

HS2 update

West Midlands to Crewe | September 2018

High Speed Two (HS2) is the new high speed railway for Britain. This newsletter is about Phase 2a of the railway, which will run from the West Midlands to Crewe, passing through parts of Staffordshire and Cheshire.

We know that local people may be concerned about the potential impacts of HS2. This newsletter explains the plans to build the new railway, progress so far, and the support available to you.

About HS2

HS2 will form the new backbone of our country's railway system and is the first North-South railway built for over a century. As a brand new line, HS2 will increase rail capacity, with extra services running on our busiest routes. It will also better connect our largest cities. We want HS2 to be a catalyst for economic growth and the project is already creating opportunities for jobs, skills and training across the UK.

The railway will be built in phases. Phase One will connect the West Midlands to London. Initial work on this section has already begun and will be complete by 2026. Phase 2a, from the West Midlands to Crewe, is scheduled to open in 2027. This will be followed by Phase 2b which will connect the line with Manchester, Leeds and beyond, by 2033.

We regularly talk to communities and understand that the construction of the railway will affect the lives of many people. Our aspiration is to be a good neighbour every single day, by respecting communities and working hard to minimise the impact of construction, while ensuring the various opportunities HS2 creates are available locally. These include jobs, apprenticeships, and opportunities for small businesses, as well as supporting local transport improvements and community projects.



Local support

Terry Stafford, Senior Community Engagement Manager, explains how HS2 Ltd is here to help your area, as the railway is planned and built.

"I'm part of a team that is dedicated to talking to people in your area about the railway. We have been keeping communities up-to-date with the plans and listening to their views through a range of methods. This includes holding public events and meeting the people that represent your area, such as local councils. The feedback from local people is really valuable and it has already helped us improve the Phase 2a design. We look forward to talking to more local people and explaining the support available – such as our property schemes"



Work so far

The following information describes what work has been taking place to prepare for the railway, and how you can find out more.

Proposals in Parliament

Before we start building the railway we need to gain permission from Parliament. Phase One was approved in 2017 and the hybrid Bill for Phase 2a is currently being considered by Parliament.

Between March and July 2018, a cross-party group of MPs, called a Select Committee, has considered over 100 objections about Phase 2a, known as petitions.

During this process, specific commitments have been made by HS2 Ltd to organisations and people affected by the new railway. These are known as Undertakings and Assurances and they are designed to help manage the impact of the railway. Recently we have provided a number of assurances to organisations such as the National Farmers Union and the Country Land and Business Association, helping to support local farms and agricultural businesses.

The Select Committee published reports of its findings and recommendations on 24 May and 23 July this year. The next stage includes updating the proposals for the new railway, following further design work. The final step will be formal approval by the Queen to make the Bill into an Act of Parliament – a process known as Royal Assent, which we expect to achieve in late 2019. You can find more information about plans for Phase 2a of the railway at www.gov.uk/transport/hs2-phase-2a

Technical terms

Hybrid Bill – the proposed law that will provide the permissions to build and run HS2. If it's approved it will turn from a Bill into an Act.

Select Committee – a small group of MPs from different political parties, led by a chair, considering the Bill.

Petitions – a way for people and organisations to have their say on the Bill. Those that are directly and specially affected by the Bill are eligible to petition.

Additional Provisions – proposed changes to the Bill. A set of Additional Provisions will be considered by the Select Committee next year.

2013

Initial route investigations

We undertook formal consultations to understand your views and looked at how the environment might be affected by our plans.



2015

Route confirmed

We finalised the route of the railway, following consultation.



2017

Permissions and approvals

We submitted the Phase 2a hybrid Bill to Parliament. This is the process we are currently going through to gain permission to build the railway.



2018

Ground investigations

We started investigating ground conditions along the route to help us to finalise its design.



2019

Main civils design work

We'll start detailed design work, prior to construction.



2021

Main construction work

We'll start building the railway.



2027

Operational railway

The first passengers will be able to board HS2 services on the Phase 2a route.

Ground investigations

Ground investigations are a key part of our preparations for HS2 and will guide how the new railway is built. By better understanding ground conditions along the route, we can deliver the railway in the safest and most effective way. We are using a number of methods to explore ground conditions, such as drilling into the ground and taking samples, or using ground radars.

We recently completed our first ground investigations along the Phase 2a route at Whitmore Heath. This will guide future tunnelling activity in the area. Ground investigations will commence at various other locations this year.



Environmental work

So far we have undertaken nearly 5,000 ecology surveys to understand the natural environment along the Phase 2a route. We will consider the best ways to manage our impact, supporting the creation of a 'green corridor' of new woodlands and habitats alongside the railway.

Our surveys have helped us to understand how HS2 will affect local bat populations and allowed us to make suggestions to manage our impact. These include providing new roosts that are tailored to the needs of individual species, as well as creating 'green bridges' and underpasses in key locations to help bats travel safely near the railway.



Establishing funds for the area

As we deliver HS2, we have the opportunity to leave a positive legacy for local communities. There will be a number of established funding opportunities for your area.

The Community and Environment Fund, as well as our Business and Local Economy Fund are already starting to support important local initiatives along Phase One of the railway from London to the West Midlands. This ranges from repairing a local village hall to improving a play area. These funds will be extended by £5m to cover Phase 2a of the new railway. There will also be a £2m Woodland Fund to help local landowners create new woodlands or restore existing ancient woodland sites.

The UK Government has additionally provided a £6.5m Road Safety Fund to improve the safety of local roads for cyclists, pedestrians, horse riders and drivers.

The funds will be available once the hybrid Bill has received Royal Assent which is expected in 2019. We will provide further details about these funding opportunities in the future.



Property schemes

Communities and businesses located near the proposed route could be eligible for one of our various property schemes. They are designed to support people directly impacted by HS2. For example, you may be able to sell your property to the government at its full, 'un-blighted' market value or receive a lump-sum payment if it's near the proposed route. Eligibility for the property schemes depends on various factors, including the location of your property. You can find out more about the support available by visiting www.gov.uk/claim-compensation-if-affected-by-hs2.

Find out more – HS2 information and events

Your local community engagement team will continue to meet local people and organisations as HS2 is planned and built.

- Terry Stafford – Senior Community Engagement Manager, Phase 2a
- Liz Davis – Community Engagement Manager, from Fradley to Colton
- Joe Wilson – Community Engagement Manager, from Colwich to Swynnerton
- Beckie Lewis – Community Engagement Manager, from Whitmore to Crewe

We'll be running a series of events along the Phase 2a route in the Autumn and will be sending you an invitation soon.

You can keep up-to-date with news about HS2 in your area, including events, at www.hs2instaffs.commonplace.is and www.hs2incheshire.commonplace.is

FAQs

People affected by HS2 inevitably have many questions about it, and we want to use this newsletter to help answer some of the common ones. We are on hand to answer any other questions you may have in future. Our contact details are on the back.

Q: How can I keep up-to-date with the parliamentary process?

A: You can find the latest news and information about the hybrid Bill by visiting www.parliament.uk and searching for 'HS2 Phase 2a Committee'. Important documents, such as reports from the committee, are published on the site. You can also sign up for email updates and watch live committee sessions on parliamentlive.tv.

Q: When will construction start?

A: The construction of the railway can only take place after Parliament has approved the plans. We will start by preparing the area for future construction work by improving local roads, diverting existing utilities, and creating new wildlife habitats, amongst other preparations. We then expect main construction work to start in 2021, followed by building the track and systems for the railway so it can open by the end of 2027.

Q: How will local roads cope with construction traffic?

A: 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 for as long as possible to reduce the impact on local communities.



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 at: 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 via the helpline. For more details on our complaints process, please visit our website: www.hs2.org.uk/how-to-complain/

Contact us

If you have any questions about this document, please get in touch.

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