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for Transport

Report on the Performance of the Need to Sell Scheme - Early Trends

**An update for the House of Commons High Speed Rail (London -
West Midlands) Bill Select Committee**

November 2015



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Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR
Telephone 0300 330 3000
General enquiries <https://forms.dft.gov.uk>
Website www.gov.uk/dft

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Introduction

- 1 HS2 is a vital part of the Government's long-term economic plan. It will have a transformational effect, supporting growth across the country by improving connectivity, freeing up space on our crowded rail network, promoting regeneration, boosting skills and generating thousands of jobs.
- 2 The Government's decisions on HS2 have been made with careful consideration of the impacts on people that live and work near the line of route. We know that some people and property will be significantly affected by the railway. When they are, the Government wants to ensure they are treated fairly, with dignity and in a timely manner.
- 3 We have recognised that HS2 is an exceptional scheme that justifies an exceptional support package. In January 2015, the Government introduced a revised package of discretionary compensation and assistance measures for Phase One of HS2, including the need to sell (NTS) Scheme.
- 4 Before the introduction of the package of property measures, we had operated a Phase One Exceptional Hardship Scheme (EHS). This was a temporary measure to assist owner-occupiers along the route of Phase One of HS2 who had an urgent need to sell, but were unable to do so other than at a substantially reduced price as a direct result of HS2.
- 5 An overview of the wider package of Phase One compensation and assistance schemes is attached at **Annex A**.
- 6 The purpose of NTS is to assist eligible owner-occupiers who can demonstrate that they have a 'compelling reason' to sell their property within the next three years, but have been unable to do so other than at a substantially reduced price, as a result of the announcement of the route of Phase One. Successful applicants will then have their property purchased at its un-blighted open market value (i.e. the value of the property as it would have been without any effect arising from the announcement of Phase One of HS2).



NTS - summary

NTS is open to all property owners living along the Phase One route and eligibility is not defined by any fixed distance from the line. Anyone who has made all reasonable efforts to market their property but has been unable to sell it due to the perceived blight of HS2 can apply to the scheme. A compelling reason to sell must be evidenced, and may be triggered by scenarios such as ill health, family expansion or moving for a new job. This list is not exhaustive and each case is considered on its own merit by an independent panel who makes a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport as to whether the case should be accepted.

- 7 In the Select Committee's First Special Report of Session 2014-15 (published 23 March 2015), the Committee raised a number of points about the operation of NTS. This report honours the commitment we made in the subsequent Promoter's Response (June 2015), that:
“We will undertake a review of the performance of the scheme in autumn 2015, the results of which will be reported to the Committee.”
- 8 NTS has been running for around 10 months (since 16 January 2015). This only provides a limited evidence base to inform this review, however we have used our analysis of the scheme to identify early trends and assess whether the scheme is operating as intended.
- 9 Chapter 1 analyses scheme application and acceptance data, draws out early trends and provides some case studies of the types of cases being accepted. Chapter 2 reviews the administration of NTS, including improvements made to guidance and training.
- 10 We will provide an update on our review of the scheme's property valuation procedure in early 2016, and perform another full review of the scheme in autumn 2016. By that time, we will be able to draw on substantially more evidence to reach more definitive conclusions. We anticipate that this subsequent report will be submitted to the Lords Select Committee as part of the parliamentary passage of the HS2 hybrid Bill.



Chapter 1: Overview and Data Analysis: Trends

Summary of Early Trends

- 11 In summary, we believe that early evidence and trends demonstrate that:
- NTS is working successfully and as intended. It has distinctly higher acceptance rates than the previous Phase One Exceptional Hardship Scheme (EHS);
 - processing times are good and well within our target limits, but we aspire to achieve quicker overall decision times and will take action to help this happen;
 - we have achieved an appropriate balance on the standard of evidence required to show that scheme criteria are met, but will continue to make improvements in clarifying the level of evidential requirement within the NTS guidance as needed, and;
 - there is a good level of awareness of the availability of NTS along the entire line of route, based on the distribution of applications.

Acceptance Rate

- 12 We have always been clear that NTS was designed to be a more generous scheme than the EHS, which was the only discretionary property scheme in place on Phase One between 2010 and 2014. **When the EHS closed in January 2015 its long-term acceptance rate was 30%.**
- 13 To date, by comparison, the **NTS has an acceptance rate of 61%**. At the end of October 2015, there had been 116 applications (representing 107 unique cases) to the Phase One NTS. 45 cases have so far been accepted. There have been 13 cases where applicants withdrew and there are 29 cases that are pending a decision.



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14 Scheme data is published monthly on Gov.uk, in the following format:

To date	30 October 2015
Number of applications received	116
Number of applications which are re-applications	9
Number of applications withdrawn by applicants	13
Average time in weeks for a decision under the final panel (excluding waiting time for additional documentation requested by the Secretariat)	8.35
Number of applications accepted	45
Number of applications rejected	29
Number of applications pending a decision	29
Number of formal offers accepted by applicants	27
Number of purchases which have completed	7
Total values of those properties where purchase completed	£4,810,000

- 15 Currently, therefore, proportionally over **twice** as many NTS applications are being accepted than were EHS applications.
- 16 The NTS acceptance rate, even on the limited evidence base to date, is encouraging. It suggests that the scheme is helping people in a much broader range of circumstances than EHS, as we had intended, and a large majority of applications are sufficiently evidenced to enable the independent panel to recommend acceptance to the Secretary of State.



Fig 1: Phase One NTS Case Outcomes (at 30 October 2015)
This excludes withdrawn and pending cases

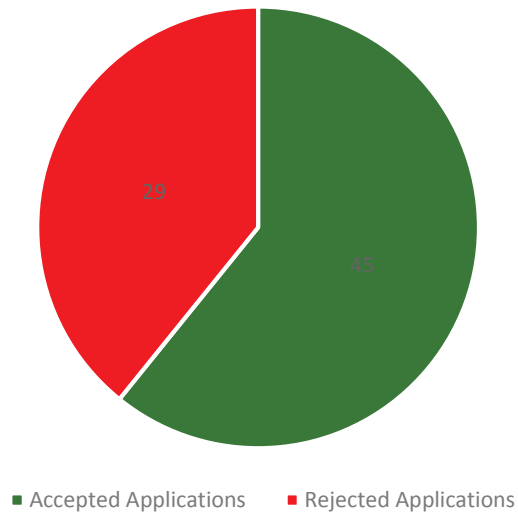
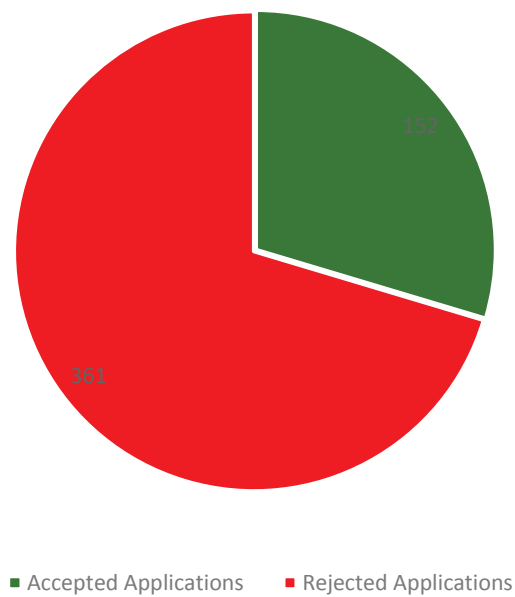


Fig 2: Phase One EHS Case Outcomes (at 30 October 2015)
This excludes withdrawn cases





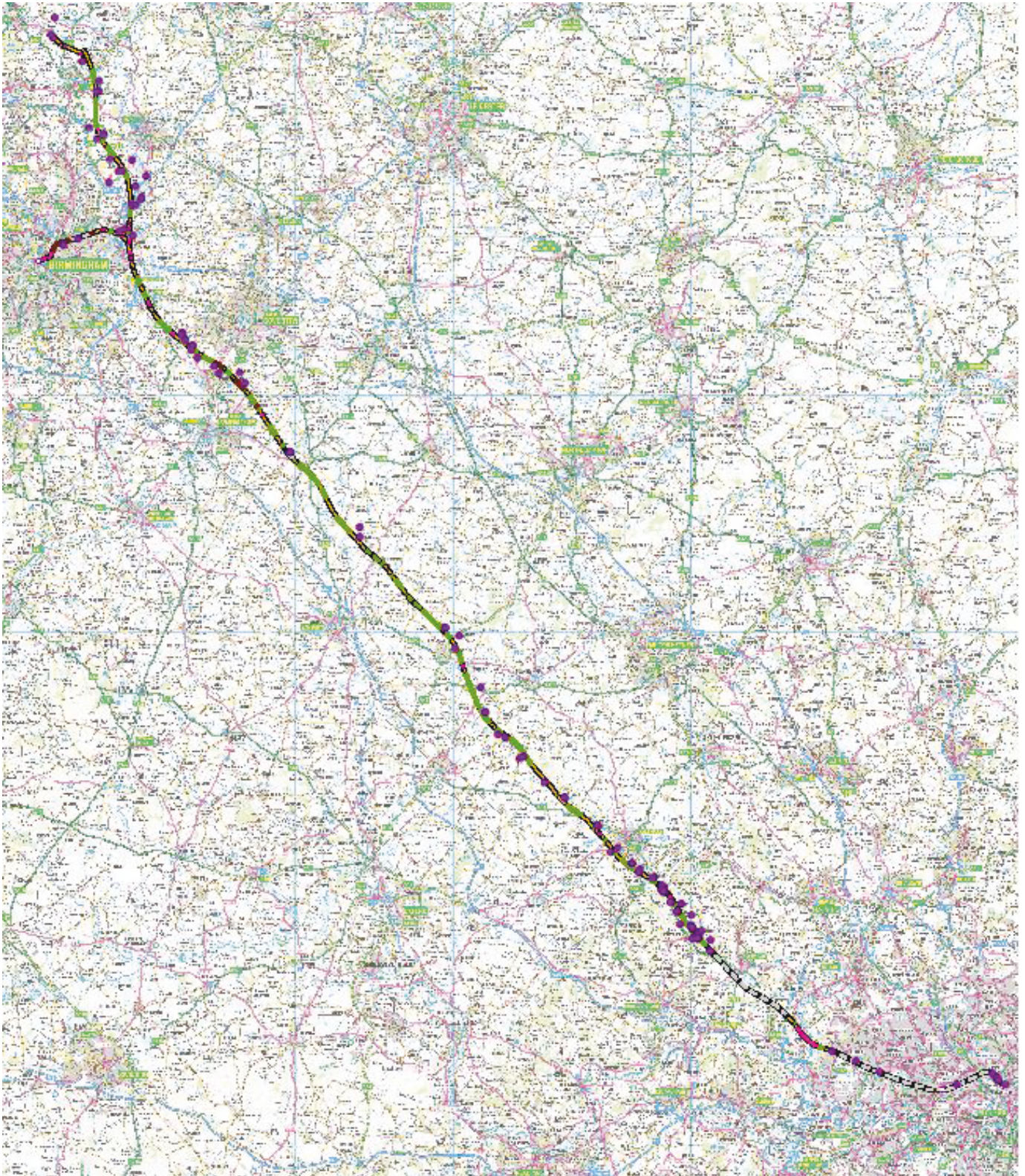
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Property Location

- 17 The illustration on the next page shows the spread of NTS applications along the Phase One line of route. Each dot on the map represents an NTS case. This shows broadly the spread of applications we would expect based on the characteristics of the route and does not highlight any significant geographical 'gaps' in awareness of the scheme at this stage.
- 18 The communications section of this report provides more detail regarding our longer term plan, to ensure that the scheme remains well communicated.
- 19 NTS criterion 2 is "Location of Property", where it should be shown that a property is in such close proximity to the route that it would be likely to be substantially adversely affected by either the construction of the operation of the new line.
- 20 80% of the total number of accepted NTS cases have been within 800m of the centre line of the railway. Most accepted cases over 800m have not met Criterion 2, but have been accepted due to extenuating circumstances overall.
- 21 We are confident that the scheme is operating robustly and as intended in this respect. The impacts of HS2 construction and operation differ along the line (based on factors such as topography, population density, the design features of the line itself, and construction plans) so each application is individually assessed against the available plans for the railway. This is why we have no geographic boundary for NTS.



Fig 3: NTS applications (to 30 September 2015) along the Phase One line of route.





Effort to Sell and the Impact of Blight (Evidence and Functioning of the Property Market)

Evidence

- 22 NTS criterion 3 is 'Effort to Sell and the Impact of Blight'. This criterion asks applicants to provide evidence that it is the blight resulting from the route of HS2 Phase One, rather than any other factor, which is the reason their property has not sold or could not be sold, other than at a substantially reduced value (blighted value).
- 23 The Committee has previously expressed concern that applicants in areas either very close to the line, or where several properties have already been purchased by the scheme, should not face an unreasonably high expectation of evidence in this regard. We agree that the requirement for evidence must be reasonable, so have reviewed NTS cases to date to ascertain if this was being handled reasonably.
- 24 The case review, some examples from which are highlighted below, demonstrated that requiring applicants to demonstrate that the inability to sell results from HS2, has not been an unreasonable requirement and has been achieving its intended purpose. There are no hard and fast rules as to the steps that an applicant is expected to take to demonstrate that this criterion is satisfied, and the panel and decision maker consider each case on its individual merits. We would highlight in particular that whilst the NTS guidance makes clear that application panels would expect to see evidence that the property had been marketed for a minimum of three months, it also makes it expressly clear that:
- Evidence provided in a Phase One NTS application about applicants' attempts to actively market their properties will be carefully considered. In particular, evidence that a number of local estate agents have refused to market the property due to HS2 is considered key information.¹**
- 25 The following anonymised examples of accepted cases demonstrate ways in which the independent panel and Decision Maker review cases and evidence flexibly, allowing cases to be successful despite not initially meeting, or indeed not meeting criterion 3:

¹ "Need to sell scheme – Guidance notes and application, January 2015", p.9.



Case Study One:

This applicant was very elderly and suffering health problems. Although the property was never put on the market, the applicant provided documents from estate agents confirming their view that the property had been blighted by HS2. This was considered sufficient evidence to demonstrate that HS2 was the reason why the property had not sold and hence the criterion was met.

Case Study Two:

This applicant was terminally ill, and the panel deemed that given this, it was not reasonable to ask the applicant to market the property for the suggested minimum amount of time in the guidance. This applicant had proof from the estate agent that they were struggling considerably to even arrange viewings, let alone receive un-blighted offers.

Case Study Three:

The applicant's first application was rejected. The re-application was accepted, once the applicants had gathered further evidence similar to those in case studies one & two.

NTS has been designed to operate flexibly in this way, re-assessing cases when evidence changes but in a way that safeguards the scheme's integrity and prevents it being undermined.

- 26 These cases demonstrate that careful and tailored consideration of individual circumstances has been afforded to applications, that the evidence required to demonstrate that criterion 3 was met was reasonable and proportionate, and that an NTS rejection can simply be challenged by a re-application either with more evidence, or on the basis of change of circumstances.
- 27 Any NTS application may be successful even if not all criteria are met, as it may be that the overall circumstances of the applicant lead the panel and decision maker to conclude that there is a compelling case for the Government to buy this property to help the applicant with a particular need or needs. We consider this very important, because it ensures that individual applicants and their specific needs are at the core of NTS decision making and that this is not just a tick-box exercise.
- 28 It is also not automatically the case that neighbouring properties will be affected by the proposed scheme in the same way or to the same extent. This is because it is possible that one property screens another from potential visual or noise impacts of construction or operation. This is particularly true in rural locations where you find larger properties in different orientations sitting in grounds that may include dense vegetation.



- 29 The real variation in marketing experiences for two properties in close proximity to each other is borne out in examples of cases that we have seen. Marketing experience is very much affected by the changes in the housing market over relatively short periods of time and the shifts in which properties are affected by generalised blight. For example, a Phase One EHS application accepted under criterion 3 (approximately 250m from the line of route) is only 0.1 miles away from a property around the corner (also approximately 250m from the route) which was the subject of an NTS application. The NTS application was then withdrawn prior to its conclusion due to the property having been sold on the open market.
- 30 This is clear evidence that (even in areas that will in the future be eligible for Homeowner Payments) the inability to sell one property due to HS2 does not mean that another property literally around the corner cannot sell. It is therefore right that the panel and decision maker consider the full picture for each application, and it is important for prospective applicants to consult a number of local agents as to the viability of marketing a property, as they would in the absence of HS2. This is why we do not believe it would be right to identify areas as 'blighted', not least as such an approach could risk exacerbating blight, contrary to the objectives that our discretionary schemes are designed to achieve.
- 31 Further relaxing the standard of evidence required to satisfy criterion 3 could well lead to more acceptances, but it remains very important that the correct balance is achieved with the need to ensure that the scheme's expenditure is being spent correctly on cases where HS2 is the cause that prevents a property from being sold at its un-blighted open market value. There can be many reasons why a property including those close to the line of HS2 can struggle to sell. Evidence since January 2015 suggests that a fair balance is being achieved, but we will continue to monitor this and act on it if necessary.
- 32 Should an applicant not be accepted under criterion 3, or any other criterion, a full set of reasons is provided. As soon as a decision letter is provided to applicants, they are able to re-apply if they consider there to be additional information they can provide to address the decision maker's comments. This of course includes further information on marketing. If they re-apply within six months, their re-application need only be against the criterion/criteria against which they were previously unsuccessful.

Functioning of the Property Market

- 33 Even within the limited number of cases that the scheme has processed so far, considerable evidence exists showing the need to maintain a careful and proportionate application of the Effort to Sell criterion.
- 34 A number of applications have been withdrawn from the scheme over the past six



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months because the properties have since sold on the open market. This demonstrates the importance of a full assessment to be made regarding whether that individual property is blighted. In one case, an applicant had been accepted but the local property market in that case had moved on over a couple of months. They returned their property to the open market and promptly received a number of acceptable offers.

- 35 It would be wrong for the Government to intervene where there is not market failure, or to assume that levels of blight in an area are static. That would risk entrenching blight and the use of public money to purchase property where there may in fact be willing private buyers.

The Compelling Reason to Sell

- 36 NTS has no fixed 'categories' or specified reasons why someone should need to sell their property. We cannot predict the full range of individual circumstances that could cause someone to have a compelling reason to sell their home, so our guidance provides a selection of scenarios that (among many other) could provide a trigger:
- Unemployment;
 - Relocation for a new job;
 - The division of assets as part of a divorce settlement;
 - Ill-health; or
 - The need to release capital for retirement.
- 37 At this early stage, the range of circumstances being successfully cited by applicants as compelling reasons to sell appears as wide-ranging as we expected. By no means should the trigger for an application be limited to the list above. It is too early to draw definitive conclusions from the first 10 months of the scheme, but the most common broad categories of compelling reason to date have been health/age related.
- 38 We know that the Committee has expressed a concern that NTS must help people with "age and stage" cases - this could be people who are approaching retirement or an age where they will need to move to a smaller or more convenient property, but who would not have been successful under EHS because they could not show an urgent need to move to avoid exceptional hardship.
- 39 NTS aims to help people who can show a compelling reason to sell their home within the next three years. The following examples of accepted cases show this in action for what might be described as 'age and stage' situations:



Case Study Four:

The applicants had retired and could not service their mortgage from their pension income. One applicant also suffered from mobility issues. The decision maker was satisfied the financial and health-related evidence provided supported a compelling reason for the applicants to sell their property within the next three years

Case Study Five:

The age of the applicants made it unreasonable to expect them to continue to travel long distances to support a relative, and health conditions showed a need to downsize to a more suitable property.

Case Study Six:

This case was accepted because although the individual 'reasons to sell' that the applicant provided were not considered compelling individually, the decision maker agreed with the panel that the cumulative impact was compelling. The reasons included the age of the applicant and their partner, the needs of a relative, and the negative impact on the applicant's business.

- 40 We hope to say more about the types of accepted cases in our second NTS review next year.



Chapter 2: Review of NTS Administration

Processing Times

- 41 The table above shows that at 30 September 2015, the average time for a decision to be received by applicants was 8.35 weeks. This is well within the 12 weeks target that the scheme guidance states.
- 42 We do note, however, that it is longer than the 6.9 week average for EHS at the point that it closed and we are determined to improve on that.
- 43 We will examine the time taken to progress cases through each step of the process, and take action to improve the NTS throughput time. The Department, for example, is recruiting a larger pool of existing Senior Civil Servant to act as Decision Makers, which we hope will further improve the speed of cases in that part of the process.

Evidencing applications

- 44 NTS applications are reviewed by an independent panel, and the evidence that applicants are asked to provide against each criterion is critical to enabling the panel to make a fair and fully informed decision. In the June 2015 Promoter's Response, we wrote:
128: We accept that there could be improvements in clarifying the level of evidential requirement in the NTS guidance. We will update the guidance document to provide clearer examples of information that could support an application in this regard.
- 45 It is important that applicants know what evidence the independent panel would expect to see. The evidential standard of NTS applications to date has been broadly very good but to help applicants further, we will make some amendments and additions to guidance, as follows:
- 46 We know that the explanation of a person's **compelling reason to sell** can often be the most difficult part of the application to evidence. Where a job relocation/job move is included in the reasons for the application, we will amend guidance to explain that



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the panel and decision maker would expect as a minimum that applicants submit (originals or certified copies):

- An official signed letter to the applicant confirming the relocation/job offer from a named person at the employer, ideally on headed paper;
- If not provided in the letter, confirmation of the position of the person at the employer and their involvement in the recruitment/relocation process;
- Documentation or correspondence providing the specifics of where the relocation is from and to, and the timescales involved; and
- Documentation or correspondence evidencing the reasons for the job move/business case for the re-location where possible/applicable.

47 We are aware that some concern has been expressed about how, under compelling reason to sell, applicants can prove to the independent panel that something (such as another bank account, or another property) does not exist. Currently, the NTS application form asks applicants to declare that:

"If I/we knowingly give information that is incorrect, or if relevant information is knowingly omitted, the application and the Government's decision on it will be void and I/we may have court action taken against us."

48 We do acknowledge that it is usually impossible for an applicant to prove a negative, but the intention of NTS is not to require applicants to do this. Moreover, we do not want to encourage applicants to feel they must attempt to prove negatives (e.g. by using affidavits) that would be at their cost and would always be secondary considerations for an evidence-based scheme. Applicants should ensure that they provide all the evidence relevant to the case they are making (so, a case on financial grounds should include details of all financial accounts/holdings) and the declaration above flags the importance of including all relevant information.

49 We know that concern has been expressed, including by applicants and members of the committee, about the financial information that people may be required to provide as part of an NTS application. It is very important that where an applicant relies on financial reasons for needing to sell their property, the panel and decision maker have a full picture of their financial situation to allow them to make an informed decision. When an applicant submits their case, we do go back to them as a matter of course to check if there is anything else they wish to provide, or identify if there may be a gap in evidence, but this is not intended to be intrusive. It aims to help applicants put forward the fullest picture possible to the panel, so that they are put in the best position for consideration of their application and avoid the situation where they may be rejected because (for example) evidence is inadvertently missed out.

50 To provide further clarity on the evidential requirements for applicants when marketing their property, guidance wording under the **effort to sell** criterion will be



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amended to state that properties should have been on the market "at least three months immediately prior to the date of the application." We hope this will help applicants better understand panel member's expectations.

- 51 The very wide range of circumstances that an NTS case might cover means it will always be difficult to provide an exhaustive list of what documentary evidence should be provided. However, we will continue to monitor cases for trends and see how the guidance could be further improved.

Helping Panel Members and Decision Makers to make the right decisions

- 52 The Independent Panel Members and Senior Civil Servant Decision Makers are fundamental to the good operation of the NTS. They need sufficient, clear training and timely, accessible support to enable them to make fair judgements on a very wide range of individual circumstances.
- 53 As part of this review, we therefore asked Panel Members and Decision Makers for their views to bring their insight and experience to our analysis.
- 54 We sent questionnaires to both groups, asking their views of the training provided (i.e. do they feel adequately prepared to do the job asked of them), their workload and their views of the scheme guidance for both themselves and applicants.
- 55 The feedback we received was positive. Respondents felt well-trained and suitably skilled for their roles, and clear on what is expected of them. Naturally, a few improvements were suggested. These are outlined in the summaries below, including how we will act on them:
- It was suggested that more frequent ('refresher') training would be helpful. We will instigate a rolling programme of training;
 - It was also suggested that the training could benefit from use of some real-life (anonymised) case studies; this can be done now that NTS cases have passed through the system, so a selection of cases, including complex ones, will be incorporated into future training sessions;
 - There was a suggestion of a specific 'lessons learned' session where panel members and decision makers could share insights and experience of the process to date: we think this would be a valuable exercise and will ensure it is carried out;



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- Some respondents suggested some more clarity on evidential requirements was needed – for example, to give more detail on how they should handle subjective evidence (where it is genuinely hard for applicants to provide firm evidence of statements). We have addressed this in the "Evidencing Applications" section of this report; and
- It was also noted that when applications are prepared on behalf of applicants by estate agents or surveyors, there have sometimes been weaknesses in the less property-market focussed sections of the application, particularly the description of the compelling need to sell. The scheme guidance states that is not necessary to use an agent to complete an application;

Atypical Properties and Special Circumstances

- 56 In the April 2014 announcement that set out the Government's decisions about compensation schemes for Phase One, we recognised that while the measures announced had been designed with flexibility and inclusiveness in mind, there will inevitably be some instances where it is appropriate for Government to go further. We therefore undertook that HS2 Ltd would work directly with property owners of atypical properties or those experiencing special circumstances in order to consider how their needs can best be met while protecting the interest of the taxpayer.
- 57 A very small number of residential properties have been acquired by applying this flexibility and engagement with people who fell into this category, and engagement is ongoing with a further small group of people. Some of these properties are on our line of route, others are further away. None of the cases to date have been identified via an NTS application but a process is in place to progress such cases if they are.
- 58 Proposals are considered first by HS2 Ltd's Commercial Committee and then by DfT's HS2 Property Approvals Group, a cross-departmental group with relevant expertise to decide on atypical and special circumstances cases.

Valuations Procedure

- 59 In the Promoter's Response, we wrote:
- 156: We will review the valuation approach to identify any improvements as part of the review of the operation of the scheme in autumn 2015.**
- 60 We know that the valuation process is one of the biggest causes of concern about NTS. We use a transparently procured panel of valuers, who provide valuations to RICS Red Book standard. There is often an element of professional judgement to be



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made, such as to appropriate comparables or the adjustment to unblighted market value. This exercise may result in a valuation being provided which the applicant considers is not in line with that their property would have been worth but for HS2, which in turn is often influenced by the view of estate agents of what they would have marketed the property at in a no HS2 world.

- 61 If successful applicants are unhappy with one of the valuations that determined their offer, we do request that the valuer in question considers relevant points made by the applicant, provides a full written response and considers whether this changes their valuation in any way. If it does, then our offer will change accordingly.
- 62 A RICS Red Book valuation requires the author to undertake necessary research into the local market. All of the panel valuers had to prove as part of the tendering process that they have appropriate experience, coverage and capacity to conduct valuations along the full line of route. Nevertheless, we know that many applicants would want to use valuers that are more local to them.
- 63 We will consider the case for local valuer input to the process and we are looking in detail at what mechanism could best achieve this that will balance the requirement for a consistent, auditable and efficient process. In all cases, we would need valuations to be carried out by RICS registered valuers to Red Book standard. We remain committed to ensuring that people accepted onto our discretionary schemes get the full, unblighted market price for their house that they would have got in the absence of HS2.
- 64 The valuation procedure for NTS is the same as used for all our discretionary schemes (except Express Purchase²) since 2010. We have commissioned a review and report on the valuations procedure and recommendations about whether we should make changes or improvements.
- 65 We expect to make a decision based on those recommendations in early 2016.

² Express Purchase operates on the same compensation principles as statutory blight. The valuation process is one of negotiation between agents.



Communications

66 In the Promoter's Response, we wrote:

136. As the schemes are to operate for one year after the railway is open for public use, communications over the longer term will be required and a plan for this, with key milestones, is currently being developed. To help inform this plan, we will undertake a review of how property owners are receiving information about NTS scheme.

67 HS2 Ltd has appointed a specialist firm to carry out demographic research along the Phase One route in order to understand how best people wish to be communicated with in relation to the discretionary property schemes. The research focusses on a selection of representative community areas, covering urban, rural and semi-rural. It will be completed by November 2015 and an analysis of the outcome will help inform the long term communication approach.

68 We have also commenced a pilot series of community events in eight locations, which will be completed by December 2015. Part of the feedback from these events will focus on obtaining the views of members of the public on how they want to be communicated with about HS2. Exit interviews are being carried out as attendees leave, and results are then collated and analysed to gain a clearer picture of how engagement and communication is wanted by those affected.

69 The outcome of both of these areas of work will drive the longer term communications plan, which HS2 Ltd expects to implement in spring 2016.



Conclusions

- 70 NTS is only one part of the Government's package of discretionary property measures for Phase One. We recognise, however, its particular sensitivity. As the only part of the package that includes an assessment of 'need', applications require significant judgement from the panel and decision makers, on what can be very personal and sometimes very difficult circumstances for the applicants.
- 71 We are confident that NTS, based upon early evidence, is operating fairly and reasonably. As outlined at the beginning of this report, we believe that:
- NTS is working successfully and as intended. It has distinctly higher acceptance rates than the previous Phase One Exceptional Hardship Scheme (EHS);
 - processing times are good and well within our target limits, but we aspire to achieve quicker overall decision times and will take action to help this happen;
 - we have achieved an appropriate balance on evidence required for applications, but will continue to make improvements in clarifying the level of evidential requirement within the NTS guidance as needed and;
 - there is a good level of awareness of the availability of NTS along the entire line of route, based on the distribution of applications.
- 72 The scheme is very deliberately designed to be flexible. Where cases do not meet all criteria, they can nevertheless be accepted where there is a strong overall rationale to do so. This flexibility is used by panel and decision makers, and there are specific cases evidenced in the review above.

Next Steps

- 73 Moving forward, we will provide further clarity on evidential requirements where we have identified areas for improvement. We will continue to do this where needs are identified in the future.
- 74 We are confident in the current valuation process and its results, however to ensure that we are not overlooking any potential improvements, we have commissioned a report to review the valuation process and provide recommendations. We will make a decision on this early next year.



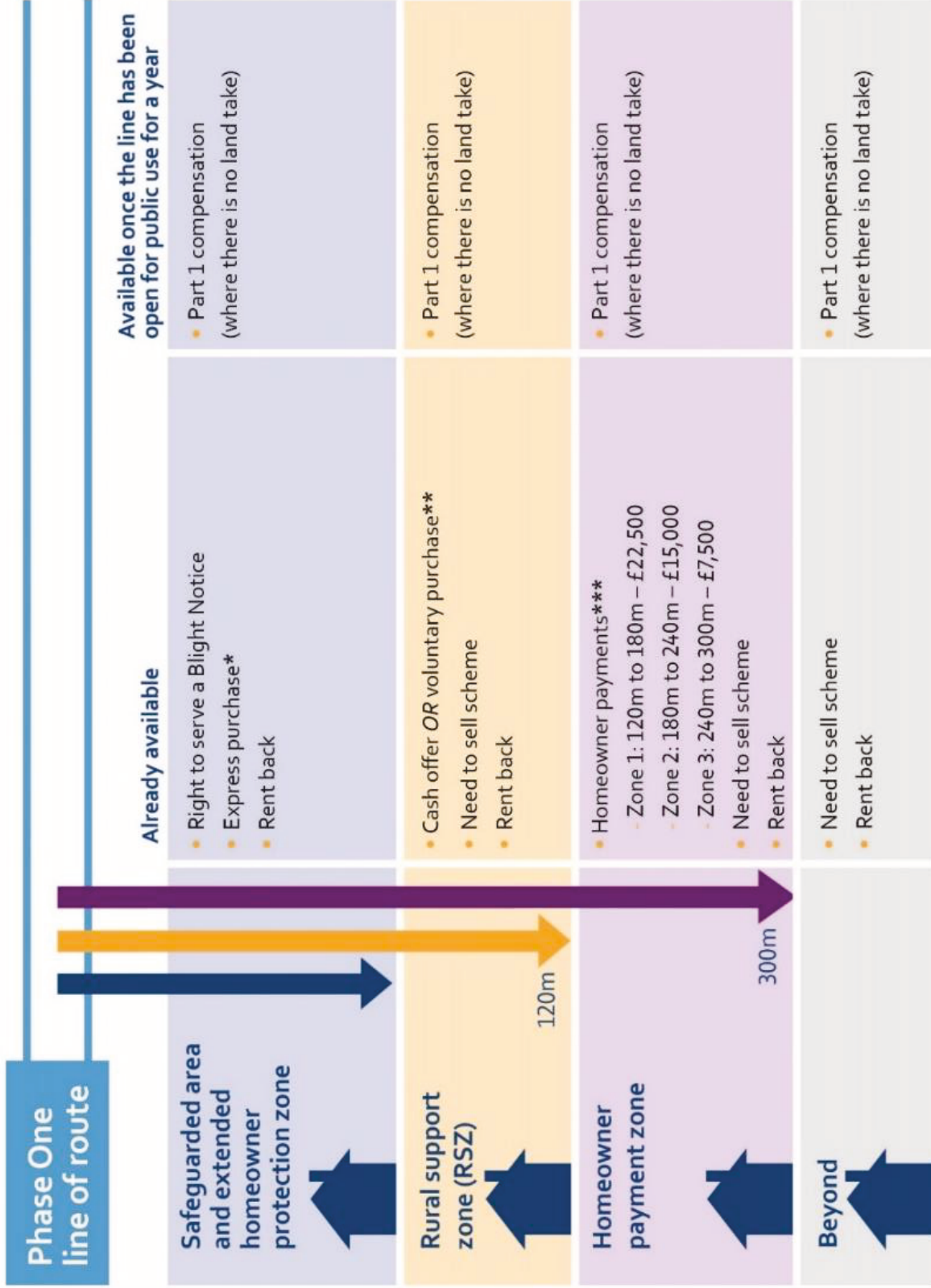
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- 75 Finally, we are implementing multiple additions to the training provided to decision makers and independent panel members. Specifically, we will:
- incorporate real life case studies, particularly complex ones, into training sessions;
 - run 'refresher' training; and
 - instigate 'lessons learned' sessions with decision makers and panel members, to facilitate consistent and considered decisions.
- 76 We are not complacent about the scheme's progress and we have identified and implemented a number of improvements. As outlined above we will continue to look for further improvements and welcome the Committee's interest and any feedback it may have on the operation of NTS.



Annex A: Phase One property scheme overview

PROPERTY SCHEMES AVAILABLE



* Surface safeguarding only. ** Applies to rural areas only and does not extend to areas beyond bored tunnels.

*** Applies to rural areas only and does not extend to areas beyond bored tunnels. Only available after Royal Assent to the Bill.