



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Doug Oakervee
High Speed Rail Review Team
Via email: HighSpeedRailReview@dft.gov.uk

4th October 2019

Dear Mr Oakervee

We are writing as Members of Parliament who are most affected by the HS2 route through South Yorkshire and in particular we are writing to you about the M18 route.

The HS2 M18 route is an appalling story of bad decision-making, half-baked compromises and broken promises which satisfy nobody. We urge you to put it out of its misery in favour of a better, integrated plan which can help our communities.

As you are no doubt aware, in 2016 the Government announced that they were changing the route through South Yorkshire, a route that had been supported by Doncaster, Barnsley and Rotherham councils. Sheffield Council had, understandably, been in favour of a route which would provide them with a High Speed Station at Sheffield Victoria.

The new route, known as the 'M18 route' did not give Sheffield a city centre high speed station, instead its proposals involved a 'spur' on old track in to Sheffield Midland, a station well known for its geographical constraints and the use of existing 'slow-speed' lines for this Sheffield spur. Additionally, it has been made clear that delivery of the Sheffield loop is for TfN and not for HS2, yet no funding and only sketchy plans are in place. It has proved impossible to date to get firm information or answers from TfN to questions that local residents have, including a proposed new station at Goldthorpe.

The M18 route, despite hailed as a cheaper option, instead has proven to be anything but. It has left South Yorkshire with no High Speed station, fewer trains, longer journey times and poorer connectivity. There remain question marks over Sheffield Midland station's ability to accommodate the extra services and demolition figures continue to be revised upwards by HS2, in a manner that draws a number of concerns over HS2 Ltd's ability to properly or correctly assess impact. In addition its impact on our constituents has been heavy indeed, including running straight through a new housing estate in Mexborough and carving out part of an estate in Bramley, and yet our constituents are not able to share in the benefits that we were promised HS2 would bring.

It has been our long-held view that the Sheffield Meadowhall is a far superior route option than the current M18 route, and the financial case made for switching away from the Meadowhall route has proved flawed. However local campaigners have also been working hard to find an appropriate alternative that would deliver on Transport for the North priorities and allow the South Yorkshire region to properly benefit from high speed rail under the name of 'HS North'.

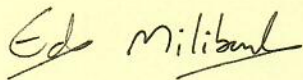
Doncaster and Rotherham Councils have made a joint submission to your Review and we fully support their assessment of the current M18 Route. We believe that both the Meadowhall Route and the HS North option should be fully considered by the Review Board and attach copies of their

submissions here for ease of reference. There has been concern among local campaigners that their submission may not reach the Review Board and given your personal assurance to Ed Miliband at a recent meeting that it would be, we would appreciate your confirmation of this.

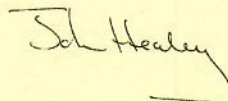
HS2 was intended to be a national infrastructure project that would not just connect London to the North or city to city but one that all communities would benefit from, particularly our towns. Instead we have a project with costs spiralling out of control, no proper integrated approach in route planning and delivery and heavy impacts on local communities who have all of the pain and none of the gain.

Please think again on behalf of our country, our region and our communities.

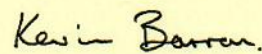
Yours sincerely



Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP



Rt Hon John Healey MP



Rt Hon Sir Kevin Barron MP