

HS2 Update



13 March 2015

This update will focus on the first of the Buckinghamshire hearings that have taken place this week as well as an update on upcoming additional provisions.

Select Committee update (correct at 13 March 2015) including the Colne Valley

The Select Committee is currently hearing from individual petitioners in the Colne Valley. This week has included petitioners from the Denham area of Buckinghamshire. The major issues that have been raised are:

- Impacts of the Colne Valley Viaduct including visual and noise issues
- Ecology issues within the Colne Valley
- Requests for a tunnel to go under the Colne Valley to mitigate the majority of impacts
- Concerns about traffic congestion due to construction compounds in the area
- Concerns about the impact on the Public Right of Way network especially Old Shire Lane
- Issues with the current compensation guidelines
- Concerns over impacts on the River Misbourne and the River Colne
- Impact on leisure facilities including Harefield Marina and the Hillingdon Outdoor Activity Centre (HOAC)

Well done to all those who have taken time out to put across their points and good luck to those who are set to appear in the coming weeks. We will be producing a special E-update at the end of the March petition hearings on the Colne Valley to summarise these hearings.

Heathrow Spur and Questions to the Secretary of State

In answer to a question put forward by Dominic Grieve MP, the Secretary of State for Transport Patrick Mcloughlin, has confirmed that the Heathrow Spur will not be built as part of either Phase 1 or Phase 2 of HS2. The reasoning given for this was that within the Airports Commission interim report of November 2014 it was found that a HS2 spur would be unlikely to be necessary to support any expansion of Heathrow Airport. This question and answer can be found [here](#).

It should be noted that there are a number of questions to the Secretary of State asked by Cheryl Gillan MP. This includes a question on the effect of tunnelling on the chalk aquifers of the Chilterns to which parts of the Environmental Statement are pointed to these can also be found [here](#).

Number of hearings so far

In the most recent Parliamentary briefing sheet for MPs it was stated that as of the 19 February 2015 the Committee had heard 230 petitions with a further 82 petitions having been withdrawn or not being appeared on. It is anticipated that by the time Parliament prorogues for the 2015 general election the number of petitioners heard will be around 400.

For more information please see the briefing sheet [here](#)

Temporary occupation of agricultural land

In November 2014 the National Farmers Union (NFU) and the Country Landowners Association (CLA) appeared before the Select Committee. One of the issues raised was the temporary occupation of agricultural land, which under the current plans within the Hybrid Bill, has only a limited amount of sites needing to be returned after their use for HS2. The CLA and NFU argued that in the first instance HS2 should only take temporary possession with land returned following its use as at present many pieces of land are taken permanently where this may not be necessary. Where land is required temporarily it should be on the terms of a lease or licence under which a fee or rent should be paid.

The Select Committee has taken a view that the current situation does need to be remedied. The Chair of the Committee, Robert Syms MP, stated “We encourage HS2 to work up a licence model, whereby farmers can retain a right of access and inspection onto land being acquired temporarily. HS2 should collaborate with a cross-section of affected parties and stakeholders on suitable terms for that model licence, and clearly that would avoid some of the tax problems that we’ve heard earlier already.”

Despite this guidance from the Committee it appears that a suitable solution has not yet been found. In a letter to the Select Committee that can be found [here](#), the CLA state that HS2 has confirmed they will not be drawing up heads of terms as they believe the powers set out in the Bill are sufficient. This issue will likely be heard again in Committee if this situation is not resolved.

HS2 Planning forum- Highways sub group

At the most recent highways sub group meeting with HS2 Ltd and local authorities, HS2 Ltd provided a diagram explaining their forward plan. This showed that they are still aiming to achieve Royal Assent, which is essentially planning permission, in the fourth quarter of 2016 with construction beginning in 2017, although ground investigation works will commence in the second half of 2015 and continue into early 2016. The full diagram can be found on Slide 21 of the slide show [here](#).

Upcoming Additional Provisions

We have received a letter from HS2 to state that further additional provisions will be forthcoming following the General Election. These cover a range of areas across Buckinghamshire including:

- Additional land take in Denham, Little Missenden, Wendover, The Lee, Great Missenden, Stoke Mandeville, Wendover, Quainton, Steeple Claydon, Calvert Green, Chetwode and Turweston.
- Realignment of Public Rights of Way in Great Missenden, Little Missenden, Twyford, Steeple Claydon and Calvert Green
- Relocation of the Quainton Grid Supply Point
- Land take for the provision of a replacement cricket ground and pavilion in the parish of Wendover

We have attached this letter within the E-update email for your information.

Photographs of areas affected

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

Thank you to those who have sent photographs through already these and general information on petitioning are now available on our website [here](#).

Buckinghamshire Compensation and Mitigation Panel (BCMP)

The next date for the Buckinghamshire Compensation and Mitigation Panel (BCMP) will be the 2nd April 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.

Overview of HS2 Document

Department for Transport published a document yesterday called, 'HS2: On Track'. By their own admission, this is 'promotional material' which sets out an overview of the HS2 project, setting out progress so far and next steps. Click [here](#) to view the document.

Buckinghamshire County Council HS2 Staff Update

We are pleased to announce that Darl Sweetland has joined the HS2 Project team as a Lead Officer.

Sadly Alex Day will be leaving the Council at the end of April.

Buckinghamshire County Council HS2 team:

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