



Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

20 December 2019

Dear Prime Minister,

Congratulations on your re-election and the magnificent victory you have achieved for our country and the Conservative Party.

We have re-formed the HS2 Review Group, which is now being joined by a large number of new and old colleagues. We are writing to you to start the conversation about the future of HS2 before any irreversible decisions are taken by the Government.

As One Nation Conservatives, we need to restore public trust in the process of government and the way we spend taxpayers' money. HS2 is widely seen as a project that is beset by problems, consistently running over time and over budget.

The business case is increasingly weakened. We have a duty to ensure that our new northern constituencies benefit from infrastructure investment to secure the trust they have placed in us. The Oakervee Review has not yet reported, and the Chair is perceived to be in favour of the project because of his previous role at HS2. Indeed, we understand his remit prevented sufficient consideration of alternatives and the panel was not given enough time to do the comprehensive review that this project demands.

It is especially important that we do look at alternatives, particularly as several colleagues have carried out research on how we can fulfil our commitments to new rail investment and other transport projects, rather than pressing ahead with HS2 as currently constituted. These include the myriad of projects identified by Craig Tracey's work with the Taxpayers' Alliance through *'The Great British Transport Competition'* and focusing on the Northern Powerhouse and regional connectivity.

We have significant concerns about HS2 Ltd's ability to manage this project, which includes high levels of turnover of senior staff with little accountability. We also have concerns about the environmental impact of the project. Community engagement has been poor or non-existent, and no lessons have been learnt from the early stages, meaning the hostility against this project has spread up the line.



It is not too late for the Government to change course. We have many new colleagues who have campaigned against or are seriously concerned about the future of this project. Our fear is that if this project goes ahead as planned, costs will continue to spiral, and the business case will further collapse. We are concerned that not only money but also energy and expertise will be consumed by this project, affecting our ability to deliver on other national priorities.

We are requesting a meeting with the Secretary of State for Transport, as a matter of urgency on the morning of Tuesday 7 January. Following that meeting we would very much hope to meet with you, Prime Minister, to discuss the future of HS2. Our aim is to provide solutions that we think will be in the national interest, whilst delivering the investment so desperately needed in those areas of the country which lent us their votes.

Victoria Prentis

Victoria Prentis MP (Banbury)
Interim Chair of the HS2 Review Group

Signatories:

Rt Hon Dame Cheryl Gillan MP (Chesham and Amersham)
Sir Graham Brady MP (Altrincham and Sale West)
Rob Butler MP (Aylesbury)
James Grundy MP (Leigh)
Michael Fabricant MP (Lichfield)
Greg Smith MP (Buckingham)
David Simmonds CBE MP (Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner)
Alexander Stafford MP (Rother Valley)
Joy Morrissey MP (Beaconsfield)
Craig Tracey MP (North Warwickshire)
Andy Carter MP (Warrington South)
Bob Seely MP (Isle of Wight)
Chris Loder MP (West Dorset)
Laurence Robertson MP (Tewkesbury)
Philip Davies MP (Shipley)
Philip Hollobone MP (Kettering)
Rt Hon Jeremy Wright QC MP (Kenilworth and Southam)
Adam Holloway MP (Gravesham)
William Wragg MP (Hazel Grove)
Theo Clarke MP (Stafford)
Sir Bill Cash MP (Stone)

cc. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Secretary of State for Transport, Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP