

To Sir Bill Cash MP.

29.10.2016

Dear Sir,

HS2A in Whitmore and Madeley - a much better solution?

The "non technical summary" HS2 Consultation Document has made us aware of the existence of "The Atkins Report: Rail Alternatives to HS2 Phase 2A, November 2015". This presents the evaluation of three alternative rail options, two of which have already been discounted. However, we understand that the third alternative, the "high cost Option number 1" has not yet been discounted? It is defined as being less expensive than the current HS2A project whilst providing almost the same benefits (the effect on journey times is minute). It is stated to be worthy of consideration because it avoids the need to carry out what is described as being the very expensive and complex section of HS2A north of Baldwins Gate. Now, this option would clearly avoid almost the entirety of the very extensive HARM that the current project will visit upon the Parishes of Whitmore and Madeley. In particular, it would avoid the very complex and expensive operations of:-

- raising the A53 (local estimation: by some eight metres...!) in order for the track to be able to run under it.
- driving a twin bore tunnel under the development known as "The Heath" at the edge of Baldwins Gate. Local knowledge is that the Heath consists of the remains of a sand and gravel quarry, NOT the solid sandstone that HS2 have believed it to be. As a result the boring can be expected to be more complex and much more expensive than originally expected.

Now, at the time that the two solutions (Current HS2A v The high cost Option number 1) were compared, leading to the preferred choice of HS2A, the authors of the Atkins report were not aware of these two expensive complications which will significantly affect the cost/benefit balance of the comparison between the two solutions.

REQUEST: that the cost/benefit comparison between the two solutions, "Current HS2A v High cost Option number 1" be revisited. Our understanding is that adopting the "High cost Option number 1" would:-

- very greatly simplify the construction project
- offer virtually the same benefits as the current HS2A project
- Cost over £1bn less
- **SAVE THE PARISHES OF WHITMORE AND MADELEY FROM THE MASSIVE DEVASTATION THAT THEY ARE CURRENTLY FACED WITH.**

Please could you have this looked into for us. The future well-being of our two Parishes is at stake.

Yours faithfully,

Ian Webb, Chairman of Whitmore Parish Council

List of major harm issues facing Whitmore Parish

- the line is due to cross the Meece valley on an as yet to be created embankment + viaduct approximately 10 metres high! Noise and visual impact.
- the A53 needs to be raised (local estimate is by 8 metres!) in order for the line to pass under it.
- the line will pass under "The Heath" in a twin bore tunnel. HS2 were convinced that the Heath was flat and consisted of solid sandstone. They now accept that it isn't flat and have been informed that the ground is the remains of a sand and gravel quarry (ie soft and unstable). HS2 are to run bore holes to verify this locally known FACT. Boring will be much more difficult and costly than currently allowed for in the project costs.
- the line will run through Whitmore Wood on a massive "shelf" and will lose one third of its treed area. A massive retaining wall will reflect operational noise onto the nearby Madeley Park Wood residences.
- Snape Hall Road is to be permanently sectioned. Snape Hall Farm is to disappear completely.
- traffic chaos will exist on the A53 for the duration of the construction ie 7 years, since it will be the primary access route for Construction Vehicle Access to the area.
- Residents of the Heath are faced with major financial and health impact due to the effect on property prices and the inability to sell.