

Information for all communities affected by High Speed Rail 2

What is HS2?

HS2 is a proposed new UK high speed rail line (HSR). Phase 1 between Euston & West Midlands (and Birmingham) was announced in March 2010. The route for Phase 2, two lines from north east of Birmingham to Manchester and Leeds, completing “the Y”, was announced in January 2013. The route is designed for 250mph, but initially trains will run at 225 mph. The Government estimates the cost as £33bn. HS2 Ltd, a company wholly owned by the Dept. for Transport (DfT,) is promoting the delivery of HS2. A hybrid bill will grant the power to build and operate HS2 (Phase 1 initially).

Is it a good thing?

Some Business groups and councils in cities with HS2 stations are supportive. But there is also robust opposition, not just from residents and councils on the route but also those concerned about its high cost and weak business case (e.g. The Taxpayer Alliance, the Institute of Economic Affairs, the *Economist*, even the Public Accounts Committee) and from environmentalists (e.g. the Green Party, Wildlife Trusts). The debate has centred on:

Issues	Supporters claim:	Opponents counter (see a summary here):
Capacity	Demand has been growing at 5%/a and there is little scope to add more trains to the West Coast Mainline (WCML). With demand forecast to double by 2037, and some trains already overcrowded, so there will be a capacity crunch on WCML	Growth in WCML intercity demand is from one-off factors and slowing. These trains are the least busy intercity services for London – just 52% full in peak: existing problems concern the pricing structure. Demand is overestimated and uses an outdated forecast model. There are cheaper and more immediate ways to meet both intercity and commuter capacity needs.
Cost	The cost is spread out and only around £2bn a year.	HS2 is a waste of £33bn and a liability for future generations. It benefits the affluent but to the cost of everyone. HS2 is the wrong priority for the UK.
Business case	HS2 is value for money. The Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) gives between £1.40 and £2.50 of benefit for every £1 spent on the subsidy HS2 requires.	The benefits are exaggerated. Over 50% of the benefit is from the journey time savings based on the fallacy that time spent on trains is all wasted. If DfT used their latest guidelines and up-to-date data the BCR would be well below 1 i.e. the subsidy cost would exceed the benefits.
Job creation	HS2 will create thousands of jobs and help bridge the North/South divide.	Experts say there is little evidence of regeneration outside the immediate area of new stations, and HS2 will just strengthen London’s dominance. For phase 1 Hs2 Ltd say that 7 out of 10 jobs created will be in London.
Carbon	HS2 contributes to a low carbon economy. It will encourage passengers from cars and planes.	Speed is not green: 89% of passengers will create more emissions – all new trips and transfers from lower carbon existing rail. HS2 Ltd say only 11% of HS2 passengers switch from air or car, under half the nos. of new trips. Any freed up landing slots will be replaced by long-haul.
Environment	Damage to the countryside can be mitigated through tunnels and other measures.	The line cuts through tranquil countryside, ancient woodland, an AONB and SSSI. Tunnels that avoid such damage continue to be opposed by HS2 Ltd.
Connectivity	HS2 increases connectivity and links cities to the continent. There will be the opportunity for new services as a result of freed up space on the WCML	The line does not connect directly with Birmingham’s main station, it’s Airport or Derby, Leicester, Nottingham, or Sheffield city centre. Out of town stations extend city to city journey times. The link to Europe by HS1 disrupts existing services, has limited demand and capacity. Some UK cities will have a worse service than at present. Any new services on freed up space will need new subsidies.
Alternatives	A new line is the best way to meet long term needs.	Train lengthening, replacing one 1 st carriage for a standard one, and dealing with three bottlenecks on WCML will more than double capacity (meeting even DfT’s forecast demand) for a fraction of HS2’s cost.

Disruption	Improving the existing WCML will be highly disruptive. The last WCML upgrade caused years of misery for travellers.	Work is only required at specific bottlenecks, quite unlike the previous wholesale upgrade of all track & signalling. By contrast, rebuilding Euston will cause 8 years of chaos.
Freight	HS2 is needed to provide more freight capacity on the WCML	The new Felixstowe-Nuneaton freight line releases capacity on the busiest southern part of WCML.
International competition	We need to keep up with our international competitors who have HSR, particularly those in Europe and China	The UK is different: shorter distances and greater population density mean HSR is not a priority. UK already has higher rail journey time satisfaction (92%) than the EU. Most HSR networks make massive losses – some are bankrupt, being scaled back or closed. HS1 in Kent cost the taxpayer billions & runs at c. 1/3 of forecast demand.

What's the timetable?

The timetable has been subject to some slippage. Many also believe it will be difficult for the Coalition to get the Hybrid Bill through this Parliament, though it can be carried over. The current official DfT timetable is below.

To 31.1.13	Phase 1 consultation on Property compensation and Safeguarding (with decision in Spring 2013)
To 29 4.13	Phase 2 consultation on EHS compensation (started 28 January 2013, on day of an announcement)
Spring 2013	Phase 1 Consultation on draft Environmental Statement including design refinements
End of 2013	Introduction of a hybrid bill to provide powers to construct and operate Phase 1
By end 2013	Consultation on preferred route for Phase 2 (with the decision announced in late 2014)
2015	Target date for Royal Assent for the Hybrid Bill, containing legal powers to construct HS2 (Phase 1)
2017 - 2025	Construction period (starts and ends at different times and at different points along the route)
2024 - 2026	Phase 1 commissioning and testing
2026	Phase 1 line opens to passengers (Phase 2 in 2033)

What are compensation arrangements?

Proposals for Phase 1 allow those within 60 metres of the line (or 120m in rural areas) to sell to Government. But those further away and unable to sell their home because of blight can only sell to Government under a range of exceptional and hardship based circumstances, leaving most unable to move or forced to sell at much less than its former value. For anyone else, compensation is assessed one year after HS2 begins operation, i.e. 2027 at earliest. A consultation is running to 31 Jan 2013, see [HS2AA](http://www.hs2aa.org.uk) website. In a previous consultation, a ["Property Bond" option](#) that protected those blighted by HS2 was very widely supported but rejected by Government. Phase 2 are being consulted on the same Exceptional Hardship scheme as applied to phase 1 in 2010 (under which about 40 properties/a qualify).

What is the current situation?

All three main political parties say they are committed to the project. But many influential individuals and groups are opposed for economic or environmental reasons. Over 70 local action groups are united under [AGAHST](#) (Action Groups against High Speed Two), and work with [HS2 Action Alliance](#), which has exposed the flaws in the business case and led two recent judicial reviews and work on compensation, and with the campaigning group [Stop HS2](#). An 18 strong local authority grouping, [51m](#), has developed an alternative to meet capacity needs and led a judicial review. Meanwhile some businesses wanting HS2 have responded with a **pro-HS2** campaign. Other groups include **Heathrow Hub**, who believe HS2 should go via Heathrow and follow existing transport corridors; and the **Right Lines Charter group** (that includes CPRE) are not opposed but want any HSR programme to be part of a national transport strategy.

What can a community do?

Affected communities can arrange a public meeting to inform local residents with their MP, Councillors and speakers involved in the campaign. From this an action group can be formed to: take part in consultations and encourage individuals to participate; liaise with their MP and local authorities; look at mitigation opportunities (eg route changes, noise barriers, etc.); support [HS2AA](#) and campaigns to get HS2 cancelled and promote alternatives solutions. Individuals can very easily e-mail their MP about HS2 using the website <http://highspeedrail.org.uk/>. Try it!

Further information

HS2 Ltd and DfT www.hs2.org.uk/ DfT <http://highspeedrail.dft.gov.uk/>

Anti HS2 Campaign www.hs2aa.org/ www.stophs2.org/ www.betterthanhs2.org/ www.51m.co.uk/