planned destinations. (*Sam Price's presentation submitted to the Committee is attached*).

As I have mentioned on many occasions, the HS2 approach design (*illustrated on Sam Price's presentation*) is extremely expensive and has some unresolved safety issues, as does an alternative of creating a track interchange in tunnel directly underneath the WCML approach tracks.

Sam Price and his team argued at the time that these were not necessary even with 11 HS2 platforms and perhaps 18 trains per hour. But now that there are only six platforms planned and some destinations such as Leeds removed, there can be no argument for continuing with either of these expensive (and so far unproven) designs. A flat junction approach that works perfectly well at other major UK termini should be substituted instead. (See slides 24 and 25).

The other major cost saving would be to reduce the width of some of the existing station platforms by moving some of the tracks sideways in order to accommodate the 6 HS2 and the 21 WCML platforms within the width of the existing station. Sam Price demonstrated that this was perfectly feasible even with 11 HS2 platforms.

However, at the time, HS2 Ltd argued that all platforms had to be 12m wide to accommodate three escalators side by side but their reasons for requiring this rather than several groups of two side by side was that their specification demanded it! This was over-engineering gone mad, as has happened on other

parts of HS2. However, at the time Network Rail were forbidden to speak to Sam Price and his team on this and other elements of the design!

The information in the attached presentation and as submitted to the Select Committee is of course out-of-date when it comes to costs. We estimate that the savings in cost by adopting Sam Price's scheme is of the order of £1.8 bn at 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2023 prices.

This alternative demonstrates that, by altering the quantity and specification of the HS2 railway works and platforms, coupled with a full deck above, there could be created a reduced but very attractive solution. This would provide one overall station for both HS2 and WCML trains, freeing adjacent land for commercial development, much needed affordable housing and green space. Since the Prime Minister's announcements about the scaling back of the HS2 project, we have received several approaches from private financiers interested in carrying the work between London Euston and Old Oak Common stations, on a "Design, Build, Finance and Operate" basis.

Sam Price's petition, HoL-00691, was considered by the House of Lords Select Committee on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2016 and received favourably by its members and by HS2 Limited, which conceded during the hearing "That the scheme petitioned was a credible and workable solution to the development at Euston" (Prof Andrew MacNaughton)

I do urge you to at least consider this alternative for Euston as described in Sam Price's petition, assuming that ministers still want the remains of HS2 to terminate at Euston. Being part of Sam's team, I would welcome the opportunity for us to describe it to you in more detail, as well as to speak to Network Rail on it.

### ***Avoiding HS2 at Euston***

It is worth reminding ourselves that, for Phase 1, Old Oak Common was considered to adequately provide sufficient capacity at the London end. Moreover (*and noting that the existing Euston Tube stations are frequently already dangerously overcrowded*) HS2 at Euston was deemed to need Crossrail 2 although the £30 billion plus cost of Crossrail 2 was not in the HS2 budget.

Old Oak Common HS2 station has six platforms and so could easily be adapted to become the HS2 terminus in the same manner as is now envisaged at Euston. In addition, with a modicum of innovation, OOC could be linked to the District Line and even the Central Line, thereby enhancing connectivity and resilience.

OOO offers shorter journey times than Euston for HS2 passengers travelling to or from most London destinations. It is thus hard to justify spending circa £10 billion plus bringing HS2 into an enlarged Euston Station with the commercial over-station development of homes, offices and retail needed for it to be viable. No rational developer is likely to fund such an endeavour.

### ***Better to take an unequivocal decision now to stop HS2 at OOC.***

This would avoid a further 20 years of blight in the Euston area and allow the grim existing station to be refurbished or rebuilt on its own merits. The land no longer required for HS2 could be immediately made available for housing and re-instated green space and for northwards expansion of the Bloomsbury "knowledge quarter" (*if not returned to the original owners under the Criche Down Rules*).

I look forward to hearing from you.

Tony Berkeley

Attached: *Sam Price's PowerPoint presentation*