

Allan Cook
Chairman, HS2 Ltd
1 Eversholt Street
London
NW1 2DN

Sent via email

30 March 2021

Dear Allan

I write in relation to the three recent planning applications submitted to Solihull Borough Council by HS2 Ltd which have caused considerable alarm and anxiety in local communities.

You may be aware of a fast-growing petition on Change.org that is at almost 2,000 signatures at the time of writing to you. This states: *“These applications would result in Balsall Common residents having a loss of amenity, an increase in noise and air pollution and increased dangers to health, safety and wellbeing, which can be mitigated by a continuous trace-line haul route. We would therefore ask that these applications be rejected and that HS2 be advised that only a continuous trace-line haul route from the Park Lane compound to the Waste Lane compound is acceptable to the local community.”*

The petition is due to be submitted to the Borough Council on 13 April, and I am writing to support local objectors. Local communities are right to point out the inconsistencies in your current approach when set against the original intent of HS2.

The petitioners have outlined that their objection is on the grounds that alternative routes have not been adequately considered and that, specifically, the applicant has failed to explain why a continuous trace-line haul route from the Park Lane compound to the Waste Lane compound and onwards to Burton Green, which was HS2’s original intent (as evidenced in your document “Berkswell Haul Route – update”), has not been pursued.

Many residents, Councillors and the local MP, Saqib Bhatti, are asking why HS2 have not considered or put forward a proposal for a dedicated haul route across HS2 land which would prevent large volumes of traffic from having to use Balsall Common. I would urge HS2 to consider this as part of the planning applications as a potential amendment to your existing proposals.

There are a number of additional concerns quite understandably being raised by the local community. The issue of displacement parking is at the forefront of residents’ concerns. I would encourage you to consider what is being done to address parking issues at the station and avoid overspill onto local roads if parking restrictions are introduced along Hall Meadow Road. Other important issues raised include pedestrian safety and ensuring clear access to the medical centre as well as the prospect of further congestion and increased air pollution as a result of significant increases in HGV movements in these communities.

I appreciate the logistical difficulties that a project of this size encounters yet failing to take local communities with you is not advised. I know that you will value the opportunity to do all you can to influence a positive outcome to these applications. For clarity, the key issue is that there is a trace line route across HS2 land which would remove HGVs from Balsall Common. This route would go a significant way to addressing a number of important concerns being expressed by local residents, and, critically, would show that HS2 strives to be a good neighbour in the communities it seeks to serve. I would be happy to work with you, Mr Bhatti and the Borough Council to see how we can make this work.

Andy Street CBE
Mayor of the West Midlands

16 Summer Lane, Birmingham, B19 3SD

Mayor of the West Midlands

Finally, there is a public meeting to discuss these issues being held on Wednesday 7 April at 7pm, which will be taking place online. I would value the attendance of a senior member of the HS2 team.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy Street". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Andy Street
Mayor of the West Midlands

Andy Street CBE
Mayor of the West Midlands

16 Summer Lane, Birmingham, B19 3SD