

Mr Robert Syms MP  
Chair  
High Speed Rail (London-West Midlands) Bill Select Committee  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

29 October 2015

Dear Mr Syms,

**Wendover**

We have carefully considered your recommendation made on 21 July that you “are minded to recommend a southward extension of the currently proposed green tunnel, unless HS2 report back with a very convincing scheme of further mitigation”. Work has been undertaken to look at the relative merits of different tunnel options and additional non-tunnel mitigation and we believe we have found an equitable package that delivers substantial noise mitigation for both North and South Wendover (see [Annex A](#)).

Our conclusion is that a package combining both a 100m southern tunnel extension and enhanced mitigation would provide a similar outcome in respect of noise mitigation at the south of Wendover as a longer tunnel, which is the principal concern of residents. However, it avoids the significant adverse effects that a longer southern extension of the green tunnel would introduce into the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) at this location.

Whilst we believe that a short 100m tunnel extension can be effectively mitigated, this is not the case with the longer southern tunnel extension proposed by the Wendover Society and others, which would require a box structure typically 10m high and 18m wide on an alignment that rises up onto embankment within the AONB. It would not be possible to cover the box structure with earth to mitigate its visual appearance without also covering part of the A413 and Marylebone to Aylesbury Railway Line, even allowing for the use of steeper embankment slopes. This long tunnel extension would thus leave an exposed concrete tunnel structure within the AONB for a distance of approximately 800m. A photomontage of this structure can be found at [Annex B](#), with a photomontage of the existing baseline at [Annex C](#).

In addition, the non-tunnel mitigation we are proposing would deliver additional noise benefits for a wider area of Wendover that would not arise from a southern tunnel extension alone. We see this as a significant improvement on the original scheme.

This non-tunnel mitigation proposed would include:

- inclusion of a 6m high noise fence barrier alongside the railway between the Wendover green tunnel south portal and the Small Dean viaduct;
- consideration of sound insulation works at St Mary’s church, subject to approval from the Diocese Advisory Council for the equivalent of listed building consent;

- consideration of sound insulation at the school, subject to securing listed building consent;
- support to the local highway authority to provide noise fence barriers alongside the A413 bypass past Wendover and along a 500m stretch of London Road past the church and school; and
- an additional noise fence barrier located from the northern portal of the Wendover green tunnel and extending to the access track leading to the portal buildings, approximately 300m in length and up to 6m high, along the eastern side of the railway.

These are, of course, all subject to the getting the necessary consents and approvals.

The provision of a short tunnel extension and noise barriers as proposed, in addition to improvements to the modelling of LAMax around tunnel portals, would provide a similar outcome to that achieved with the long green tunnel extension, in that the forecast sound levels at the church would no longer be likely to cause a significant effect. These measures would also remove the significant noise effects reported on Bacombe Lane and reduce noise impacts at Wendover House School. Additional works to the church and school buildings themselves would further enhance the noise mitigation achieved and we are in detailed discussions with both the church and the school about the scope of these.

We believe that in the round this package of enhanced mitigation would deliver noise results comparable to an extended, but visually intrusive, tunnel option and has the added benefit of also reducing the existing traffic noise experienced from the A413 and London Road for residents of Wendover. But, more importantly, we believe it would offer the most viable way of protecting both residents and the Chilterns AONB. Therefore, our recommendation is that the Committee pursue the option of a short 100m southern tunnel extension plus enhanced non-tunnel mitigation.

The intention is that the amendments required for these changes will be brought forward in a Supplementary Environmental Statement, as part of the fifth Additional Provision to the Bill, in December.

Yours sincerely



**Roger Hargreaves**  
Director, Hybrid Bill Delivery  
High Speed Two Limited