

The Conservative government's handling of the HS2 project has not inspired confidence – Andy McDonald

Andy McDonald MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Transport,

responding to the awarding of contracts to build the first phase of HS2, said:

"The last Labour government initiated High Speed 2 and we continue to support the project to increase network capacity and deliver economic benefits.

"Labour will press the Government to ensure that the route causes as little disruption as possible and those affected are appropriately compensated.

"The Conservative government's handling of the project has not inspired confidence, with independent experts already calculating cost over-runs of the initial section of almost twice the official figures. The Transport Secretary must reassure the public that there will be no repeat of the conflict of interest scandal between HS2 and CH2M. He must also clarify what steps he has taken to assure himself of the suitability of the decision to award contracts to Carillion, in light of the company's recent difficulties.

"HS2 must deliver value for money and retain public support, which means ensuring jobs and apprenticeships for the UK workforce and, crucially, securing the best deal for taxpayers by running services under public ownership, not for private profit."