

Press Release

10 January 2012



Government Green Light for High Speed Two

Largest infrastructure project for a generation approved by Transport Secretary

Sir Brian Briscoe, Chairman of HS2 Ltd, has welcomed today's decision by Justine Greening, Secretary of State for Transport, to proceed with plans to build a high speed rail line between London and the West Midlands and on to Manchester and Leeds. The new scheme will improve capacity across the rail network, shorten journey times between Britain's major population centres, boost the economy and create thousands of jobs

Sir Brian said: ***"I very much welcome this decision by Justine Greening as the time is right to build a high speed network that connects our major cities, Heathrow and continental Europe. This will be one of the most significant transport projects ever undertaken in the UK.***

"The new route will free up much needed space for other services on the West Coast Main Line, help drive economic benefits and enhance business productivity, while taking you from London to Birmingham in just 49 minutes.

"Now that ministers have decided to go ahead with the project our purpose changes significantly. Rather than just advising Government we will now move to promoting the project as well. Engineering, design and environmental work begins immediately in preparation for the hybrid Bill for the London to West Midlands section, and we will continue to develop proposals for the Manchester and Leeds legs."

The consultation that ran from February to July last year generated 54,909 responses and helped inform a series of refinements that have significantly reduced the impacts of the route.

A package of alterations were recommended by HS2 Ltd and accepted by the Transport Secretary. **(See Notes to Editors)** Compared to the consultation route there will be a 50

per cent increase in tunnel or green tunnel - totalling around 22.5 miles. In addition, around 56.5 of the 140 miles of the London to West Midlands line will be partially or totally hidden in cutting. In the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) just over one and a half miles of the route will be visible.

HS2 Ltd will be working very closely with local authorities and communities along the line in the next stage of work. Community, planning and environmental forums will be set up to help identify the potential impacts of the proposals and explore the best ways of minimising them. **(See Notes to Editors)**

The revised route announced today almost halves the numbers of dwellings at risk of land take and reduces by a third the number experiencing increased noise levels. To assist affected homeowners, communities and businesses a package of property measures are to be brought in over and above what affected homeowners are already entitled to under law.

There will be a streamlined purchase scheme, a refreshed hardship scheme, support for those affected by construction, measures to reinforce confidence in properties above tunnels and a sale and rent scheme.

The Government will seek the necessary powers and consents for constructing the line from London to West Midlands via an Act of Parliament (a hybrid Bill). This is scheduled to be placed in the House of Commons by the end of 2013.

Prior to the laying of the Bill, consultations will be held seeking views on how best to safeguard the route and how blight proposals should be approached. These consultations are set to start in Spring 2012 and will run for 12 weeks.

HS2 Ltd will also continue to develop plans for a high speed link to Leeds and Manchester via South Yorkshire and East Midlands and a spur to Heathrow. They will deliver recommendations to ministers later this year.

For further information and to read documents supporting this announcement go to www.dft.gov.uk/topics/high-speed-rail or contact the HS2 Ltd press office on 020 7944 6149.

Note to Editors

- Improvements to the line of route between London and West Midlands

Lichfield

1. Increase the clearance of HS2 over the Trent and Mersey Canal near Lichfield. The change is required to keep the canal navigable and would slightly improve flood management.

Warwickshire

2. Move the route slightly further away from Middleton. The changes to the scheme in this area will result in fewer demolitions and less noise impacts.
3. Mitigation of impacts on Balsall Common by moving the line further away from the community and lowering the height of the viaduct.
4. A shallower cutting and longer green tunnel at Burton Green. Changes here include mitigating local impacts and reducing spoil generation, whilst still shielding the visual impact of the trains from the community.
5. Avoid Kenilworth Golf Club, lower the line further into cutting through the National Agricultural Centre, and introduce a narrower cutting through South Cubbington Wood. This will help mitigate the impacts in this area and also avoid the need for the demolition of a Grade II listed farmhouse at Kenilworth.
6. Introduce a longer bored tunnel at Long Itchington Wood. This will reduce land take, noise, landscape and visual impacts significantly.

Northamptonshire

7. Introduce a longer green tunnel past Chipping Warden and Aston le Walls, and to curve the route to avoid a cluster of important heritage sites around Edgcote. These changes will provide additional mitigation for Aston le Walls, reduce setting impact on Grade I listed Edgcote House, avoid a Scheduled Monument (the Roman Villa site) and the possible location of the historic Edgcote Moor battlefield.
8. Lower the alignment and introduce a green tunnel past Greatworth, and a short green tunnel at Turweston. These changes will help mitigate landscape, noise and visual impacts as well as remove the need for a viaduct.

Buckinghamshire

9. Take an alternative alignment past Twyford, taking it further away from Twyford and reducing noise. This will assist mitigating impacts on Twyford by making some land available between HS2 and the village that would allow for landscaped earthworks that would reduce noise and visual impacts.
10. Lower the alignment past Aylesbury and Stoke Mandeville to reduce local impacts and eliminate the need for larger scale works to local roads and the Chiltern Railways line.
11. Introduce a longer, now continuous tunnel from Little Missenden to the M25 through the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to reduce the need for deep cutting and to avoid a major aquifer. This will provide an overall benefit to landscape and features in the AONB.

London

12. Introduce a 2.75 mile (4.4 km) bored tunnel along the Northolt Corridor to avoid major works to the Chilterns Line and impacts on local communities in the Ruislip area. This will have the effect of removing all surface impacts apart from the need for an intervention shaft.

- **Community forums** will meet over the coming year and it is expected that 15 – 20 representatives of each local area will liaise with staff from HS2 Ltd. They will be asked to highlight the key environmental impacts locally, discuss mitigation options such as screening views of the railway, how best to manage noise, reinstate highways and identify possible community benefits.
- **Planning forums** will involve officers from local authorities and other transport and planning bodies to discuss route design development, mitigation principles and environmental impacts.
- **The Environmental forum** will include national representatives of environmental consultees, such as Natural England, and government departments. This group will assist the setting of environmental policy for the development stage of HS2.
- The Government's proposed network would be delivered in two phases - the first a line from London to the West Midlands, and the second the onward legs to Manchester and Leeds with connections to points further north via the existing East and West Coast main lines.
- The proposed London to Birmingham line would run from a rebuilt Euston station to a new Birmingham City Centre station at Curzon Street. There would be a Crossrail interchange station at Old Oak Common in West London and a second interchange station to the south east of Birmingham.
- There would be a direct link to HS1 built in phase 1, and a spur linking to Heathrow Airport would be built in phase 2.
- Since the Government's decision to go ahead with HS2, HS2 Ltd is the organisation that is developing and promoting the project. The company will now start the engineering, design and environmental work in preparation for the hybrid Bill for the London to West Midlands route. The Bill will authorise the Government to build and operate phase 1 of the project. It will also continue to work on proposals for the line of route from Birmingham to Leeds and Manchester. HS2 Ltd is a company wholly owned by the Department for Transport.

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