

# House of Commons: Written Statement (HCWS18)

## Department for Transport

Written Statement made by: **Minister of State for Transport (Mr Robert Goodwill)** on 26 May 2016.

### HS2 Phase 2a (West Midlands to Crewe): Property Consultation

I am today announcing to the House the Government's package of measures to provide assistance to owner occupiers along the line of route for Phase 2a of the High Speed 2 project (West Midlands to Crewe).

This announcement responds to the public consultation the Government conducted from November 2015 to February 2016 on the long-term property compensation and assistance schemes for Phase 2a. A Command Paper setting out the Government's detailed response to the consultation and way forward has been placed in the Libraries of the Houses of Parliament today.

Following detailed consideration, the Government is to implement the following long-term property compensation and assistance schemes for Phase 2a which are based upon schemes already in place for Phase One (London to West Midlands) of the route. They will apply with immediate effect and replace the temporary Exceptional Hardship Scheme that has been in place for Phase 2a since 2013

- **Express Purchase** - owner-occupiers may be able to sell their property to the Government at its full unblighted market value (as it would be if there were no plans for HS2), plus 10% (up to a maximum of £53,000, known as a home-loss payment) and reasonable moving expenses, including stamp duty.
- **Need to sell** - this scheme does not have a boundary and is available to owner-occupiers who can demonstrate a compelling reason to sell their house but are unable to do so other than at a discount because of HS2. The Government will pay the full, unblighted value for these properties.
- **Rent back** - is available if a property that the Government has purchased under any of the HS2 property schemes is suitable for letting.
- **Extended homeowner protection zone** - where a property is removed from surface safeguarding, an owner-occupier will in most instances continue to be able to apply under express purchase for a period of five years from the date the property ceases to be affected by the directions.

Further measures will be provided in rural areas where the line runs on the surface in recognition that the short-term effects on communities can reasonably be expected to be much more marked in these areas. This Rural Support Zone (RSZ) will cover the area outside safeguarding up to 120 metres from the centre line of the railway. The RSZ will run from the connection with Phase One near Fradley in the West Midlands to the A500 south of Crewe. The schemes available in the RSZ are:

- **Cash offer** – This is a lump sum payment of 10 per cent of the unblighted open market value of a property. This payment is a minimum of £30,000 and is capped at £100,000. This scheme will be available to eligible owner-occupiers from today until one year after Phase 2a

first opens for public use.

- **Voluntary purchase** - eligible owner-occupiers will be able to sell their home to the Government for its full unblighted value. This scheme will be available from today until one year after Phase 2a first opens for public use. This scheme will be made available when Royal Assent is obtained for the Phase 2a hybrid bill.
- **Homeowner payment scheme** - those beyond the rural support zone and within 300 metres of the centreline of the railway will, following Royal Assent of the HS2 Phase 2a Hybrid bill, be able to apply for a homeowner payment ranging from £7,500 to £22,500.

I also confirm that we are going to make a number of changes to the discretionary property assistance schemes which will apply to Phase One and Phase 2a. They will be implemented with immediate effect. Key changes include:

- **NTS health and mobility** - we have added additional guidance on health and mobility whereby HS2 Ltd will give wider consideration to an applicant's health and mobility and suitability of their current property.
- **Valuations for NTS, EHS and RSZ** – we are going to permit the use of local valuers in the valuation process.

I believe these refined schemes demonstrate our continued commitment to provide a package of compensation and assistance schemes for owner-occupiers along the HS2 route that far exceeds what is required by law in recognition that HS2 is an exceptional project. I am confident the schemes we now have in place represent the best possible balance between supporting affected communities and providing value for money for the taxpayer.