



Department
for Transport

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From the Minister of State
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Dear David,

It was good to meet you again on 11 March to discuss the impact of HS2 works on your constituency, including the construction of the Colne Valley viaduct. I said I would follow up with a letter on the subjects of working hours and water quality in the Colne Valley lakes.

The Colne Valley viaduct is one of the largest structures along the HS2 route, and its construction will inevitably cause some disruption to local communities. However, considerable care has been taken to plan the viaduct construction, in consultation with relevant local authorities, to avoid the highest noise generating activities taking place during the most sensitive times for residents.

Contractors will build the viaduct in ways that reduce noise as much as they reasonably can, employing an established benchmark “Best Practicable Means” to limit construction activity taking place at night, and to reduce the noise created by all works.

As we discussed, although it will be necessary to carry out some works during extended hours, these will predominantly be reserved for quieter activities such as the concrete pours for the viaduct piled foundations. This involves pouring concrete to fill columns of around 50m in depth, which can take many hours and, once started, cannot be interrupted because doing so would create weaknesses in the structure. Noisier activities such as piling will be undertaken during core hours as far as possible. The noise generated, and its effects on residents, will be closely monitored by HS2 contractors and local authorities, so that adjustments can be made where appropriate.

Special arrangements, including noise insulation and temporary accommodation, are also being put in place for people who may be particularly susceptible to construction noise (e.g. those living in non-standard accommodation, or night-workers). HS2 Ltd will be able to give you further details on this.

Turning to water quality matters, I can assure you that HS2 Ltd takes its environmental obligations extremely seriously, and protection of the aquifer and public water supply is central to the design and delivery of construction activities in this area. HS2 Ltd has been working closely with experts from the Environment Agency and Affinity Water for a number of years to ensure that its work does not cause contamination of the aquifer, or affect the ongoing provision of drinking water from it.

All works with the potential to affect groundwater require prior approval from both Affinity Water and the Environment Agency, and HS2 Ltd (and its contractors) is required to demonstrate that the works are managed in an appropriate manner and, where necessary, mitigation is implemented. In addition, monitoring of groundwater levels and quality and surface water flow and quality is required before, during and after the works to assess any impacts, determine their significance and whether further monitoring or mitigation is required.

I can also confirm that, following requests from the local authority, HS2 Ltd has shared relevant risk and environmental assessment reports. I understand from your recent meeting with HS2 Ltd that they will also be making further information available to the public on their local website, and holding a meeting on the subject with community representatives.

I hope the above helps to reassure you that all reasonable care is being taken to ensure that impacts on your constituents are minimised, and that the safety of the water supply is maintained, throughout the construction of HS2.

Best wishes,



ANDREW STEPHENSON MP

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT