



From Lord Berkeley
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Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport, SW1.
13 January 2025

Dear Heidi,

High Speed 2 - London end

I write to express my continuing concern about the Government's failure to get a grip of HS2. It has been costing £7bn per annum, projected to continue at that draining level for many years.

In direct consequence, Network Rail's annual capital budget has been halved to a pitiful couple of billion per annum. Worthwhile rail infrastructure projects with good BCRs have been shelved or stalled whilst it is well known that HS2 can never realistically make any positive return.

However, the most expensive part of HS2 will be Euston. For over a year the DfT and Lendlease have sought unsuccessfully to fulfil the challenge of private funding. For the government to ignore, fudge and underwrite that failure would be to accept an open-ended bill.

Surely it would be better to pull the plug now on an uncosted dedicated line to a dedicated HS2 station?

I suggest that it is time to re-configure ambitions. Drop the dreamy spires of "The Knowledge Quarter" and focus on re-furbishing Euston's existing station, such that some HS2 train-sets could access it over the existing rail network. Old Oak Common with the link to the successful Elizabeth line will be more than adequate as a terminus for the remains of HS2 to Birmingham.

This would release the wider Euston footprint to Camden for new social rented homes and replacement green spaces.

Given the parlous state of the economy, surely it is time for our nation to start to live within its means and stop this 'folie de grandeur'?

Lord Berkeley

Yours,
tony