

Christopher Pincher MP: News Release

Christopher Pincher Lobbies Minister on High Speed 2

Christopher Pincher, Member of Parliament for Tamworth, Drayton Bassett and Hints, together with colleagues Dan Byles, MP for North Warwickshire and Andrea Leadsom, Member for South Northamptonshire, met with Transport Minister Theresa Villiers last week to outline their concerns about the High Speed Rail link proposed by former Transport Secretary Lord Adonis before the General Election. The Department of Transport has asked Sir Brian Briscoe, Chairman of High Speed 2, to review his original proposals but for the moment the current "Route 3" which cuts through Lichfield District remains on the table.

In the meeting Ms. Villiers made several important comments:

- The Secretary of State, Philip Hammond MP, is waiting for the Mawhinney Report (that is looking into the viability of moving the HS2 starting point to Heathrow) before finally deciding which route/s to take for HS2 to consult on in early 2011.
- The Government will take **all** realistic measures to mitigate the damage caused to the environment and communities along the route he decides upon. This will include using slower speeds (so the route can be flexed away from sensitive areas) and tunnelling in order to minimise the impact.
- The Secretary of State will make an announcement soon (possibly in September) on the shape of the Exceptional Hardship Scheme. Anyone wishing to submit claims should write to him now (address: Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP, Department for Transport, Great Minster House, 76 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DR) with a copy to Christopher Pincher at the House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA, in order to be considered in the first group. Any compensation will be at 100% of pre-blight levels.

Mr. Pincher and his colleagues urged Ministers to visit their constituencies to meet with local residents and see at first hand impact of Route 3. Ms. Villiers undertook to look into when Mr. Hammond or other ministers will be able to visit affected communities.

Following the meeting Mr. Pincher said:

"I am pleased we were able to get across to the Minister what a dramatic impact communities building High Speed 2 will have on communities like Drayton Bassett and Hints on the edge of Tamworth. Theresa Villiers said she accepted that this is a big issue."

"We now know that consultation will be full and meaningful and that the government is prepared, whichever route is chosen to consult upon, to listen to local people and do all it can to minimise impact."
"But we must keep up the pressure to get this route changed. The campaign continues. "