

THE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE DESIGN REFINEMENT CONSULTATION:

Decisions and Safeguarding Directions
for Northolt and Bromford



The Government Response to the Design Refinement Consultation:

**Decisions and Safeguarding Directions
for Northolt and Bromford**

Presented to Parliament
by the Secretary of State for Transport
by Command of Her Majesty

October 2013

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1 Introduction

- 1.0.1 On 9 July 2013, the Secretary of State for Transport announced that safeguarding directions had been issued for Phase One of High Speed Two (HS2) from London to the West Midlands. Safeguarding is an established part of the planning system, designed to protect land which has been earmarked for major infrastructure from conflicting developments which might otherwise occur.
- 1.0.2 At the time of this announcement, the Government was consulting separately on a number of design refinements on the Phase One route. This Design Refinement Consultation (DRC), which closed on 11 July 2013, included proposals for bored tunnels at both Northolt and Bromford. Due to the uncertainty regarding the safeguarding requirements in these areas, the Secretary of State decided that it would not be appropriate at that stage to issue safeguarding directions for those two sections of the route.
- 1.0.3 The Secretary of State indicated that the safeguarding directions for the Northolt and Bromford sections would be issued once decisions on whether to proceed with these tunnels had been taken in light of the outcome of the DRC.
- 1.0.4 In order to complete the safeguarding of land along the whole length of the HS2 Phase One route as soon as possible and so clarify the position for local property owners, the Secretary of State has decided to bring forward the decisions on the design refinements at Northolt and Bromford. We are currently considering the responses to the other changes proposed in the DRC and will publish the Government's full response in due course.
- 1.0.5 The Government intends to introduce to Parliament a hybrid Bill for Phase One of HS2. There will be a further opportunity for the public to comment to Parliament on the design of the scheme after the Bill and Environmental Statement have been deposited. People directly affected by the railway will also have the opportunity to petition Parliament on the Bill after its Second Reading.

2 Northolt Corridor Tunnel

2.0.1 Originally it was proposed that between Old Oak Common and Northolt the HS2 line should run on the surface. This surface section would have followed the existing Chiltern Line and London Underground Central Line, and passed beneath 20 existing road bridges. In the DRC, in response to representations by the local community, Ealing Council and the Mayor of London, the Secretary of State proposed a refinement to replace the proposed surface section of the route between Old Oak Common and Northolt with a bored tunnel, including three new vent shafts.

2.0.2 This section sets out the Government's decision following consideration of responses to the question:

"This proposed change consists of replacing the proposed surface section of the route between Old Oak Common and Northolt with a bored tunnel including three new vent shafts. Please give your views on this proposal, indicating whether or not you support the proposal together with your reasons."

2.0.3 135 respondents answered this question or made comments relating to the proposed design refinement to the Northolt Corridor. Most consultees supported the proposed change to a tunnelled route at Northolt, to reduce traffic congestion, noise and disruption for residents.

2.0.4 Only a small proportion of respondents opposed the proposed tunnel. Some commercial businesses expressed specific concerns over the impact of the proposed vent shafts on their property interests. HS2 Ltd will work closely with those affected to ensure that impacts are mitigated where reasonably practicable or that appropriate compensation is negotiated.

2.0.5 A small number of consultees were concerned that the location of the vent shafts might prevent future development of the Northolt rail corridor. HS2 Ltd will work with Network Rail to reduce as far as reasonably practicable the future impact on any likely developments of the corridor. A number of consultees raised concerns about the construction sites required at the West Ruislip end of the tunnel, construction traffic in that area, the removal of increased amounts of spoil from the tunnel using local roads, and the possible severance or disruption to bus routes. These issues will be taken into account in the Environmental Statement for the hybrid Bill and we will continue to work with the community and local councils to mitigate local impacts. Material excavated from the tunnel will be transported by rail wherever possible.

2.0.6 Some consultees felt Ickenham would be significantly impacted and argued that the tunnel should be extended beyond Ickenham. HS2 Ltd has considered options to extend the tunnel west of West Ruislip by either a further 650 metres or a further 1.15 kilometres. However, in practice, these changes were assessed to have limited benefit against a significant increase in costs. (Further detail was given in the draft Environmental Statement, Community Forum Area Report 6 South Ruislip to Ickenham, section 2.6.)

2.0.7 Other consultees suggested changes not relevant to the design refinement proposed at Northolt. These included comments on Old Oak Common station and the Langtree Walk and Alexandra Road vent shafts, both of which are to the east of Old Oak Common station.

2.0.8 Having carefully considered the consultation responses received, the Secretary of State has decided to confirm the proposed change to replace the surface section of track at Northolt with a continuous section of tunnel extending all the way from Old Oak Common to West Ruislip. This will reduce as far as practicable disruption during construction and loss of property. In addition, it would be no more expensive to construct than the surface route and could be completed in less time.

3 Bromford Tunnel

3.0.1 In the DRC document the Secretary of State proposed replacing a surface section of the HS2 route beneath the M6 Bromford Viaduct with a bored tunnel, as it would avoid the disruption to local infrastructure and the resultant significant adverse environmental and social effects on the local community caused by the January 2012 route.

3.0.2 This section sets out the Government's decision following consideration of responses to the question:

"This proposed change consists of replacing the proposed surface section of the route beneath the M6 Bromford Viaduct with a bored tunnel. Please give your views on this proposal, indicating whether or not you support the proposal together with your reasons."

3.0.3 28 respondents answered the question or made comments relating to the proposed design refinement at Bromford. Most consultees who responded supported the proposed change from surface route to tunnel at Bromford. They noted that the change would reduce costs, lead to less disruption to traffic and property, and avoid changes to the river and electricity pylons. Network Rail also noted that it would avoid what would otherwise amount to a significant impact on the existing railway.

3.0.4 A small number of consultees raised concerns about businesses which would be affected by the location of the tunnel portal at Castle Bromwich Business Park, and wished to understand more about how the impacts of construction would be managed. As for other commercial sites along the route, HS2 Ltd will be working closely with affected commercial businesses and local authorities to mitigate impacts. This will include assisting with the identification of alternative sites and agreeing appropriate compensation arrangements.

3.0.5 As Birmingham City Council noted in their response, HS2 Ltd has looked further at whether the Bromford Tunnel could be extended eastwards by around 3km with a tunnel portal near Water Orton, in order to avoid impacts on the business park and also on Park Hall nature reserve. HS2 Ltd has concluded that, on balance, the net additional costs of an extended tunnel option would be likely to outweigh the net environmental benefits.

3.0.6 Having taken account of the consultation responses, the Secretary of State has decided to confirm the proposed change to replace the surface route with a tunnel. This is in order to avoid the disruption to local infrastructure and resultant significant adverse environmental and social impacts on the local community that would have been caused by the January 2012 surface route.

3.0.7 Following further development of the design, the Secretary of State has also decided to move the alignment of the central part of the tunnel by up to 35 metres to the north and to lower it by up to 12 metres compared to the design published in May 2013. This is to reduce as far as reasonably practicable settlement risks to properties.

4 Safeguarding Directions in relation to Northolt and Bromford

4.0.1 In light of the decisions to promote tunnels at Bromford and Northolt, the Secretary of State has re-issued the safeguarding directions for HS2 Phase One, providing additional and / or replacement maps for these sections of the Phase One route that reflect these directions.

4.1 Immediate implications of safeguarding

4.1.1 Safeguarding directions for the whole of Phase One are now in place. This has immediate implications for a small number of Local Planning Authorities in affected areas and those wishing to submit planning applications in respect of land in the safeguarded areas.

4.1.2 Safeguarding also enables those who own property and meet the qualifying criteria to approach the Government to purchase their properties, if they wish. General information on compensation for those who own property within safeguarded areas is available from the Department for Communities and Local Government at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/series/compulsory-purchase-system-guidance>.

4.1.3 Information on compensation specifically aimed at those who own property within areas safeguarded for HS2, including application forms, is available at: <http://www.hs2.org.uk/> or by phoning the HS2 Ltd enquiries line on 020 7944 4908.

4.1.4 To provide more information to those living above or close to HS2 tunnels, the Government has recently published a report entitled *Impact of Tunnels in the UK* which looks at the history of similar tunnelling work in this country. The full report and a non-technical summary can be found on the HS2 website at: <http://www.hs2.org.uk/news-resources/engineering-documents>



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