

Contact our HS2 Helpdesk team on **08081 434 434**

HS2 update

West Midlands to Crewe | June 2020

High Speed Two (HS2) is the new high speed railway for Britain. Phase 2a is the section of the planned railway between the West Midlands and Crewe, passing through parts of Staffordshire and Cheshire. This newsletter explains the latest plans and the support available.

Progress on Phase 2a of HS2

Parliament has been considering the plans for Phase 2a since July 2017.

Once complete, this process will give us the permission and powers we need to build and operate the railway. The parliamentary process was delayed slightly by the general election in December 2019, and has been further affected by the Government's response to the COVID-19 virus outbreak. We are working towards Parliament approving the Phase 2a plans later this year, after which construction work can begin. In the meantime, we are continuing to talk to people and organisations affected by the route, ensuring they

understand what is being planned, while identifying opportunities to address any concerns.

As part of the parliamentary process, a House of Commons Select Committee of MPs considered petitions from people directly affected by the Phase 2a railway, and this stage has led to some design changes and to HS2 Ltd making some specific commitments to people and organisations.

The Government has published its responses to the three reports issued by the Select Committee, which can be found at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-phase-2a-promoters-response-to-select-committees-third-special-report



Still to come on Phase 2a:

- Further investigation of ground conditions
- Securing Royal Assent for the hybrid Bill
- Archaeological and ecological surveys
- Setting up construction compounds and diverting existing infrastructure
- Making changes to the road network to reduce the impact of construction



2020 Updates

HS2 and COVID-19

Initial work on Phase 2a of the railway has involved investigations into ground conditions along the route. Work on Phase One of HS2, from London to the West Midlands, is at a more advanced stage and includes some initial preparatory works in parts of Staffordshire, such as compound construction and highways works.

We are continually reviewing the works on our construction sites in line with Government and Public Health England advice on dealing with COVID-19. The Government's current strategy makes it clear that construction activity can continue as long as it complies with this guidance. Only sites that can operate within the guidelines are working, and they remain under constant review.

We have postponed all face-to-face engagement events and meetings, and we are keeping communities informed and involved in different ways. This includes letters, phone calls and digital events, as well as updates and alerts from each of the local community websites. You can still sign up for updates in your local area at hs2instaffordshire.co.uk and hs2incheshire.co.uk.



OAKERVEE REVIEW

The Oakervee Review

In late 2019, the Prime Minister committed to an independent review of HS2 which was carried out by Doug Oakervee. The review looked at the full range of costs and benefits of HS2, and at whether and how the project should proceed. It recommended that the Government should proceed with HS2, bringing the benefits of high speed rail to the Midlands and North of England. The review was published in February 2020, and you can read it here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/oakervee-review-of-hs2>

The Government has since issued HS2 Ltd with full approval to proceed with the main construction work on Phase One of the railway, from London to the West Midlands. This follows a series of enabling works that began in 2018.

Works on Phase 2a of HS2

Ground Investigations

To help us design and build HS2 in the safest and most efficient way, we need to understand ground conditions along the route. To achieve this, we are carrying out a Ground Investigations (GI) programme for Phase 2a.

We use a variety of techniques to investigate ground conditions, ranging from drilling into the earth and taking samples to using ground penetrating radar. When the programme is completed, we will have gathered information from nearly 2000 boreholes.

Last summer we invited local parish councils along the line of the Phase 2a route to visit our GI sites to see the work for themselves and to ask questions of our contractors. We undertook several well-received visits, including one in August 2019 for Ingestre with Tixall parish councillors who visited a site served by our Lichfield compound.

Councillor Malcolm Sindrey said: "Thank you for the effort HS2 and Balfour Beatty has put in to showing us your GI works. You are clearly taking good care of the land as best you can while on site".

Ecology surveys

In addition to our ground investigation work, you may see our teams out and about undertaking surveys as we continue our preparations for building the railway. This will include surveys relating to local ecology, which will help us to understand the needs of local wildlife populations and design new habitats as part of the railway. If we need to access your land as part of these surveys you will receive a letter which will explain what we are doing, when and how. If you have any questions about this, please get in touch with our HS2 Helpdesk.



Ingestre with Tixall Parish Councillors Malcolm Sindrey and Nicholas Bostock at an HS2 GI site visit



Being a good neighbour

Community Information

HS2 Ltd is committed to being a good neighbour to anyone affected by the project. We have a team of people dedicated to talking to communities along the route and ensuring they are kept up-to-date. As part of this work, we regularly meet local people and talk to many individuals at various local events. We have also set up some information points at 14 locations near the Phase 2a route. These feature a range of documents providing information about the project that you can take away to read.

The information points are at libraries in Brereton, Rugeley, Lichfield, Uttoxeter, Stafford, Stone and Crewe, as well as at Lichfield District, Stafford Borough, Staffordshire County, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough and Cheshire East council offices, and Yarnfield Park Conference Centre and the Madeley Centre.

Access to these information points is currently restricted during the COVID-19 outbreak, but they will be an important long-term resource for local people. The same information is available here:

hs2incheshire.commonplace.is and hs2instaffs.commonplace.is

Funding for local communities

Once the plans for Phase 2a of HS2 are approved, we will make two funds available to communities and businesses affected. These funds are the Community and Environment Fund (CEF) and the Business and Local Economy Fund (BLEF), with a total of £5m available to communities affected by Phase 2a. You can find out more about CEF and BLEF here: **hs2funds.org.uk**.



Liz Davis and Gita Dhunna of HS2 Ltd's Community Engagement team setting up a public information point at Lichfield District Council offices



London bus community project

As well as keeping people up-to-date with plans and progress on HS2, we like to ensure they can benefit from it directly. Earlier this year, we helped donate two decommissioned London buses for static use to community projects along the route. A company called RATP Dev London donated them as they no longer met CO2 emission guidelines. Our Phase 2a ground investigation contractor, Balfour Beatty, worked with us to deliver the buses to local organisations. This was the latest in a series of community activities that Balfour Beatty have supported ranging from charity fundraising initiatives to renovating outdoor spaces.



Terry Moy and Carol Carney of Upper Moreton Farm receiving one of the buses

One bus was donated to Upper Moreton Farm, a Community Interest Company near Wolseley Bridge in Staffordshire that provides educational farm visits, learning and wellbeing activities to the community. They will use the bus as an arts and crafts teaching space. The other bus was donated to Henry Chadwick School in Hill Ridware, who will use their bus as a multi-functional learning area.

'Growing Spaces' community project



Children from Richard Crosse Primary School in Kings Bromley, completing their Growing Spaces project

The Phase 2a Community Engagement team delivered our 'Growing Spaces' initiative at schools and community centres along the line of route in March 2020. The project involved building vegetable growing boxes at each location, and teaching local young people to grow their own food. It is part of HS2 Ltd's commitment to work closely with local communities and involve them in interesting, educational opportunities. The focus of the Growing Spaces project is to teach the importance of nutrition, as well as the practical skills and the science behind growing fruit and vegetables. It reflects our commitment to respect the natural environment as we build HS2.

Traffic Management

Managing our impact on local roads

We understand that many people are concerned about or interested in how we will manage traffic and transport during future construction work. In particular, we have received questions and comments about our construction activity leading to more vehicles on the road network, as well as short-term and long-term changes to the road network.

Please be assured that we will minimise the impact of construction traffic on local roads in various ways. This includes re-using most of the earth we excavate during construction in our earthworks and landscaping around the railway. This means the material won't need to be moved for long distances on the road network.

We will also reduce the use of local roads by building some dedicated 'haul roads' to provide access to our construction sites. We will still need to use the existing road network for some of our construction routes, but we are aiming to use the motorway and A-road network as much as possible to reduce the impact on local communities.

Proposals for Phase 2a of the route are currently being considered by Parliament. A route wide traffic management plan will be produced to help manage the impact of traffic during construction. More information about our approach is covered in our information papers:

gov.uk/government/publications/environment-hs2-phase-2a-information-papers



Property Information

Information for property owners

We have a number of property schemes available to support owners of properties close to the line of route. These schemes will be available until one year after the railway has opened. Most of the schemes are already open for applications, however one scheme, known as the "Homeowner Payment Scheme" will not be available on Phase 2a until the parliamentary stage is completed. The Homeowner Payment Scheme will allow people with a qualifying interest to receive a cash payment. To find out more about our property schemes and to see if you are eligible, please contact our HS2 Helpdesk or look online at **www.hs2.org.uk**.

For anyone who lives or owns land or property who has been impacted and are within the area known as "Safeguarding", we will keep you updated as we move forward with our programme, including how our proposals are likely to impact your land or property.

Property Management

Some people have asked how we manage properties we have purchased on behalf of the Government. Since the Phase 2a route was first announced in January 2013, the Government has bought several properties through the range of property schemes we have in place to support people affected by the railway. So far, this has been only in cases where the owners have wanted to sell, either

HS2

Discretionary property schemes

**Guide to HS2
property schemes**
Phase 2a



for their own reasons or because the property is on the route or very close to it. Where possible, we rent these properties out, so they are secure and occupied. Sometimes we need to refurbish the properties before we rent them out, which we aim to do so with the minimum amount of disruption to neighbours.

When the properties are vacant, they are secured with alarms and if necessary, security guards on site. The level of security will depend on various factors such as the location of the property and its size.

Any properties bought through HS2 property schemes are owned by the Government. Unless they need to be demolished in order to build the railway, we expect the Government to begin selling them once the railway has been operational for a year. This is to prevent them distorting the local housing market and to ensure value-for-money for the taxpayer. In the meantime, the safety and security of these properties, as well as the wider community, remains a key priority for us.

Keeping you informed

We are committed to keeping you informed about work on HS2. This includes ensuring you know what to expect and when to expect it, as well as how we can help.

Residents' Charter and Commissioner

The Residents' Charter is our promise to communicate as clearly as we possibly can with people who live along or near the HS2 route.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-residents-charter

We also have an independent Residents' Commissioner whose job is to make sure we keep to the promises we make in the Charter and to keep it under constant review. Find reports at:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-ltd-residents-commissioner

You can contact the Commissioner at:
residentscommissioner@hs2.org.uk

Construction Commissioner

The Construction Commissioner's role is to mediate and monitor the way in which HS2 Ltd manages and responds to construction complaints. You can contact the Construction Commissioner by emailing:

complaints@hs2-cc.org.uk

Property and compensation

You can find out all about HS2 and properties along the line of route by visiting:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-property

Find out if you're eligible for compensation at:

www.gov.uk/claim-compensation-if-affected-by-hs2

Holding us to account


If you are unhappy for any reason you can make a complaint by contacting our HS2 Helpdesk team. For more details on our complaints process, please visit our website:

www.hs2.org.uk/how-to-complain

Contact Us

Contact our HS2 Helpdesk team all day, every day of the year on:

 Freephone 08081 434 434

 Minicom 08081 456 472

 Email HS2enquiries@hs2.org.uk

Write to:
FREEPOST
HS2 Community Engagement

Website www.hs2.org.uk

To keep up to date with what is happening in your local area, visit:
www.HS2inyourarea.co.uk

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