

High Speed Two

Frequently Asked Questions

Produced by David Lidington
Member of Parliament for
Aylesbury

March 2014

david.lidington.mp@parliament.uk
0207 219 2514

David Lidington
Member of Parliament for Aylesbury
House of Commons, London
SW1A 0AA

www.davidlidington.com
Twitter: @DLidington

Contents

Introduction - page 3

What happens next? - page 4

How can I find maps of the route for HS2? - pages 4 & 5

What is the Department for Transport's justification for this scheme? – page 5

What are the respective roles of the Department for Transport and HS2 Ltd? - page 6

The Hybrid Bill and Petitioning

- What is a Hybrid Bill? – pages 6 & 7
- What is a petition? – page 7
- Who may petition? – pages 7 & 8
- How to petition – pages 8 & 9
- Do I need an agent? – page 9

What is the current situation with compensation and what is going to happen in the future?

- Current situation - pages 9 & 10
- The Exceptional Hardship Scheme - pages 10 & 11
- The Consultation on Compensation – pages 11 & 12
- What is a safeguarding zone? – page 12
- What are compulsory purchase orders? – pages 12 & 13
- What if only part of my property or land is within the safeguarding zone? – page 13
- Who should I contact with concerns about my property? – page 13

What is the current situation with mitigation?

- Environmental Statement – page 14
- Adding further mitigation measures - page 14

Judicial Reviews

- Background – page 14
- Appeals - page 15

What is the significance of the Community Forums that were set up?

- What were they designed to do? – page 15
- What could a Community Forum do/not do? – pages 15 & 16
- Are the Community Forums still meeting? – page 16
- Where can I see what was discussed as the Community Forums? – page 16
- Did I attend Community Forums? - page 16

The Maintenance Loop at Stoke Mandeville

- Background – page 17
- What is a maintenance loop? – page 17
- What is the impact of the maintenance loop on the local area? – page 17
- The views of the local community – page 17

A Fully Bored Chiltern AONB Tunnel

- Background – page 18
- What is your view? – page 18

How do I contact the Department for Transport or HS2 Ltd?

- The Department for Transport - page 18
- HS2 Ltd - page 19

Introduction

In March 2010 the then Transport Secretary Andrew Adonis (Lord Adonis) announced the Labour Government's intention to build High Speed Two, a rail link between London and the north of England to be built in two phases. The first phase to be built is between London and Birmingham and the second a Y route going to Manchester and Leeds.

This decision was reviewed by the Coalition Government upon taking office in May 2010 and in December 2010 the then Secretary of State for Transport Philip Hammond announced that the route to be consulted on was largely the same as the one proposed by Lord Adonis.

In January 2012, following the consultation which took place between February and July 2011, the previous Secretary of State for Transport Justine Greening announced that the Government intended to proceed with High Speed Two along the proposed route. She also confirmed that a Hybrid Bill to grant powers of construction would be deposited in Parliament before the end of 2013.

As I am sure you appreciate the HS2 proposals have dominated my constituency postbag since March 2010 and I thought that it would be useful to produce this document which is designed to answer some of the questions I have been asked on the scheme. This is the second edition (first edition published November 2012) and reflects the changes that have taken place in recent months.

Since January 2012, the great majority of letters and emails that I have had about HS2 have been about the environmental impact of the scheme on particular locations, prospects for mitigation measures and compensation issues. More recently I have also received a significant amount of correspondence on the issue of petitioning. I have therefore concentrated on those matters here. I commented on the principle of the scheme and the business case for HS2 in my submission to the 2011 public consultation which you can view on my website www.davidlidington.com

What happens next?

In the first edition of this document I included a reproduced copy of a Department for Transport timeline of key events that had been published in a document called *High Speed Rail: Investing in Britain's Future The Government's Decisions*. However, this timeline is now significantly out of date and therefore I have produced my own timeline to reflect these changes. The information provided in the table is all in the public domain. It is likely the timeframe below will change depending on how the scheme develops.

Timeframe	Action
25 November 2013	Hybrid Bill (including Environmental Statement documents) deposited with Parliament
4 December 2013	Consultation on compensation proposals for phase one closed
27 February 2014	Consultation on Environmental Statement closed
28 April 2014 – at the very earliest	Second Reading of HS2 Hybrid Bill
Summer 2014	New compensation scheme for phase one is operational
Summer 2014	Beginning of Hybrid Bill petitioning phase
April 2015 *	Phase One Hybrid Bill receives royal assent
2017 – 2025	Construction period (starts and ends at different times and at different points along the route)
2024-2026	Commissioning and testing of Phase One
2026	Phase One opens to passengers

*I believe this is an unrealistic timeframe and the Transport Secretary has recently acknowledged that the Bill will take longer to pass through Parliament.

How can I find maps of the route for HS2?

These are available online via the Department for Transport's website and I have included the link below. Alternatively in my constituency office I have large scale copies of the maps for the areas of Wendover Dean, Wendover, Stoke Mandeville, Fairford Leys and Aylesbury that constituents are welcome to come and view by appointment by calling my constituency office on 01296 482 102.

Link to maps: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/publications/hs2-maps-20120110>

The maps that show the route when it runs through my constituency are maps 8, 9, 10 & 11. These maps were produced in January 2012 and provide a general overview of the proposed route, including its vertical alignment, but do not show the latest mitigation developments.

The Environment Statement mapbooks include the most up to date information on mitigation measures. Further information is available on page 14.

What is the Department for Transport's justification for this scheme?

The Department for Transport sets out its case for High Speed Two in various documents which can be accessed via the weblinks below.

Economic case for HS2: Updated appraisal of transport user benefits and wider economic benefits: A report to Government by HS2 Ltd

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/hs2-economic-case-appraisal-update/hs2-economic-case-appraisal-update.pdf>

Economic case for HS2: Value for money statement

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/hs2-economic-case-value-for-money/hs2-economic-case-value-for-money.pdf>

Review of the Government's strategy for a national high speed rail network

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/hs2-review-of-strategy/hs2-review-of-strategy.pdf>

High speed rail strategic alternatives study: Update following consultation

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/hs2-strategic-alternatives-study-update/hs2-strategic-alternatives-study-update.pdf>

Review of strategic alternatives to High Speed Two: A report to Government by Network Rail

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/hs2-review-of-strategic-alternatives/hs2-review-of-strategic-alternatives.pdf>

Documents relating to Phase Two

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/hs2-phase-two-initial-preferred-route>

What are the respective roles of the Department for Transport and HS2 Ltd?

The Department for Transport is responsible for policy decisions related to the high speed rail proposals while HS2 Ltd is responsible for implementing decisions made by the Secretary of State.

For example, the Department for Transport will make the decision on what sort of compensation scheme should be implemented to compensate those affected by the proposals but HS2 Ltd will be responsible for administering the scheme.

Arguments about the principle of the scheme as a whole or what type of compensation scheme should be implemented should be directed to the Department for Transport. However, issues relating to the administration of a compensation scheme or the running of the Community Forums (see pages 15, 16 &17) should be directed to HS2 Ltd.

I also understand that HS2 Ltd are responsible for providing advice to individuals concerned about the impact HS2 would have on their property.

The Hybrid Bill and Petitioning

What is a Hybrid Bill?

A Hybrid Bill is a Bill which contains both public legislation (eg powers for the Government to build a new railway) and private legislation (law affects private interests, such as powers for compulsory purchase of specified properties)

The HS2 Hybrid Bill sets out plans for Phase One (London to Birmingham) of HS2. If the Bill is passed by Parliament, work will be able to begin on constructing HS2. Construction of HS2 cannot start until both Houses of Parliament have passed the Bill and it receives Royal Assent.

The Bill was presented to Parliament on Monday 25 November 2013 and the Bill and all documents relating to it have been made public. The documents include:

- The Bill itself
- Details of the work taking place
- Plans of the proposed route
- An estimate of the cost
- The Environmental Statement

HS2 Ltd have made the Bill and all the documents relating to it (around 55,000 pages), available online on their website (www.hs2.org.uk) and copies have also been made available to affected local authorities, Parish Councils and libraries along the route. The Environmental Statement includes details on the impact HS2 will have on the local area and the mitigation measures HS2 Ltd are proposing to put in place.

Second Reading of the HS2 Hybrid Bill will take place in Parliament at some point in 2014. While I cannot be sure of the exact timing of Second Reading, based on the timetable for the Environmental Statement consultation, it is unlikely to be before 28 April 2014 at the earliest.

Should the Bill be passed at Second Reading, a period of petitioning will follow during which people “specially and directly” affected by the scheme can submit a petition to Parliament setting out what changes they would like made to the Scheme. A special Select Committee of MPs who have no constituency or personal interests in HS2 will be appointed to hear petitions and will have the power to make alterations to the Hybrid Bill. After this the Hybrid Bill will then follow the normal procedure of a Bill through Parliament. It will proceed to a Public Bill Committee, Report Stage and finally Third Reading. It will then follow the same procedure in the House of Lords.

Although the Department for Transport’s public aim is for the HS2 Hybrid Bill to have received Royal Assent before the next General Election in 2015 this will be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. However, there is a Parliamentary procedure known as a “carry over motion” which enables a Bill to be carried over into the next Parliament and continued by whoever is in Government should they wish to do so after the next General Election. Without a carry-over motion, a Bill automatically dies when Parliament is dissolved for a General Election.

What is a petition?

Your petition sets out your objections to the HS2 Hybrid Bill and is a request to argue your case before a committee of MPs. It must describe at least in outline all the issues you want to raise. It will not be possible to raise new issues before the committee if they have not been covered in the petition.

As the petitioning process will take place after Second Reading of the HS2 Hybrid Bill, it will not be possible to petition to cancel HS2 as the House of Commons will have already approved the principle of building the railway. At this stage it is unclear whether the Committee hearing petitions will have the scope to look at issues such as the location of a terminus station in London or Birmingham.

Examples of issues on which an individual or group may wish to petition include the inclusion of additional mitigation measures (including altering the horizontal or vertical alignment) and compensation.

Who may petition?

An individual, group of individuals or organisations “directly and specially” affected by HS2 can petition against it.

If the Department for Transport believes that someone who petitions against HS2 is not “directly or specially” affected they can object to the petitioner’s right to be heard by the Committee of MPs. The MPs on the Committee will then decide if the petition will be heard.

Individuals, groups of individuals or organisations can petition in respect of the HS2 Hybrid Bill in the House of Commons and then afterwards in House of Lords. The Clerks to the House of Commons have also told me that your petitions do not have to be identical in the House of Commons and House of Lords and that the precedent from other Hybrid Bills is that the House of Lords does not overturn positive decisions regarding petitions made in the Commons.

Individuals may sign more than one petition. For example, a resident could choose to sign both a large- scale petition calling for more tunnelling in Buckinghamshire **and** a petition with immediate neighbours about the impact of HS2 on their homes.

How to petition?

You must submit your petition in person at the Houses of Parliament or arrange for an authorised agent or your Member of Parliament to do so. There will be a fee of £20 payable for each petition which is submitted. Details about payment methods will be available soon.

There will be a deadline by which petitions will have to be submitted by. This will be a minimum of ten days after the Second Reading debate. The Clerks have told me that the precedent for other Hybrid Bills is for the deadline for petitions to be 2-3 weeks after Second Reading.

Your petition must include certain details including:

- The short title of the HS2 Hybrid Bill (High Speed Rail (London – West Midlands) Bill)
- Your name (or organisation)
- An explanation of why you are qualified to petition (how are you “directly and specially” affected by HS2)
- Broad details of which clauses within the Bill are relevant to your petition
- Preferably what remedy you want to see put in place (this cannot be to cancel the HS2 scheme)

If at any point the Bill’ scope is extended, for instance because a petitioner is successful in arguing for works to be shifted elsewhere, there will be time for individuals or organisations to petition against such alterations. An appropriate timeframe in which this can take place will be set.

Once your petition has been submitted and accepted it is possible that HS2 Ltd will seek to meet you to discuss your petition to see if they can resolve your concerns without the need for your petition to be heard by the Committee. HS2 Ltd openly admit it is in their interest to reduce the number of petitions by trying to resolve as many issues as possible before the petition is due to be heard by the Committee and I would encourage you to engage with HS2 Ltd should they contact you.

If you are unable to resolve the concerns raised in your petition with HS2 Ltd you and HS2 Ltd will appear in front of the Select Committee who will decide whether to alter the Hybrid

Bill to include the changes you have requested. The Committee operates like a planning inquiry with each side able to call witnesses to give evidence and cross examination of witnesses taking place.

Do I need an agent?

Petitioners can represent themselves. However if you want someone else to represent you (e.g. a solicitor) you can instruct an agent to act on your behalf in all matters relating to your petition.

There are two types of agent: professional Parliamentary agents as Roll A agents and other agents as Roll B agents. There are seven Roll A agents, two of which are acting on behalf of HS2 Ltd and the Department for Transport. Roll A agents will charge for their services. A list of useful petitioning contacts, including Roll A agents, is available on my website at the below link.

<http://www.davidlidington.com/useful-petitioning-contacts>

Roll B agents can be anyone who is not a registered Roll A agent but whom an individual or organisation would like to act for them regarding their petition. Since petitioners may also represent themselves anyone who signs a petition (they can have more than one signatory) is able to act on behalf of the petitioners without becoming a Roll B agent.

Any group or individual wishing to be represented by a Roll B agent should sign a letter authorising a named individual to act on their behalf; this should be presented when the petition is deposited. An organisation should also ensure they have a written record of a meeting where a resolution was passed authorising the Roll B agent or one of the petitioners to act on the organisation's behalf.

Anyone wanting to act as Roll B agent will need to produce a certificate of respectability signed by an MP, magistrate, barrister or solicitor. I have already signed some certificates for constituents. A certificate is not required for Roll A agents nor individuals who want to become Roll B agents who are solicitors.

What is the current situation with compensation and what is going to happen in the future?

Current situation

Currently the only compensation scheme in place is the Exceptional Hardship Scheme (further details are provided below). The Department for Transport ran a consultation on alternative proposals for those affected by Phase One of HS2 which closed in December 2013.

The Secretary of State for Transport has said that he expects a new compensation scheme to be operational by the Summer of 2014. I expect that more individuals will be eligible for

compensation under any new discretionary scheme than are currently eligible under the Exceptional Hardship Scheme.

The Exceptional Hardship Scheme

In the Summer of 2010 the Government made the decision, following consultation, to introduce the Exceptional Hardship Scheme to help those suffering from property blight due to the HS2 proposals and who have an urgent need to sell their home. The scheme was not designed to compensate those who may be affected by the proposals but have “no urgent” need to sell.

To be eligible for the EHS, owner-occupiers of residential households must meet five criteria. Successful applicants must:-

1. Have a qualifying interest in the property which they wish the Government to buy (such as being the owner-occupier.)
2. Demonstrate that their property is in such close proximity to the proposed route that it would be likely to be substantially adversely affected by the construction or operation of the new line, if it were to go ahead.
3. Have made all reasonable efforts to sell their property and still not received an offer within 15 per cent of its unaffected open market property value.
4. Have bought their property before they could be reasonably expected to have been aware of the high speed rail proposals (ie: before 11 March 2010).
5. Have a pressing need to sell their property, and be able to demonstrate that they would suffer exceptional hardship if they had to wait until when statutory and discretionary compensation arrangements to assist affected property owners come into force. Examples of such a pressing need include a medical condition necessitating a more appropriate dwelling, or a need to relocate to take up new employment.

From my experience of assisting constituents who are applying to the Exceptional Hardship Scheme I have seen that the scope for the scheme is very narrow and have included some figures below¹ which you may find of use. In addition, I would suggest that any constituents who are considering applying to the EHS include in their application as much information about their financial situation as possible as in my experience a panel assessing an application is likely to reject it if a full financial picture is not provided.

¹ To view the most up to date figures please visit <http://www.hs2.org.uk/developing-hs2/property/exceptional-hardship-scheme>

To date	1 March 2014
Number of applications received	532
Number of these applications which are re-applications	153
Average time in weeks for a decision under the final panel (excluding waiting time for additional documents requested by the Secretariat)	7
Number of applications accepted	139
Number of applications rejected	340
Number of applications pending a decision	26

Important Please Read:

I also want to highlight the below information that is published on HS2 Ltd's website which will be of interest to those considering applying to the Exceptional Hardship Scheme.

The Secretary of State for Transport has issued safeguarding directions for the Phase One line of route between London and the West Midlands.

Eligible property owners whose properties fall wholly or partly within the safeguarded area published at www.hs2.org.uk/safeguarding are now able to serve a statutory blight notice on the Government requesting that their property is purchased under provisions set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The compensation payable resulting from a successful blight notice would include an additional element, above the unaffected value of the property that is currently payable under the EHS. Property owners are therefore advised to check whether their property falls wholly or partly within the safeguarded area before applying to the EHS, as they may be entitled to greater compensation for statutory blight instead.

More information on blight notices and compulsory purchase orders is available on pages 12 and 13.

The consultation on compensation

I responded to this consultation and set out both mine and my constituents' concerns about the proposals put forward and a copy of my response is available on my website. If you would like me to send you a copy of my response please get in touch. However, I have included below a brief outline of some of the arguments I made.

1. Reconsider the decision to reject the property bond which is widely accepted to be the best way to compensate those affected by HS2.
2. Extend the Voluntary Purchase Zone in severely affected areas including; Wendover Dean; Bacombe Lane and Ellesborough Road Wendover; Nash Lee Lane, Risborough Road, Old Risborough Road and Marsh Lane Stoke Mandeville; and Oxford Road Aylesbury.
3. Remove the hardship criteria from the Long Term Compensation Scheme if the property bond is not implemented to allow those who simply want to move because of HS2 to do so.

4. Include second home owners in the scheme to ensure that those who have invested in property as part of prudent planning for retirement do not suffer a severe financial penalty when selling their second home.

What is a safeguarding zone?

The Secretary of State for Transport announced on the 9 July 2013 that safeguarding directions have been issued for Phase One of HS2. These directions were subsequently updated on 24 October 2013.

A safeguarding zone is an area of land which has been officially safeguarded by a direction from the Secretary of State, to allow for possible future expansion of infrastructure (such as a railway) on that land. Therefore, the safeguarding zone for HS2 is designed to show what land HS2 Ltd believe they need to acquire on a permanent or temporary basis to build HS2, including land needed for temporary or permanent road diversions.

If someone applies for planning permission for development within the safeguarded zone land, the local planning authority dealing with the application must refer it first to the person specified in the direction (HS2 Ltd). A safeguarded zone does not mean that all development on that land is necessarily prohibited.

The safeguarding zone for construction of HS2 with some exceptions is generally 60m either side of the line.

To view the safeguarding maps for HS2 please visit the link below:

http://www.hs2.org.uk/safeguarding?sg_link=576

If you would like me to send you a hard copy of a particular map as you do not have access to the internet please let me know. The maps that cover my constituency are maps 30 to 37.

What are compulsory purchase orders?

Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) are issued to land and home owners when their property or land is required to allow construction of a project. CPOs form part of the statutory compensation scheme that will be in place for HS2. In the case of HS2, it is estimated that around 400 homes between Euston and Birmingham will need to be demolished for phase one of HS2.

Should your property be in the safeguarding zone you have the option of remaining until the Government requires your property in order to construct the line. Alternatively, you are entitled to request that the Government buy your property (by issuing what is called a blight notice) at its current market price as if the HS2 proposals had never been announced. I understand from HS2 Ltd that blight notices are valid for 3 years once accepted.

However, if you decide to remain in your property in the knowledge that HS2 Ltd may issue a CPO but do not hold a valid blight notice and as it later became clear that your property or

land was no longer required, you would lose your legal right to force the Government to buy your home. You would then need to apply to the discretionary scheme for compensation.

It is also important to note that even though home owners in a safeguarded zone are entitled to serve a blight notice, the authority to which the notice is served can issue a counter notice. One ground for a counter-notice is that they do not intend to acquire that land compulsorily. The official grounds for serving a counter-notice to a blight notice are set out in section 151 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Act². The counter-notice must be served within two months of the blight notice being served or the blight notice will take effect. If a counter-notice is served the claimant (i.e. the home owner) is entitled to appeal to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) – this must be done within two months of the counter notice being served or the counter notice will take effect.

For further information on issuing a blight notice please visit the link below.

http://www.hs2.org.uk/safeguarding?sg_link=570

The House of Commons Library has told me that it is highly unlikely that a blight notice from the owners of a property which is outside the safeguarding zone would be accepted.

What if only part of my property or land is within the safeguarding zone?

HS2 Ltd's guide to blight notices says:

You can only serve the Secretary of State for Transport a Blight Notice if your property is wholly or partly within the safeguarded area and you have a qualifying interest. You can check whether your property is in the safeguarded area by clicking the 'Maps and Plans' link at www.hs2.org.uk/safeguarding. A Statutory Blight Notice must be served in respect of the whole of your property, regardless of whether it is wholly or partly in the safeguarded area. The Secretary of State for Transport can then issue a counter-notice to buy only part of the property if that is all that is required.

Who should I contact with concerns about my property?

If you have general concerns regarding your property Alison Munro, Chief Executive of HS2 Ltd, confirmed to me that in the first instance HS2 Ltd may be able to offer guidance on the likely impact HS2 will have. The contact details for HS2 are located on Page 15 of this document.

Bearing in mind the costs involved, you may also wish to consider seeking legal advice from a qualified professional.

² To view section 151 please visit <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/8/section/151>

What is the current situation with mitigation?

Environmental Statement

The most up to date information regarding mitigation can be found in the documents relating to the Environmental Statement on which a public consultation was recently held. These documents include the mitigation measures HS2 Ltd are proposing to include in the scheme as well as the noise impact of HS2. They also include details of the impact on local flora and fauna. The relevant documents can be found at the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-phase-one-environmental-statement-documents>

HS2 Ltd have told me that the noise maps represent a worst case scenario and show just the noise impact from HS2 and take no account of ambient noise which, they argue, would diminish the impact of HS2 noise.

I responded to the Environmental Statement consultation and a copy of my response is available on my website and in my constituency office. I would also be happy to send you a copy of my response.

Adding further mitigation measures

The petitioning phase of the HS2 Hybrid Bill (see page X for more information) will provide those affected with the opportunity to try and convince Parliament to include mitigation measures they would like to see put in place included in the scheme.

The Judicial Reviews

Background

An application for a judicial review is a challenge in court to the decision of a Minister or civil servant on the grounds that the decision was not made properly and failed to follow due process.

The HS2 Action Alliance, 51M (a group of councils who oppose HS2), Heathrow Hub and Aylesbury Park Golf Club all submitted judicial reviews against various aspects of the HS2 project and in March 2013 Mr Justice Ouseley ruled in favour of the Department for Transport on 9 of the 10 reviews that were brought. The HS2 Action Alliance won their judicial review relating to compensation which resulted in the Department for Transport deciding to re run the consultation on compensation for those affected by Phase One of HS2.

Appeals

51M, Heathrow Hub and the HS2 Action Alliance all appealed against the decision to rule in the Department for Transport's favour. However, on 24 July 2013 the Court of Appeal dismissed all of the appeals.

The HS2 Action Alliance (supported by 51M) and Heathrow Hub appealed to the Supreme Court to challenge the Court of Appeal's decision. However, on 22 January 2014 the Supreme Court dismissed all of the appeals.

You can read the reaction's of the Department for Transport, HS2 Action Alliance and 51M below.

Department for Transport

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/supreme-court-dismisses-all-appeals-against-hs2>

HS2 Action Alliance

<http://www.hs2actionalliance.org/2014/01/mornings-supreme-court-decision/>

51M

<http://www.51m.co.uk/supreme-court-decision/>

What is the significance of the Community Forums that were set up?

What were they designed to do?

“Community Forums have been initiated along the London to the West Midlands (route) to work with HS2 Ltd to develop the route design in a way which will minimise potential impacts and identify opportunities for local communities to benefit from the project.

It is intended that each forum is a community led forum, supported and resourced by HS2 Ltd in an advisory, information giving role. Participation in the forum will not be taken to mean that community members agree with the principle that HS2 should be built.”

This is a direct quotation from HS2 Ltd's terms of reference for the Community Forums and explains what they were designed to achieve. The Community Forum meetings were designed to look at plan B on the assumption that most people who attend already have a plan A which is to succeed in persuading or forcing the Government to abandon the scheme.

What could a Community Forum do/not do?

Again the terms of reference for the Community Forums detail what HS2 Ltd envisage being areas community forums can become involved in.

The Forums provide an arena for the local community to identify issues and concerns arising from the proposed high speed route from London to the West Midlands and aid HS2 Ltd to create community solutions to mitigate the impacts where possible. For example: reducing visual and noise impacts, managing construction and traffic issues** or agreeing the best road diversions and access ways***.*

* A number of suggestions have been put forward by both community forums in my constituency and HS2 Ltd have examined a number of these.

** I am aware that both Community Forums in my constituency have made suggestions to HS2 Ltd about this.

*** HS2 Ltd have included in the scheme an alternative road plans put forward by the Stoke Mandeville Community Forum.

Below is what HS2 Ltd indicated was outside the scope of the Community Forums:

- Impact on individual properties, land and businesses
- Route wide policy decisions for example safety and security or use of HS2 for freight
- Alternative to HS2 including alternative routes
- Legal challenges to the former Secretary of State's decision to proceed with the scheme

Are the Community Forums still meeting?

The Community Forums last met in September 2013 and no further meetings are planned for the foreseeable future. HS2 Ltd have said that while they will continue to engage with local people, due to the stage the development of the scheme has reached, they believe Community Forums are no longer a suitable form of engagement.

HS2 Ltd have said they envisage the Community Forums restarting during the construction phase of HS2 to allow local communities to engage directly with the contractors building the railway.

Where can I see what was discussed at the Community Forums?

Minutes of the Forum meetings are published on HS2 Ltd's website at the below link.

<http://www.hs2.org.uk/developing-hs2/forums/community-forums/country-south>

If you do not have access to the internet and would like me to send you copies of the minutes please let me know and I would be happy to do so.

Did I attend the Community Forums?

Either I or a representative from my office has attended each Community Forum meeting in my constituency to ensure that I am up to date with the concerns of local residents.

The Maintenance Loop at Stoke Mandeville

Background

HS2 Ltd have made several design changes to the route since the Department for Transport made the decision to proceed with the HS2 project in January 2012 and one of these changes is the inclusion of an 850m maintenance loop in my constituency.

To read more about the maintenance loop please visit the link below.

<http://www.hs2.org.uk/design-refinement-consultation>

What is a maintenance loop?

HS2 Ltd have explained to me and local residents that the purpose of the maintenance loop is to allow maintenance trains to maximise their working hours during the period high speed trains are not running by allowing them to shorten the distance they have to travel before carrying out maintenance. This will be done by a maintenance train travelling from the maintenance depot to the loop the night before maintenance is due to take place. I also understand that the maintenance loop could be used as an evacuation area for passengers should a HS2 train break down.

What is the impact of the maintenance loop on the local area?

The maintenance loop will result in the width of the HS2 track at that location increasing from 22 to 36 metres. In addition, maintenance workers will be entering and leaving the loop, most likely outside of traditional working hours. HS2 Ltd have also said low level lighting will be required for safety and security reasons.

The views of the local community

Both the Stoke Mandeville HS2 action group and Parish Council have told me that they were firmly opposed to the maintenance loop being located at Stoke Mandeville. However, having considered HS2 Ltd's argument for locating the maintenance loop in its current location they believe there is no realistic prospect of an alternative location being chosen. Based on this, neither the action group or Parish Council are currently actively campaigning on this issue.

HS2 Ltd consulted on these proposals via the Design Refinement Consultation and I responded to it. A copy of my response is available on my website and in my constituency office. If you would like me to send you a copy please get in touch.

A Fully Bored Chiltern AONB Tunnel

Background

Since the previous Secretary of State announced the Department for Transport's intention to proceed with HS2, a group of local engineers from the Chilterns Ridges Action Group (CRAG) have developed a proposal for a tunnel through the entire AONB, aside from a small 500m gap at one of two locations, one of which is Durham Farm at Wendover Dean. Residents of Wendover Dean, Dunsmore and Wendover strongly support of the proposals in principle. Residents of Stoke Mandeville, while supporting the principle of an extended tunnel, oppose a northward extension to the Wendover tunnel, bored or otherwise, towards their village.

What is your view?

I support the principle of additional tunnelling in the Chilterns AONB. However, it is important to continue to seek local agreement on where the portal north of Wendover should lie. There is firm local support for additional tunnelling south of Wendover. The CRAG proposal, while providing for a gap at Durham Farm, would also do away with the need for a viaduct and embankment at Wendover Dean.

I covered this issue at length in my response to the Environmental Statement consultation which is available on my website www.davidlidington.com. Alternatively I am happy to send you a copy.

How do I contact the Department for Transport or HS2 Ltd?

The Department for Transport

If you would like to contact the Department for Transport I would suggest emailing Robert Goodwill, the Minister with responsibility for HS2, at robert.goodwill_MP@dft.gsi.gov.uk or writing to the address below. However, it is standard practice for Government Ministers to reply personally to letters from their own constituents and other MPs. Any other letters are responded to by officials. Therefore, I am happy to write to Mr Burns in order to pass on any concerns about HS2 if a constituent asks me to do so.

Robert Goodwill MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DR

HS2 Ltd

To contact HS2 Ltd directly I would recommend emailing HS2enquiries@hs2.org.uk and I have also included HS2's postal address below. HS2 Ltd can also be contacted by telephone on 020 7944 4908 between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday. Should any constituent wish for me to contact Alison Munro, Chief Executive of HS2 Ltd, on their behalf I am happy to do so.

HS2 Limited
2nd Floor, Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU