



Our Ref: SB10669

5 May 2022

Dear Sir,

Application reference: PL/2022/00256/HS2DIS
Appellant's name: High Speed Two (HS2) Ltd
Planning Inspectorate reference: APP/HS2/19
Appeal Start Date: 12/04/2022

On behalf of my constituents, I am writing to object to the appeal launched by HS2 Limited, APP/HS2/19, once again citing environmental impact, noise, road safety and air pollution. I would be grateful if this letter could be recorded as part of the consideration process against this appeal.

I have voiced my concern about the Schedule 17 Planning application as I believe that HS2 have taken no action to mitigate the impact on the local community or protect the safety of residents living in Balsall Common, in particular on Kelsey Lane and Waste Lane.

The significant increase in the number of vehicles proposed will result in congestion on local roads and will be detrimental to air quality in a residential area. I believe this application is yet another indication that HS2 Limited and BBV have not worked with the local community and taken into account their concerns, a point which has been raised to me by a number of residents who have confirmed that my assessment is consistent with their experiences too.

I have raised this point previously but again, to highlight the safety issues along Kelsey Lane, paragraph 2.1.3 describes the lane as 'predominately residential in nature with infrequent side roads.' The road is totally residential in nature. Nearly all the houses have driveways directly onto the road. Kelsey Lane has frequent side roads – eight within a distance of approximately 700 yards. All of these lead to further houses. There is therefore a significant number of householders' vehicles negotiating a way onto and off Kelsey Lane, which can already be difficult to access.

Schedule 17(6(5)) of the HS2 Act 2017 states: "The relevant planning authority may only refuse to approve arrangements for the purpose of this paragraph on the ground that – (b) the arrangements ought to be modified:

- I. To preserve the local environment or local amenity
- II. To prevent or reduce prejudicial effects on road safety or on the free flow of traffic in the local area, and are reasonably capable of being so modified

The application that has been submitted will impact on the local environment and the local

amenity with the increase in volume of HGV movements on local road, near to residential properties and schools, and will affect the free flow of traffic in the local area. In particular, the application proposes up to 400 HGVs on the A452, the main arterial route through the village and then routes along residential roads, Kelsey Lane and Waste Lane, with some continuing on the narrow rural lanes of Hodgetts Lane and Truggist Lane. This volume of HGVs on residential roads and rural lanes is inherently unsafe. As mentioned previously, there has been a failure to evaluate credible alternatives which have been put forward by local residents and parish councils for a number of years.

One of the reasons the previous planning application PL/2021/00471/HS2DIS was refused was due to the width of Kelsey Lane being too narrow to allow free flow of traffic and the required volume of HS2 lorries without compromising pedestrian safety. This was also referred to in the Planning Inspector's decision notice in dismissing HS2's appeal. HS2 keep submitting applications and appeals to plans that have been rejected due to safety concerns. They have not modified their plans to reflect the concerns and instead, they spend their time launching the same application and appealing when the outcome does not go their way. They spend valuable time trying to push through an application that is unpopular and unsafe, rather than trying to look for alternative routes.

This appeal once again falls short of the commitment that HS2 made to be a "good neighbour" and respect the local community by looking to overturn decisions made by the local council to protect the residents of Balsall Common. In the HS2 Community Engagement Strategy, HS2 state "our aspiration is to be a good neighbour every single day, by respecting the people and communities we impact and being sensitive to their needs, earning our social license to operate." HS2 Limited and BBV's conduct in relation to the people of Balsall Common has not been that of a "good neighbour" and they have failed to earn their social license to operate.

The appeal made by HS2 completely disregards the thoughts and feelings of 1308 people living in Balsall Common who signed a petition created by Berkswell Parish Council member, Andrew Burrow, against HS2's original application. HS2 cannot claim to be a "good neighbour" if they are willing to overlook discernible and justifiable opposition to their plans without even attempting to look for alternative methods of constructing the project.

If these plans go ahead my constituents will suffer significant disruption with losses of amenity, an increase in noise and air pollution as well as increased dangers to health, safety, and wellbeing. Many residents have come to me to express their concerns and they are deeply worried for their safety, especially as they see the new proposal from HS2 which would send even more HGV down small residential roads. One resident explained to me that she has lived on Kelsey Lane for 12 years and her main concern is that it is no longer a safe route to school for her 3 young children as well as for other families who live on the lane. She informed me that trucks routinely break the speed limit and clip the kerbs so no longer feels safe for young families and other pedestrians.

Another resident has expressed concerns regarding the health and well-being of residents in their homes due to the noise and vibrations caused by the HGV movements already going past. Furthermore, members of her family who are key workers (paramedic and ITU nurse) who are working night shifts are unable to rest and sleep at home during the day because of the noise and dust. Residents' quality of life is being affected already. Other residents have also pointed out their concerns about the damage the vibrations from HGV movements are causing to their properties and the longer term impact of this.

This second appeal confirms to residents that HS2 have never really been interested in investigating alternative routes. HS2 have acquired all the properties and land throughout the whole project but not purchased the land that was necessary for an alternative route in

Balsall Common, proving to the residents that there was never any indication by HS2 that they were prepared to compromise and work with residents to find alternative solutions - they were content with following their original plans regardless of the thoughts of the local community. There is an overwhelming sense when I spoke to these residents that HS2 feel that if they dither and delay, the Minister will have no choice but to give into their demands so there is no need to investigate alternative solutions.

The fact remains: HS2 continue to submit almost identical plans which will have a detrimental impact on the amenity of the local area, not to mention the impact on the health and well-being of residents. There is significant local opposition to HS2'S proposals and I urge the Inspectorate to reject this appeal. I strongly urge HS2 Limited and BBV to come up with alternative solutions in collaboration with the local community. As I said in my original submission, the people of Balsall Common deserve much better than what they are being offered.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Saqib', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Saqib Bhatti MBE MP