



HS2 E Update

April 2020

Notice to Proceed

You will no doubt all be aware that the government granted 'Notice to Proceed' for the HS2 project on 15 April 2020. It does not mean actual main construction work will commence yet; that will start later this year and into the second quarter of 2021. The issuing of Notice to Proceed does mark the point in the Main Works Civil Contractors contracts where the work transitions from scheme design and preparatory work, to full detailed design and construction.

Covid-19 pandemic

HS2 Ltd recently issued the following statement on this:

'The health, safety and wellbeing of the communities along the route of the new railway, and our staff remains our absolute priority.'

We are working closely with our construction partners to review the works on our construction sites in line with Government and Public Health England (PHE) advice on dealing with COVID-19. The Government's current COVID-19 strategy makes clear that construction activity can continue as long as it complies with this guidance.

Along the overall Phase One route, between London and the West Midlands, work at some of our sites has been paused as we complete this review. Some staff may be present to make the safety assessments and to ensure the sites remain safe and secure. Those sites that are still working are doing so because they can operate within PHE and construction industry guidelines, and will be monitored and remain under constant review.

We do expect that work will restart at some of these sites where our contractors are confident that they can operate in line with PHE and industry guidance, protecting our staff and the communities in which they are working.

We have taken the decision to postpone all face-to-face engagement events and meetings during this period. We have been notifying local residents and putting in place alternative ways of communicating and engaging with communities over the coming weeks and months.'

We would suggest that if people have concerns about HS2 operatives working practices that you report it to the HS2 Help Desk, number below, preferably with any evidence.

HS2 ongoing work

There is already a substantial amount of HS2 preparatory work being undertaken. You can see what work is taking place at the HS2 website, Commonplace section, (Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire) and also sign up for automatic alerts:

<https://hs2inbucksandoxfordshire.commonplace.is/schemes/proposals/works-in-your-area/details>

HS2 Undertakings and Assurances (U&As)

During the Parliamentary process as the HS2 Bill progressed to an Act of Parliament, a great number of U&As were offered to a wide range of individuals and stakeholders, back in 2017.

Buckinghamshire Council is seeking a review of all of those they were offered by HS2 Ltd and which have been publically committed to in the Register:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/high-speed-rail-london-west-midlands-bill-register-of-undertakings-and-assurances>

We continue to work with HS2 Ltd, its contractors and with our affected communities to ensure the least disruption as possible and to hold them to account on their commitments.

Transport Select Committee

On Friday 24 April, The Committee heard evidence on HS2 next steps from a number of witnesses, including HS2 Ltd Chief Executive, Mark Thurston:

<https://parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/c3218456-568c-4d35-8957-6026c65a134a>

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