

Generalised Blight

This factsheet outlines the extra-statutory measures that the Government has put in place to address generalised blight resulting from the promotion of the Proposed Scheme.

1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 High Speed Two (HS2) is the Government's proposal for a new, high speed north-south railway. The proposal is being taken forward in phases. Phase One will connect London with Birmingham and the West Midlands. Phase 2a will extend the route to Crewe. The Western Leg of Phase 2b comprises an extension of the network to Manchester and a connection to the West Coast Main Line at Golborne, and is referred to as the Western Leg hybrid Bill. The Eastern Leg of Phase 2b currently comprises an extension of the network from the West Midlands through the East Midlands to Leeds.
- 1.1.2 HS2 Ltd is the non-departmental public body responsible for developing and promoting these proposals. The company works to a Development Agreement made with the Secretary of State for Transport.
- 1.1.3 The construction and operation of Phase One of HS2 is authorised by the High Speed Rail (London – West Midlands) Act (2017). In July 2017, the Government introduced a hybrid Bill to Parliament to seek powers for the construction and operation of Phase 2a.
- 1.1.1 In February 2020, the Government announced its intention to draw up an Integrated Rail Plan. This will recommend a way forward on scoping, phasing and sequencing the delivery of HS2 Phase 2b, Northern Powerhouse Rail, Midlands Rail Hub and other proposed rail investments across the north. At the same time, the Government asked HS2 Ltd to prepare the Western Leg hybrid Bill, provided it does not prejudge any recommendations or decisions that will be taken in this plan, which will be published by the end of the year.
- 1.1.2 It is intended to deposit a Western Leg hybrid Bill seeking powers to construct and operate this phase in Parliament in early 2022 or sooner if possible (the Proposed Scheme). The work to produce the Bill will include an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), the results of which will then be reported in an Environmental Statement (ES). The ES would be submitted alongside the Bill when it is introduced to Parliament. As was the case with Phase One and Phase 2a, when the Bill is introduced to Parliament the Secretary of State will also publish draft Environmental Minimum Requirements (EMRs). The EMRs will set out the environmental and sustainability commitments that will be observed in the construction of the Proposed Scheme.
- 1.1.3 A series of information papers were produced for the Phase One and Phase 2a hybrid Bills, explaining the commitments made in those Bills and EMRs. It is the Secretary of State's intention to follow a similar process for the Western Leg Bill. These information papers will be used to provide information about the Proposed Scheme itself, the powers contained in the Bill and how decisions on

the Proposed Scheme have been reached. It is currently proposed that these information papers for the Western Leg of Phase 2b will be published at the time the Bill is introduced in Parliament.

- 1.1.4 The Secretary of State for Transport will be ‘the Promoter’ of the Western Leg Bill. The Promoter will also eventually appoint a body responsible for delivering the Proposed Scheme under the powers to be granted by the Bill. This body will be known as the ‘nominated undertaker’. There may well be more than one nominated undertaker. However, any and all nominated undertakers will be bound by the obligations contained in the Bill, the policies established in the Western Leg EMRs and any commitments provided in the Western Leg information papers.
- 1.1.5 These Western Leg factsheets have been produced to provide information on the emerging proposals for measures to manage the design process for the Proposed Scheme and to control impacts which may arise from the construction and operation of the Proposed Scheme. These measures may then be applied to the Western Leg as commitments made through the eventual Bill, EMRs or information papers.

2 Overview

- 2.1 This factsheet outlines the extra-statutory measures that the Government has put in place to address ‘generalised blight’ resulting from the promotion of the Proposed Scheme. Generalised blight is the adverse effect on the market value of land and property, or the future enjoyment of the land and property, arising from the perceived effect of future developments (also referred to as ‘generalised property blight’ or ‘property blight’).
- 2.2 The HS2 property schemes, as summarised below are intended to supplement and operate in parallel with the existing statutory regime governing compensation for the compulsory acquisition of land known as “the Compensation Code”.

3 Rural Support Zone

- 3.1 The Rural Support Zone (RSZ) is the area outside of the safeguarded area, which is up to 120 metres from the centre line of the railway. The RSZ applies in rural areas where the route is not in bored tunnel. Eligible homeowners within the RSZ have the choice to either to sell their property to the Government for its unblighted open market value under the Voluntary Purchase scheme or to claim a lump sum payment under the Cash Offer scheme.

- 3.2 The Voluntary Purchase scheme allows owner-occupiers living outside the safeguarded area but within 120m of the line of route in rural areas to sell their property to the Government for its unblighted open market value.
- 3.3 As an alternative to the Voluntary Purchase scheme, owner-occupiers of properties that fall within the RSZ have the option to claim a lump sum payment under the Cash Offer scheme. The lump sum is equal to 10% of the property's unblighted open market value. The lump payment is tax free with a minimum of £30,000 and a maximum of £100,000.
- 3.4 More information is available at:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/593159/Rural_support_zone_schemes_guidance_and_application_form_Feb_2017.pdf

4 Need to Sell scheme

- 4.1 The Need to Sell (NTS) scheme is available to eligible property owners who can demonstrate that they have a compelling reason to sell but have been unable to do so, other than at a substantially reduced price, as a result of the announcement of the HS2 Phase 2b proposals. More information is available at:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/609776/need_to_sell_guidance.pdf

5 Rent Back

- 5.1 Where the Secretary of State for Transport accepts an application made under Voluntary Purchase or Need to Sell schemes, the vendor may ask to rent the property back. This is a voluntary scheme that allows applicants to continue to live in their homes having sold their property to the Government. Approval to Rent Back is subject to an assessment to determine the costs of any repairs, improvements or testing of service installations and the open market rental value with these changes made.
- 5.2 More information is available at:
<https://www.hs2.org.uk/in-your-area/assistance-for-property-owners>

6 Homeowner Payment

- 6.1 The Homeowner Payment (HOP) scheme for the Proposed Scheme will be launched after Royal Assent. HOP will be available for property owners living in rural areas near the route of the Proposed Scheme, where the line is not in a

deep tunnel. Eligible property owners will be able to apply for a cash payment of £7,500, £15,000 or £22,500 depending on how close they live to the line of route.

- 6.2 The HOP scheme will operate within a fixed 'HOP zone', 120 metre to 300 metres either side of the centre-line of the route.
- 6.3 A claim may be made at any time following Royal Assent of the Bill.
- 6.4 More details of the scheme are available at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/878554/DIGITAL_CS_HOP_GuidanceApForm.pdf

7 Atypical and Special Circumstances

- 7.1 The Secretary of State accepts that there will be some land and property cases that are exceptional and where special arrangements should be made to deal with them appropriately.
- 7.2 Where there are landowners or occupiers who are significantly affected by the construction or operation of the railway, and do not fall within the defined scheme criteria for one of the existing schemes, they should contact HS2 Ltd and inform them of their circumstances.

8 More information

- 8.1 For more information on the HS2 Property Schemes see:
<http://www.gov.uk/claim-compensation-if-affected-by-hs2>
- 8.2 Further information about compulsory purchase and compensation is also available on the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government's guides. These can be viewed at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/compulsory-purchase-process-and-the-crichel-down-rules-guidance>
- 8.3 For information about compulsory purchase and compensation in Scotland, please see the Scottish Government Guide to Compulsory Acquisition, this can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/compulsory-purchase-scotland-guide-property-owners-occupiers/pages/6/>
- 8.4 For information about safeguarding, statutory blight and express purchase please see the Western Leg factsheet: Safeguarding and Statutory Blight.

8.5 Further factsheets and details on the Proposed Scheme can be found at:
www.hs2.org.uk/phase2b