

# Chesham Town Council

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Dear Sir

## Chesham Town Council's Response to the HS2 Proposals

I have been asked to submit Chesham Town Council's response to the HS2 proposals.

As you will see from the enclosed completed response form, the Council has serious doubts about HS2. This is not however because of insular self-interest (though it will have a negative effect on Chesham as outlined below). Rather it equally reflects our belief that at a time when huge cuts in public sector spending are being forced upon the Government so as to reduce the enormous budget deficit, there seems to be no commercial case for spending over £30 billion on a project, which would slow down the journeys of more people than it speeded up and which is neither "low carbon" nor "green". The Council very much regrets the lack of a detailed environmental impact assessment.

As for the effects on our residents, it is very hard to think of any significant benefits that would accrue to Chesham as a result of the building of HS2. Chesham people would only be able to access this service by first travelling to London. Given the amount of time that takes and allowing time for the transfer to the HS2 station, a car journey from Chesham to Birmingham would probably prove quicker and less expensive.

High speed railway construction is a very specialised business, dominated these days by non U.K companies. Given the skill sets required, it seems unlikely that the construction of HS2 would provide employment opportunities for local people. On the other hand it is certain that a great deal of disruption to traffic flows through and around Chesham would be caused during the construction process. Many residents commute by car to work in neighbouring towns. In the mornings and evenings there is heavy traffic on the Chesham – Amersham and Moor Roads. Church Street, where there is a "pinch" at the junction with Wey Lane, also experiences substantial rush hour traffic heading up the Missenden Road, which route would be bisected by the railway close to the turn off for South Heath. Naturally there is also substantial commuter



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## Chesham Town Council

continued . . .



traffic coming through Chesham in the opposite direction, down the Amersham and Missenden roads and down Nashleigh Hill. As things stand, the road system around Chesham just, but only just, about copes with peak traffic flows, except when there are interruptions due to road and infrastructure works . Then there can be lengthy and frustrating delays for car and lorry drivers. An already at close to capacity road system would come under severe additional strain during a construction period lasting years.

Thus, whilst bridges over the railway route were being built, and they would be built in advance of the railway itself, one would expect a very large increase in the volume of traffic with construction plant, lorries, building materials and workers being conveyed to the working sites. These materials in huge quantities and excess spoil could only be moved by road and the idea that none would come through Chesham's narrow streets is not, in our view, credible.

Neither is it credible that Chesham would not be adversely affected by the tunnelling work at Amersham and elsewhere and viaduct construction. Life around here could become very difficult indeed.

Please feel free to contact me if you require any further information from Chesham Town Council on this matter which raises great concern for us on both a national and local level.

Yours faithfully

Bill Richards  
Chesham Town Clerk