

Pincher Vows to Vote Against HS2

Christopher Pincher, Member of Parliament for Hints, Hopwas & Tamworth, has made clear that he will vote against HS2 legislation when it is debated in the House of Commons at the end of April. The "Second Reading" of the Bill (when the principle of the legislation is discussed) will be held on 28th April allowing MPs just one day to debate the proposals for Phase 1 of the development. Leader of the House of Commons, Andrew Lansley MP, made the announcement to MPs during Business Questions on 3rd April. If the Bill passes its Second Reading then it is sent for detailed scrutiny by a "Hybrid Bill Committee" of MPs who will examine the legislation line by line and interview witnesses. That process could take several months.

Mr Pincher said:

"I have long maintained that the business case for the proposal to build a brand new railway line across virgin countryside in our part of the world just does not stack up. Nor have we been promised the best possible mitigations to reduce the impact of the line on local communities such as Hints, Drayton Bassett and the Packington area, nor offered any decent compensation. Entire villages are blighted by the prospect of the route. So I cannot support this legislation and will again have to vote against my own Party. I voted against the Second Reading of the HS2 Paving Bill last year and I will vote against the main Bill when it comes before the Commons at the end of the month."

"I am also very disappointed that just one day has been allocated to debate this important topic which concerns so many local people – including residents of Wilnecote and Stonydelph affected by plans for Phase 2. I do not think that gives the House of Commons enough time to properly discuss the matter. I raised this concern, together with Michael Fabricant MP and Cheryl Gillan MP, at Business Questions last week."

Tamworth constituency is particularly affected by both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of HS2. Phase 1 runs past Drayton Bassett, through the Bourne Valley passed Hints and not far from Hopwas, along Flats Lane to Packington and on to Whittington and Lichfield. Phase 2 runs parallel with the M42 within sight of Hockley and through Relay Park at junction 10.

All the major parties – Conservatives, Labour and the Lib Dems – support the HS2 proposals. Even the Scottish Nationalists do not oppose it so it is certain to pass with only a handful of MPs, including Christopher Pincher and Lichfield's Michael Fabricant, voting no.