

HS2 – item for LAF agendas

HS2 – the fight goes on

Update on HS2, and how BCC with others continues opposition to the Government's case.

BCC continues to fight HS2, but there is concern that members of the public are not writing in the numbers needed to raise their concerns with their MPs. Our message is:

- Keep up the momentum
- Write to your MP outlining your views on HS2
- And... encourage friends and family who may not live on the route – but whose taxes will still be used to pay for it – to write to their local MPs.

HS2 is a national issue, it has huge implications for every taxpayer in the country for generations to come. Unless MPs hear from their constituents, they will not know or have a complete picture of how their electorate feels.

Please pass the word on, encourage as many people to write to their MPs and get the message out there. It's very easy to find out how to find your MP – look on the 51m website, 51m.co.uk – click on the Write to Your MP tab, type in your postcode and the details you require will appear.

We are told HS2 will cost £32 billion – that is about £51m for every single Parliamentary constituency in the UK, or £1,000 per household. This money could be better spent on new schools, hospitals, improved local transport infrastructure, education, nurses – services which will bring direct benefit to our communities.

BCC is the lead authority of 51m – now a 17-strong group of councils opposing proposals to spend £32 billion on the HS2 scheme.

In recent weeks we have added both Oxfordshire County and Three Rivers District (Herts) to our ranks and momentum to the anti-HS2 argument continues to grow.

BCC and the 51m group presented a strong response to the consultation, which ended on July 29. Buckinghamshire also made a specific response on environmental and local issues. Presentations were made at the Institution of Civil Engineers, the Royal Town Planning Institute and the London Assembly.

We also put a submission and made representation at the Transport Select Committee. The TSC meets next on September 6, when environmental groups will speak, and the final hearing is on September 13, when Secretary of State for Transport Philip Hammond will appear. Mr Hammond is expected to announce his decision in December 2011.