

High Speed Rail (HS2)

Exceptional Hardship Scheme Proposals

Who should read this?

Everyone who thinks HS2 will affect their lives, and not just people next to the route

Replies must be in by 20 May 2010.

Scheme, purpose and rules

The government are consulting us on a proposed hardship scheme. It's intended to compensate some homeowners who have difficulty selling their home because of the HS2 route announcement.

What is the Proposed Scheme's aim?

- To protect the interests of homeowners whose property value may be seriously affected by this 'preferred route', and who can show an urgent need to sell.

When does the Scheme apply?

- *Starts:* later this year – sometime after 20 May 2010
- *Ends:* when the route is chosen (possibly mid 2011).

Who is eligible?

You can apply to the Secretary of State to buy your home at its full market value (as if no HS2), if you meet all the criteria. These are:

- Residential owner-occupiers only
- Only those with a 'pressing need to sell'. Potential eligibility requires:- change in employment location; extreme financial pressure; accommodate enlarged family; move into sheltered accommodation etc; or medical condition of a family member
- Only those 'on or in close vicinity' of the 'preferred route'
- Have tried to sell your home – been on the market for at least 3 months and had no offers within 15% of its full market value. You must also prove the inability to sell is due to HS2.

How will it operate?

- The scheme is discretionary ie non-statutory
- A 'panel of experts' will decide on individual applications.

Things to think about

The consultation asks you three questions, summarised below:

1. *Should there be a scheme before the route is decided?*

- **Issue:** without a scheme there is no compensation for anyone having to sell (until the statutory rules apply)
- **Issue:** should the scheme end when the route is settled, or should it continue (up to the Bill and during construction)? Other major projects have schemes for that period.

2. *The scheme principles and any alternative criteria?*

- **Issue:** should only people with specific pressing reasons to sell be eligible, or anyone needing or wanting to sell?
- **Issue:** should it only cover homes 'on or in close vicinity' of the track, or should it be any property that has lost value?
- **Issue:** should homeowners have to suffer up to 15% loss in property value without compensation, or should the threshold be less before they can apply to get 100% of market value?
- **Issue:** should only residential owner-occupiers be eligible, or should other properties be covered - farms, small businesses
- **Issue:** should owners be expected to prove that HS2 caused the difficulties with their sale and not a slow market etc, or should a set timescale without a sale be enough?

3. *The operation of the scheme, and any changes?*

- **Issue:** should the scheme be discretionary with a 'panel of experts' deciding who is or isn't accepted, or should it apply to everyone who suffers a loss?
- **Issue:** no appeal provisions are provided; should there be?
- **Issue:** is it clear enough what the criteria mean in practice, or do we need more details?

What to do next?

Look at the proposals for the Exceptional Hardship Scheme (eg on www.chilternsaonb.org), and the questions it asks.

Where to find out more?

More information is being put together on this scheme; on other (better) schemes; and more facts eg effects on property values

Go to the HS2 Action Alliance website and other action group websites, and new information will be added as it's gathered. It will also be available elsewhere in the local community.

How to reply to the consultation document

- Write to:
High Speed Two Ltd
Exceptional Hardship Scheme Consultation
55 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0EU
- E-mail: ehsconsultation@hs2.gsi.gov.uk

When Before 20 May 2010

Who should reply?

- Anyone who thinks HS2 may affect their lives and the value of their property
- If the only replies are from people who live near the tracks, the chance to improve the scheme for everyone is lost.

Want some help?

Ask your local HS2 action group, or look at their websites

**www.hs2actionalliance.org
29 March 2010**

This leaflet is produced by residents and should not be relied upon legally