

HIGH SPEED TWO PHASE 2a INFORMATION PAPER

C5: GENERALISED BLIGHT

This paper outlines how landowners will be compensated for the acquisition of their land required for the construction and operation of the Proposed Scheme.

It will be of particular interest to those potentially affected by the Government's proposals for high speed rail.

This paper was prepared in relation to the promotion of the High Speed Rail (West Midlands-Crewe) Bill which is now enacted. It was finalised at Royal Assent and no further changes will be made.

If you have any queries about this paper or about how it might apply to you, please contact the HS2 Helpdesk in the first instance.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. High Speed Two (HS2) is the Government's proposal for a new, high speed north-south railway. The proposal is being taken forward in phases: Phase One will connect London with Birmingham and the West Midlands. Phase 2a will extend the route to Crewe. Phase 2b will extend the route to Manchester, Leeds and beyond. The construction and operation of Phase One of HS2 is authorised by the High Speed Rail (London – West Midlands) Act 2017.
- 1.2. HS2 Ltd is the non-departmental public body responsible for developing and promoting these proposals. The company works to a Development Agreement made with the Secretary of State for Transport.
- 1.3. In July 2017, the Government introduced a hybrid Bill¹ to Parliament to seek powers for the construction and operation of Phase 2a of HS2 (the Proposed Scheme). The Proposed Scheme is a railway starting at Fradley at its southern end. At the northern end it connects with the West Coast Main Line (WCML) south of Crewe to allow HS2 services to join the WCML and call at Crewe Station. North of this junction with the WCML, the Proposed Scheme continues to a tunnel portal south of Crewe.
- 1.4. The work to produce the Bill includes an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), the results of which are reported in an Environmental Statement (ES) submitted alongside the Bill. The Secretary of State has also published draft Environmental Minimum Requirements (EMRs)², which set out the environmental and sustainability commitments that will be observed in the construction of the Proposed Scheme.
- 1.5. The Secretary of State for Transport is the Promoter of the Bill through Parliament. The Promoter will also appoint a body responsible for delivering the Proposed Scheme under the powers granted by the Bill. This body is known as the 'nominated undertaker'. The nominated undertaker will be bound by the obligations contained in the Bill and the policies established in the EMRs. There may be more than one nominated undertaker.
- 1.6. These information papers have been produced to explain the commitments made in the Bill and the EMRs and how they will be applied to the design and construction of the Proposed Scheme. They also provide information about the Proposed Scheme itself, the powers contained in the Bill and how particular decisions about the Proposed Scheme have been reached.

¹ The High Speed Rail (West Midlands – Crewe) Bill, hereafter 'the Bill'.

² For more information on the EMRs, please see Information Paper E1: Control of Environmental Impacts.

2. General approach

- 2.1. This information paper summarises the package of non-statutory measures that the Government has put in place to address generalised blight resulting from the promotion of the Proposed Scheme. These measures are summarised here as the HS2 Property Schemes.

3. Rural Support Zone

- 3.1. The Rural Support Zone (RSZ) is the area outside of the safeguarded area, which is up to 120 metres from the centre line of the railway. The RSZ applies in rural areas where the route is not in bored tunnel. Eligible homeowners within the RSZ have the choice to either sell their property to the Government for its unblighted open market value under the Voluntary Purchase scheme or to claim a lump sum payment under the Cash Offer scheme.
- 3.2. The Voluntary Purchase scheme allows owner-occupiers living outside the safeguarded area but within 120m of the line of route in rural areas to sell their property to the Government for its unblighted open market value.
- 3.3. As an alternative to the Voluntary Purchase scheme, owner-occupiers of properties that fall within the RSZ have the option to claim a lump sum payment under the Cash Offer scheme. The lump sum is equal to 10% of the property's unblighted open market value. The lump payment is tax free with a minimum of £30,000 and a maximum of £100,000.
- 3.4. More information is available at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877835/DIGITAL_CS_RSZ_GuidanceApForm.pdf

4. Need to Sell Scheme

- 4.1. The Need to Sell (NTS) scheme is available to eligible property owners who can demonstrate that they have a compelling reason to sell but have been unable to do so, other than at a substantially reduced price, as a result of the announcement of the HS2 Phase 2a proposals. More information is available at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/917407/WEB_CS_NEEDTOSELL_GuidanceApForm.pdf

5. Rent Back

- 5.1. Where the Secretary of State for Transport accepts an application made under Voluntary Purchase or Need to Sell schemes, the vendor may ask to rent the property back. This is a voluntary scheme that allows applicants to continue to live in their homes having sold their property to the Government. Approval to Rent Back is subject to an assessment to determine the costs of any repairs, improvements or testing of service installations and the open market rental value with these changes made. More information is available at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/925113/15620_HS2_Rent_Back_booklet_v1.2_201007.pdf

6. Home Owner Payment

- 6.1. The Homeowner Payment (HOP) scheme for the Proposed Scheme will be launched after Royal Assent. HOP will be available for property owners living in rural areas near the route of the Proposed Scheme, where the line is not in a deep tunnel. Eligible property owners will be able to apply for a cash payment of £8,000, £16,000 or £24,000 depending on how close they live to the line of route. The HOP scheme will operate within a fixed 'HOP zone', 120 metre to 300 metres either side of the centre-line of the route.
- 6.2. A claim may be made at any time following Royal Assent of the Bill.
- 6.3. More details of the scheme are available at https://assets.hs2.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/18131308/DIGITAL_CS_HOP_GuidanceApForm.pdf

7. A typical and Special Circumstances

- 7.1. The HS2 Property Schemes provide the necessary flexibility to manage claims in respect of atypical properties and special circumstances.

8. More information

- 8.1. More detail on the Bill and related documents can be found at: www.gov.uk/HS2 and <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/developing-a-new-high-speed-rail-network/supporting-pages/hs2-route-and-reducing-the-impact-on-local-environment-and-communities>
- 8.2. For more information on the HS2 Property Schemes see: <http://www.gov.uk/claim-compensation-if-affected-by-hs2>
- 8.3. Further information about compulsory purchase and compensation is also available on the Department for Communities and Local Government's guides. These can be viewed at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/compulsory-purchase-process-and-the-crichel-down-rules-guidance>
- 8.4. For information about safeguarding, statutory blight and express purchase please see Information Paper C4: Safeguarding and Statutory Blight.