

Parliamentary Lobby Day October 25th

Philip Hammond:

Consultation will cover 4 areas:

1. The principle of High Speed Rail
2. The corridor it will follow
3. The chosen line of route
4. The approach to blight

Oral Questions 28 October 2010

High Speed 2 Project

7. **Tony Baldry (Banbury) (Con):** If his Department will fund (a) tunnelling and culverting work and (b) other mitigation work arising from the construction of any future rail line as part of the High Speed 2 project. [19918]

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr Philip Hammond): The coalition Government take very seriously the potential impact of a high-speed rail line on line-side communities and property owners. HS2 Ltd's current preferred route utilises a range of mitigation techniques, including tunnelling and culverting where appropriate, practical and economically justifiable.

Tony Baldry: On page 174 of the HS2 proposals, the report states:

"It is difficult to analyse exactly where the benefits of HS2 would accrue."

HS2 is a project that will clearly be expensive in construction costs, mitigation costs and the costs of compensation. Will my right hon. Friend give an undertaking that next year's consultation will include a consultation on the principle of HS2 and on whether the same amount or even less money spent on the existing rail infrastructure could produce similar or even better results?

Mr Hammond: I can assure my hon. Friend that the option of spending money on enhancing existing rail infrastructure to provide the capacity and the additional connectivity that a high-speed railway will provide has been examined in detail and has been found not to be a practical option.

The consultation next year starts from the premise that the Government believe that a high-speed rail network will be in the United Kingdom's interest, but it will consult on issues to do with the design of that network, the route and the details of the proposals for the London to Birmingham link.