



Department
for Transport

Claire Perry MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

07 DEC 2012

From the Minister of State
The Rt. Hon. Simon Burns MP

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR

Tel: 020 7944 3082
Fax: 020 7944 4492
E-Mail: simon.burns@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Web site: www.dft.gov.uk

Our Ref: MC/61284

06 DEC 2012

Yours Claire

Thank you for your letter of 22 November, further to our recent meeting to discuss the Great Western franchise and the scope of planned Great Western Main Line electrification.

The Terms of Reference for the study I agreed, which will look at the case for an extension of planned electrification to Bedwyn and Newbury, has now been drawn up and as I said in reply to your parliamentary question on 20 November, it includes consideration of the freight route from the quarries just outside Westbury, as well as the diversionary route to Bath via Bathampton Junction. Departmental officials are in the process of contracting this work to specialist consultants and I expect to see their conclusions during February next year.

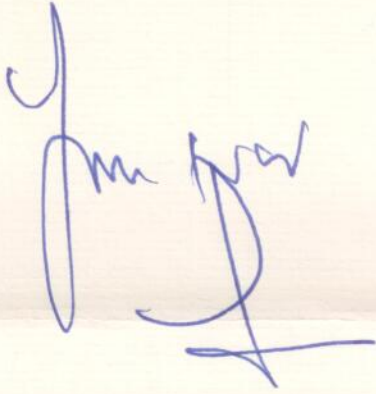
We have no objections should a small group of your constituents with knowledge in this field wish to meet with the consultants once they are appointed.

In terms of the appraisal methodology used, we will be looking closely at the proposals from organisations who wish to carry out the study. However, accepted practice is that any analysis should comply with accepted and published Departmental guidance on the conduct of transport studies, known as I expect you know as 'Webtag', which is further explained on our website at: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/webtag/>.

I understand your further point about the service frequency contained within the Train Service Requirement published with the Invitation to Tender (ITT) in July and the importance of services from stations on the Berks and Hants

line. However, I am afraid that I cannot add much, at present, to my previous reply as we remain unable to comment on the detail of the specification as we continue to await the findings of the independent review of franchising by Richard Brown CBE. I have, however, noted your concerns and will be mindful of these when we restart the Great Western franchising process.

I realise this will be disappointing but trust it helps to confirm our current position.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Simon Burns', is written over the text. The signature is stylized and cursive.

THE RT. HON. SIMON BURNS