




Leader of the Council

Martin Tett
Buckinghamshire Council
The Gateway
Gatehouse Road
Aylesbury
HP19 8FF

martin.tett@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
01296 382302
www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk

By Email Only 

The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

8 March 2021

Email: - grant.shapps@dft.gov.uk

Dear Grant

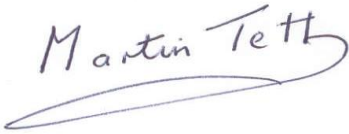
I apologise for having to write to you again so soon about HS2 and their actions in Buckinghamshire. Unfortunately, the intensification of HS2 and East West Rail (EWR) works, the length and breadth of Buckinghamshire, continues to cause major disruption for local communities.

As I alluded to in my recent correspondence on EWR, and was eloquently presented upon by the Chairman of Calvert Green Parish Council at the recent Transport Select Committee, the county is suffering from the impacts of HS2 construction, as well as EWR, particularly in the north of the county. I have met with both HS2 and EWR and made them aware of the tremendous local disquiet on the way they are working, and they have acknowledged they need to improve. However, there is no evidence of that in terms of the way they are managing the detailed works. As we now face huge increases in vehicle movements on already crowded roads, with no adequate sharing of information or realistic mitigation, it feels we have reached a tipping point locally.

I would add to this that the large-scale construction appears to both local people and the Council to be virtually uncoordinated between the two DFT projects. The continued failure to deliver the assurances (such as adequately fixing their damage to our highways) promised by HS2 Ltd, combined with poor local coordination is severely testing our communities and consequently impacting upon the Council's resources as it attempts to fill the communication void and address the local concerns such as providing the independent "sheriffs" proposed by the recent Common's Select Committee. As a result, the Council has felt that it has no option but to find an additional £500,000 to fund additional staff to manage the physical impact locally on the ground, fill the communications gap with local residents and communities, and deal with many unresolved issues resulting from HS2.

On the issues of road safety, the goal posts seem to have moved on the HS2 Road Safety Fund. Consistent with the announced overall aims of the fund, our aim is to focus our very limited allocation working with our HS2 affected parishes to provide a road safety legacy. Your officials have now indicated that our local criteria to not spend this fund on mitigating road safety issues caused by HS2 construction is too restrictive, despite their Guidance Note also stating that, 'it will be for local authorities to decide what their local road safety priorities are and how they wish to spend the money available in order to contribute to the overall aims of the fund'. If the emphasis of this fund has now shifted away from a legacy for local communities to mitigation of HS2 this further increases our argument that £3.95m is wholly inadequate. My officers are scheduled to meet with your officers to discuss this shortly, but I would welcome a meeting with you or one of your Ministers, to discuss this and how the additional burdens on the Council will be resolved and mitigated, not at local public expense.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Martin Tett". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Martin Tett
Leader
Buckinghamshire Council

Cc:

Cllr Angela Macpherson, Buckinghamshire Council

Cllr Peter Martin, Buckinghamshire Council

Cllr Nick Naylor, Buckinghamshire Council

Rachael Shimmin, Buckinghamshire Council

Rob Butler MP

The Rt Hon Dame Cheryl Gillan MP

Greg Smith MP