



Department
for Transport

[REDACTED]

From the Minister of State
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Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your letters of 2 December to Grant Shapps and myself, on behalf of several residents' groups, about the HS2 Golborne Link. I note your concerns and would like to thank you for sharing the suggestions for further improvements to local transport.

As you are aware, the Golborne Link forms part of the current plans for the Western Leg of HS2 Phase 2b. The Government has committed to progressing the Western Leg of HS2 quickly, for the route between Crewe and Manchester, including this Link to the West Coast Main Line. Legislation for this is currently being prepared.

Alongside this, we are working with the National Infrastructure Commission to develop an Integrated Rail Plan (IRP), which will consider how HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail can work together alongside wider investment in transport to make sure we are bringing the benefits to the North and Midlands as quickly and efficiently as we possibly can.

At this stage, I am only able to confirm that the Golborne Link is being considered as part of this study. The IRP will assess the role of the Link, including its benefits and costs, in serving the North West of England and Scotland. It is expected that the IRP may consider alternative options on certain corridors, including the Golborne Link. We expect the findings of the IRP to be published soon and any proposed changes to the route would be subject to future consultation.

Rest assured that I am familiar with the area and your Member of Parliament, James Grundy, has left me in no doubt about the strength of feeling of residents on this issue.

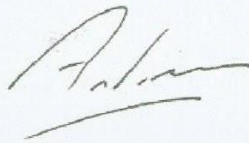
In your letter, you mentioned that projected rail passenger numbers may need to be further revised due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As you would expect, the Department for Transport is working with colleagues across government to understand the impact on transport demand and the pandemic's wider effect on the economy.

In the meantime, however, it is worth noting that the Full Business Case for Phase One of HS2 published in April this year looked at both high and low demand scenarios, underpinned by population and economic growth forecasts. What that analysis showed is that, even in a scenario where demand is relatively low, there is still a case for pressing ahead with HS2.

HS2 is at the heart of our plans to build back better from Covid-19. The project already supports more than 13,000 jobs and the decision earlier this year to go ahead with HS2 gave thousands of workers across the country certainty at a time when they need it most.

I hope that this letter goes some way towards explaining the current situation with regard to the Golborne Link.

Best wishes,



ANDREW STEPHENSON MP

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT