

HS2 Update



20 February 2015

This update will focus on progress in Select Committee hearings, the upcoming hearings for the Colne Valley (including support we will be offering) and details on the HS2 fly-through.

Select Committee update (correct at 20 February 2015)

The Select Committee has continued to hear from petitioners in the last three weeks. Notably Jeremy Wright MP was heard on the 11 February 2015. Mr Wright focused on summing up his constituents' petition points and bringing together all the arguments in one clear presentation for the Select Committee. He also took time to focus on the communication issues his constituents have faced throughout the process, highlighting specific examples for the Committee. The MPs of the Committee found this very useful and even asked for a summary document of the points to be responded to by HS2 Ltd. The full transcript of this hearing can be found [here](#).

The timetable for hearings from 23 February to 9 March has now been released. This goes right up to the Northern border of Buckinghamshire with Mixbury Parish Council and Finmere Parish Council being heard on the 23 February. The full timetable can be found [here \(Correct on 20 February 2015\)](#). It has also been announced that the Select Committee will be visiting Old Oak Common and Northolt on the 5 March the itinerary for this visit can be found [here](#).

On the 11 February HS2 sent a letter to the National Farmers' Union (NFU) and the Country Land and Business Association. This letter listed a number of assurances that HS2 are providing to the NFU and CLBA including on consultation with farmers and soils management. This letter can be found [here](#).

Colne Valley

Following the site visit to the Colne Valley in January it has now been announced that some Colne Valley petitioners will be heard from Tuesday 10 March through to 23 March. This is not likely to include the Local Authorities as we currently are not expecting to be heard until after the General Election. However, a finalised programme of who will be heard when has not been released yet.

New Compensation Arrangements

Following the announcement of the new compensation measures the HS2 Action Alliance (HS2AA) has continued to press their case for a property bond. At the petition hearing the Select Committee requested written details on the Property Bond costings from government. The response took 2 months to arrive (arriving on the eve of the announcement of the Need to Sell scheme) but failed to explain what was wrong with the £30- £158m costings that the government's own advisors (PwC) had prepared. There were also extensive errors and misrepresentations of the Central Railway Bond. HS2AA has responded to the Select Committee, who had already indicated they were "not impressed" by the government's response. Chiltern District Council has also responded which can be seen [here](#).

The new compensation arrangements were announced in January – they included the Need to Sell scheme which is virtually unchanged from the Exceptional Hardship Scheme, the plans are identical to what was consulted on. The Select Committee has publically stated that they will see how the new scheme works over the next 6 to 9 months, and that they have not ruled out the Property Bond.

HS2AA has also raised concerns about the valuations of properties being carried out by Government for example in one area HS2AA found blighted values were being used.

For more information please contact Hilary Wharf – hilarywharf@hs2actionalliance.org

HS2 Fly- through

During the Select Committee hearings HS2 Ltd has shown a helicopter fly- through video of the route. The local authorities and partners have been asking for this to be made available publically. Although this has not yet been successful, petitioners can now request to view the fly through [here](#). Please note that the 'Document' link on this website does not link through to anything except for a HS2 logo.

MPs of Buckinghamshire including Cheryl Gillan, David Lidington and John Bercow have written a letter to Simon Kirby, Chief Executive of HS2 Ltd requesting that the video is made available online as soon as possible. This letter can be found [here](#).

Parliament Questions and Answers on HS2

Periodically Members of Parliament put forward written questions to ask government ministers for information on the work, policy and activities of government departments. Recent questions on HS2 have included how much the government has spent on HS2 up until this point (£912.9 million at the end of January 2015) and what funds will be made available for protection against terrorist attacks on HS2 (there is no separate funding line specifically for security at this stage). These questions and answers can be found [here](#).

Photographs of areas affected

We would like to ensure that the best possible photographs are available for petitioners to put into their presentations for the Select Committee. At the Buckinghamshire Mitigation and Compensation Panel it was pointed out that during the winter months the lack of leaves may make some photographs clearer. It was suggested that petitioners should be starting to collect evidence photographs now.

We are currently looking to collect photographs of affected areas to publish on our website. These will be to add to petitioners presentations. If you have photographs of specific affected areas that you would like to share please email them to hs2blueprint@buckscc.gov.uk

Public Rights of Way

We met with HS2 Ltd on a range of Public Rights of Way petition points on the 3rd February. This meeting allowed both parties to explain why each option was preferred. HS2Ltd showed a willingness to discuss all issues. Where Additional Provisions would be required HS2 were less inclined to look at proposals unless they felt that it could be done without any real impact on new people or areas. Some of the site omitted information should be provided through the Environmental Statement Addendum (due in the summer), when further details of this are available we will ensure this is provided through the e-update.

Buckinghamshire Mitigation and Compensation Panel (BCMP)

The Buckinghamshire Mitigation and Compensation Panel (BCMP) met on Wednesday 4 February. This group provides a forum for communities to voice concerns on HS2 issues and for the Council to feedback information to the communities. The next meeting of this group will be on the 4 March 2015. Each CFA area has a community representative on the panel who should be feeding back discussions had at BCMP. If you would like to know who your representative is, please let us know. County Councillors are also invited.

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