



## HS2 UPDATE

### SUBMISSION FROM PROF. F. STEWART – CHAIR OF THE SIR JOHN MOORE FOUNDATION, APPLEBY MAGNA

Dear Mr Crossland

I am Chairman of the Sir John Moore Foundation. As a Charity we own the Grade 1 listed building providing a unique home for a successful primary school and community facilities in Appleby Magna. Originally designed by Sir Christopher Wren, it has provided education for over 300 years and its future is at threat from the HS2 reroute proposal around Measham. I have been asked by my Board of Trustees to express our strong objections to your suggested support for this reroute.

I have just read your HS2 update report for the Environment & Transport Committee on 19 January 2017. We are extremely unhappy at your failure to address the negative consequences of the proposed Measham rerouting on the Sir John Moore School in Appleby Magna. The County Council's statutory obligations regarding education and heritage are being ignored. Your report is quite wrong and misleading to treat the rerouting around Measham and that around East Midlands Airport as one proposal. They are two separate and distinct proposals and must be treated as such. Our objections are solely addressed to the Measham reroute.

The Sir John Moore CoE Primary School is a thriving school with 140 pupils ranked as 'outstanding' by OFSTED. It is at the heart of the daily life of Appleby Magna and its neighbouring villages. The original HS2 route was a kilometre from the School in a positioning, recommended by HS2 for noise impact reasons, close to the M42/A42 corridor. The new route runs through tranquil fields adjacent to the school on an elevated embankment only 200 metres away.

There are three major threats to the future of schooling arising from this:

1. Operational impact: the noise of the operation of high speed trains will be a continual unsettling and disruptive intrusion on the learning environment where stable quiet conditions are essential for attention and concentration.
2. Constructional impact: the massive disruption involved in an engineering project of this scale could render the operation of the school completely impossible for 1 or 2 years. Although temporary this could nevertheless result in a discontinuity threatening long term viability.
3. Strategic impact: the proposed reroute would maroon the villages of Appleby Magna and Measham in between two major noisy transport infrastructures. Surely this is normally regarded as quite unacceptable in terms of general land use planning. It could well have a major chilling effect on settlement intentions of potential residents with adverse consequences for future school enrolment.

The Sir John Moore School is a Grade 1 listed building – the highest level of classification of historical and architectural importance. There is only a handful of secular buildings of this national status in Leicestershire.

There are two major threats to this extremely important heritage asset:

1. The building: the stability and integrity of this 300 year old building could be threatened by ground disturbance and vibrations arising from both construction and operation of HS2 in this location.
2. The setting: it is a building of modest scale whose remarkably grand appearance depends on its rural edge of village setting. This would be utterly changed by the new line which would be clearly visible from the road frontage adjacent to the school.

The justifications for this reroute seem very weak and unpersuasive:

1. Ecology: the original route through the Measham industrial estate and next to the A42 was recommended by HS2 to enable the shortest possible traverse of the River Mease Special Area of Conservation. The new route involves a longer, potentially more deleterious crossing over this highly sensitive ecological area. It is therefore a worse option in terms of environmental impact
2. Employment: the original route would run through the Plastics Omnium factory. Relocation nearby could be achieved with the compensation due and a period of several years for it to be achieved
3. Housing: the original route affects an unbuilt housing estate. The applicants for this site were fully aware of the proposed HS2 route. Arrangements can be made for housing relocation on an alternative site
4. Road: A42 realignment can be addressed through appropriate measures.
5. Regeneration: the attractiveness of a new section of the Ashby Canal will be undermined by the new proposed route which will destroy the traditional rural character of the canal approach into Measham which underpins the rationale for the whole scheme. On the other hand the A42 realignment of the original route offers the opportunity for including a connection of the canal to Moira.

In sum the principal arguments mainly seem to be about cost saving rather than any substantive unmanageable problems. On the other hand the deleterious impact on our school and building are irreversible and not open to such solutions given its unique historic character and setting.

Our Trustees are upset that no effort has been made by political representatives or responsible organisations to contact us directly to discuss the negative impacts of this new HS2 reroute and seek our views.

We ask the County Council not to endorse the rerouting of HS2 around Measham and to act to secure the future of our school for the benefit of our Leicestershire community.

Yours sincerely

**Prof Fred Steward**

**Chair of the Sir John Moore Foundation, Appleby Magna.**