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19 October 2015

Dear Lucy, Henry,

**Consultation process for Great Western electrification - Chilterns and North Wessex Downs AONBs**

Following recent correspondence and meetings with your officers, and with the South Stoke and Goring Gap Railway Action Group, we are aware of your concerns regarding the visual impact of the overhead line equipment (OLE) that is currently being installed within the Chilterns and North Wessex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

As we have explained, the Government recently confirmed Great Western Electrification as a top priority. It is the intention that the works in the area continue as planned, as this section of the Great Western Mainline will form the test track for the new Intercity Express rolling stock from early 2016.

However, Network Rail has committed to undertaking a review of viable design options for the OLE within the AONBs, the output of which will form the basis of a public consultation in early 2016.

We also confirm that should the outcome of the design options and the public consultation highlight that Network Rail should undertake retrospective works to alter or replace the installed apparatus, Network Rail intends to undertake such works as are necessary subject to costs and the agreement of our funders. Such works may result in disruption of the operational railway, and so we are unable to commit to a timescale at this point, but we will continue to engage with your organisations throughout the design and consultation stages.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S.C. Maple".

**Simon Maple**  
Route Programme Sponsor (Western)  
Great Western Route Modernisation

Cc: Ian Haslam (South Stoke & Goring Gap Railway Action Group)