

Jonathan Pile

Via email: yorkshireagainsth2@gmail.com

7 September 2016

Dear Mr Pile

Reference number: FOI16-1555

Thank you for your recent information request dated 09/08/2016. I have processed your request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 ('EIR') as the information requested is environmental according to the definition in regulation 2 of the EIR. Section 39 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the Act') exempts environmental information from the Act, but requires us to consider it under the EIR.

In your email, you requested information on demolitions, noise and cost in relation to the proposals for an alternative HS2 route in South Yorkshire. I confirm that we hold some information in relation to your requests and our responses are provided below.

"DEMOLITIONS

"As requested at our meeting with you on Aug 2nd at Crofton, it is extremely urgent that we have comparative figures on Demolitions viz Route 1 versus Route 4 as you did not have that key information available for the information event. Figures taken from your reports list 105 demolitions for Route 1 and our estimates on demolitions indicate 28 additional demolitions in addition to the 212 at the Shimmer Estate in Mexborough total 240 which contradicts the statement by Sir David Higgins "Overall, though, it is expected fewer properties would be need to be demolished" (p.22 Sheffield & South Yorkshire Report)

"NOISE

Could you confirm if any noise nuisance figures were produced to compare to the 6,200 affected properties on Route 1."

I can confirm that we do hold some information relevant to your requests on demolitions and noise however access has been refused to the information we hold on the following grounds:

Regulation 12(4)(d) – Material in the course of completion, unfinished documents and incomplete data

Regulation 12(4)(d) of the EIRs provides that a public authority may refuse to disclose information "to the extent that the request relates to material which is still in the course of completion, to unfurnished documents or to incomplete data". In effect, the exception covers three classes of information: information which relates to material which is still in the course of completion; unfinished documents; and incomplete data. If the information falls into any one of these categories, then the exception is potentially engaged (subject to a consideration of whether the public interest in maintaining the exception outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information).

We consider that Regulation 12(4)(d) of the EIR applies to this part of your request because it relates to information which forms part of material that is still in the course of completion and comprises part of

unfinished work. The information requested is currently "work-in-progress" as final decisions on the Phase 2 route have yet to be taken and as such the information is likely to be subject to change. The alternative route in South Yorkshire is, at this stage, a recommendation only in the form of a report authored by David Higgins, the Chair of HS2 Ltd. The Secretary of State for Transport will now consider David Higgins' report in detail and make an announcement on the full HS2 Phase Two route later this year.

Following the announcement on the Phase 2 route by the Secretary of State, we can commit to sharing the information that has informed a decision. This will include demolition and results from the noise appraisal for the comparison of Sheffield Meadowhall and M18/Eastern routes. We will also publish a sustainability report which summarises the key potential environmental impacts based on the current level of design. The report would include details of the potential number of demolitions for the Phase 2 route based on the footprint of the railway (including station and depots) and the potential noise impacts on groups of dwellings based on an initial airborne noise appraisal. Information on where clusters of dwellings may benefit from mitigation will also be provided.

All exceptions under EIR are subject to a Public Interest Test (PIT) which means that we need to consider whether *"in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exception outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information"*. We have weighed up the benefits to the public of releasing the information against the factors for not releasing it. We consider that the factors for not releasing the information outweighs that for disclosure. Please see [Annex A](#) for full details of our consideration.

"COST

"Could you please provide a breakdown on the £1 billion saving on Route 4 compared to Route 1. We were told at the event that the cancellation of Meadowhall Station was the significant part of this. Given the new route is longer, & will involve 240+ demolitions (twice the 105 of Route 1) and significant additional noise nuisance to Crofton, Mexborough, Hemsworth, South Kirkby & significant concerns about mine working geology in the Crofton & Mexborough area we feel Route 4 will be more expensive on a "like for like" comparison (excluding Meadowhall Station one off saving)"

"Could we please have these figures if they exist as we would like a level playing field for our counter proposal to the Secretary of State."

I confirm that we hold information relevant to this part of your request. The breakdown of the cost saving is attached, please see [Annex B](#).

If you are unhappy with the way we have handled your request or with the decisions made in relation to your request, you may complain in writing to HS2 Ltd at the above address. Please also see attached details of HS2 Ltd's complaints procedure and your right to complain to the Information Commissioner.

Please remember to quote reference number **FOI16-1555** in any future communication relating to this request.

Yours sincerely

Jane Ivey
Freedom of Information Manager
High Speed Two (HS2) Limited

Your right to complain to HS2 Ltd and the Information Commissioner

You have the right to complain to HS2 Ltd within two calendar months of the date of this letter about the way in which your request for information was handled and/or about the decision not to disclose all or part of the information requested.

Your complaint will be acknowledged and you will be advised of a target date by which to expect a response. Initially your complaint will be re-considered by the official who dealt with your request for information. If, after careful consideration, that official decides that his/her decision was correct, your complaint will automatically be referred to a senior independent official who will conduct a further review. You will be advised of the outcome of your complaint and if a decision is taken to disclose information originally withheld this will be done as soon as possible.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF