

HS2 land and property review



PUBLISHED NOV 17, 2020
BY [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

High Speed Two (HS2) is at the heart of our plans to build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic, creating 1000s of skilled jobs, boosting connectivity between our towns and cities and helping to rebalance opportunity across the country for years to come.

However, as part of that commitment to build back better, it's crucial that we deliver HS2 in a way that is as considerate as possible of those disrupted by the project, who may face losing their homes and relocating their businesses.

In confirming HS2 would go ahead in February 2020, the Prime Minister also committed to a step-change in HS2 Ltd's performance and to drive improvements in transparency, accountability and value to the taxpayer. This included a renewed focus on placing people – the communities and individuals who will be impacted by HS2 – at the heart of everything the government does.

So following my appointment as the Minister for HS2, I initiated a review of the HS2 land and property acquisition programme, to ensure that those most directly affected were placed at its heart.

The review examined HS2 Ltd's operational acquisition processes and, where the evidence demonstrated it, associated wider-government policies. It focussed on 4 areas. How to:

deliver a step-change in community engagement on the land and property acquisition programme

protect the interests of those impacted

improve process efficiency and delivery by HS2 Ltd

drive a better tone, showing conspicuous respect, courtesy and understanding

Today, I'm pleased to publish the findings of this review. Copies of the report have been laid in the Libraries of the House.

The government is grateful for the contributions made by Members of the House and their constituents, external stakeholders, the HS2 Residents' Commissioner and the HS2 Construction Commissioner. The review also considered lessons from Phase One of HS2 and examined compensation regimes employed on other UK infrastructure projects and abroad.

The review generated a number of proposals that are designed to speed up property valuations and disturbance payments, settle cases and disputes more quickly and build on the improvements HS2 Ltd have been introducing to engage more effectively with people.

The focus now will be on how the government and HS2 Ltd turn these proposals into long-lasting changes that not only improve the delivery of HS2, but also the experience and well-being of individuals, businesses and communities impacted by them.

The government wants to ensure that those living near the route receive the right support at all stages of the project. Importantly, it remains committed to ensuring that those affected are properly compensated and treated with compassion, dignity and respect.

Press release distributed by Media Pigeon on behalf of GOV.UK, on Nov 17, 2020. For more information subscribe and follow us.

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