

19<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about HS2 and the environment.

On the recommendation of the independent Oakervee Review commissioned last year, the Prime Minister has given the go ahead to HS2, alongside major improvements to local transport networks up and down the country.

HS2 will play an important role in the UK's transition to a net-zero carbon economy by 2050. I understand that HS2 will offer some of the lowest carbon emissions per passenger km, seven times less than passenger cars and 17 times less than domestic air travel in 2030. Indeed, HS2 is expected to help reduce the number of cars and lorries on the road and cut demand for domestic flights.

It is estimated that the total carbon emissions produced by both constructing and operating Phase One for 120 years would be the same as just one month of the UK's road network.

HS2 was also the first major transport infrastructure project in the UK to commit to the achieving 'no net loss' in biodiversity.

I am pleased that a green corridor will be created alongside the railway. This will involve the planting of seven million new trees and shrubs, including over 40 native species, along the Phase One route from London to the West Midlands.

It is welcome too that an overall £70 million funding package has also been made available to enhance community facilities, improve access to the countryside, and help improve road and cycle safety in towns and villages along the HS2 Phase One route.

I regret that a number of trees exhibiting veteran or ancient features will need to be removed for the construction of HS2. I do believe HS2 is an exceptionally important infrastructure project that must be built, but I want to reassure you there are a number of compensation packages in place to compensate for the unavoidable loss of this woodland during construction. For example, the HS2 Woodland Fund – overseen by the Forestry Commission – funds projects to support the creation, restoration and enhancement of woodland on private land or in partnership with multiple landowners. I understand that £1.6 million of the £5 million provided for the Fund for Phase One has gone towards supporting approximately 121 hectares of new native woodland creation, and the restoration of 174 hectares of plantations within ancient woodland sites.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



**Alok Sharma MP**

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