



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt. Hon. Philip Hammond, MP
Secretary of State
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DR

21 May 2010

Dear Philip.

National High Speed Rail Network

Today's national newspapers quite properly give extensive coverage to the Government's programme for the next five years.

In "The Times", there is a diagram with three categories of proposal, the last of which is described as "Out of Bounds" – "Far Too Difficult, Unlikely to emerge from the long grass any time soon". And in the six proposals in that column is the National High Speed Rail Network.

I think it was always clear to everyone that Lord Adonis and the previous Labour Government made their announcement on High Speed Rail in the run up to the General Election because they wanted to get some press releases in Birmingham - indeed, Gordon Brown actually went to Birmingham, specifically to make the announcement.

So it was very much a pre-election punt by the Labour Party.

However, the effect of the previous Government's statement has been to blight a number of properties along the route and to cause considerable uncertainty about their futures for a whole number of communities. As you know, consultation is still taking place on an "Exceptional Hardship Scheme"

I am sure that everyone living on, along or near the route of the proposed High Speed Rail route, would welcome complete clarity as to whether it is the Government's intention still to proceed with this project.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Baldry'.