



High Speed Rail Link

High Speed 2: London to Birmingham through Buckinghamshire

The Government has published proposals for a second high speed rail line in Britain, High Speed 2 (HS2). These proposals include a detailed recommended route option for the first section between London and Birmingham. There are six options for the route – three of which impact on Buckinghamshire.

At this stage the High Speed 2 Company has a preference for one route (set out inside). Further consultation will be carried out nationally including along the route. Buckinghamshire County Council recognises that HS2 is a project of national importance and one which could meet future demand for longer distance inter-city travel.

However Councils in Buckinghamshire (County and Districts) believe that if the case for high speed rail is proved then one of the alternative routes should be considered. This alternative route should broadly follow a West Coast Main Line alignment, and the councils have lobbied Government and HS2 Ltd (see www.buckscc.gov.uk/highspeed2). All five councils **oppose the preferred route** which would create extensive impacts on the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Green Belt and other environmentally sensitive parts of the county. They will therefore work with other stakeholders to protect the interests of Buckinghamshire.

This leaflet sets out key facts and information about the HS2 proposals, its preferred route, outlines what will happen next and details where you can find further information. The detailed reports on HS2 can be found on the Department for Transport's (DfT) website: www.dft.gov.uk/highspeedrail

Timetable

As a major national project the Government has suggested that the completion of HS2 may be some years away. Subject to consultation, the proposed timetable is set out below:

March 2010	HS2 proposals published, Exceptional Hardship Scheme consultation opened
20 May 2010	Exceptional Hardship Scheme consultation closes
Before autumn 2010	Further engagement and preparations for public consultation
Autumn 2010	Formal public consultation on HS2 proposals including preferred route
2011	Government decision on future of HS2 and preferred route for London to Birmingham section
2011-2013	Detailed design and assessment of the preferred route
2013	Further public consultation
2014	Hybrid Bill laid in House of Commons
2019	Possible start of construction
2026	Line between London and Birmingham could open

Frequently Asked Questions

Where does the route go?

Please see the map on the inside pages for the preferred route. There are more detailed maps on the DfT website. The Government has not committed to building any route and no decision will be taken until after the formal public consultation, this autumn.

What alternative routes have been considered?

HS2 have considered alternative routes, some of which were discarded. Other than the preferred route the HS2 proposals also set out a 'preferred alternative' and an 'alternative' route. Both alternatives also pass through Buckinghamshire. These are also shown on the map on the inside pages. To see more details of these routes refer to chapter 3 of High Speed Rail; London to the West Midlands and Beyond (www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/rail/pi/highspeedrail/hs2ltd/hs2report/).

What areas in Buckinghamshire are most affected?

The preferred route primarily affects Aylesbury Vale and Chiltern Districts, although it does pass through the north east corner of South Bucks District and touches Wycombe District.

What are the local environmental impacts?

Environmental impacts can be split into three, namely construction, new infrastructure, and impact of trains using the line. Further work is to be completed to assess the localised impacts of HS2; including research on noise, vibration, visual and ecological impacts.

What happens next?

The Government will carry out a full public consultation in autumn 2010. When more is known about the consultation this information will be posted on the County Council's website.

What happens between now and consultation in the autumn?

The Government will work with HS2 Ltd and engage with key stakeholders to discuss the arrangements for public consultation in the autumn. This ensures that formal public consultation is as effective as possible. It should enable any specific sensitivities or concerns to be addressed as part of the consultation and allow all interested parties to register their views.

How can I comment / influence what is going on?

Anyone with an interest is urged to submit their views during the public consultation in the autumn. Local interest / lobby groups are being established to channel views to the Government. As details about these groups emerge the information will be posted on the County Council's website.

Who can I talk to?

Interested individuals could join a local interest / lobby group or can contact their local Councillors or Member of Parliament to express their views. Any new or further information will be posted on the County Council's website.

Will I be directly affected?

More detailed work is needed to identify which properties are directly affected. There will be impacts during any building work and further analysis of these affects is necessary. More detail about noise and mitigation measures will be available at the public consultation in the autumn.

If HS2 is built, some buildings will have to be demolished. The preferred route aims to minimise this wherever possible. Under existing law, residential owner occupiers directly affected by confirmed plans would have access to statutory blight provisions. These will come into force once Safeguarding Directions are issued about a route, most likely following decisions after the autumn consultation.

What if I am trying to sell my house now?

The Government recognises that HS2 plans will cause uncertainty and difficulty for those people most affected, particularly home sellers. That is why the Government propose an Exceptional Hardship Scheme for home owners meeting certain criteria, to sell their property to the Government. Consultation on the proposed scheme can be found at www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/open. Any resident can respond to the consultation and Buckinghamshire County Council will be responding formally.

The consultation on the scheme closes on 20 May 2010.

What does this mean for existing rail services?

The Government proposes to minimise disruption to other rail lines created by construction of HS2. In the future, however, HS2 may help increase capacity on the existing network for regional and local journeys.

What is the planning process for HS2?

Subject to the consultation process the necessary powers for the delivery of HS2 will be secured through a Hybrid Bill. Crossrail, High Speed 1 and the Dartford Crossing were all successfully taken forward by means of a Hybrid Bill. For more information please see Chapter 10 in the High Speed Rail Command Paper at: www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/rail/pi/highspeedrail/commandpaper/

Where can I find out more?

See www.dft.gov.uk/highspeedrail for the Government papers, HS2 reports, maps and additional information. These documents are also available at central libraries.

Contacts:

- **DfT website**
www.dft.gov.uk
- **County Council webpage**
www.buckscc.gov.uk/transport
This will be regularly updated with further news and information.
- **County Councillors**
www.buckscc.gov.uk/councillors

If you, or someone you know, is visually impaired please contact us on 01296 387193 to receive this leaflet in an alternative format.

