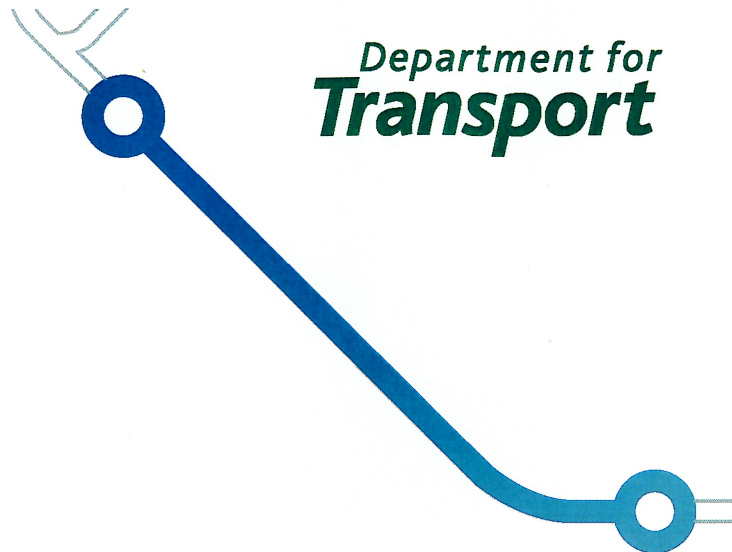


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Department for
Transport



High Speed Rail: Investing in Britain's Future

Thank you very much for responding to the public consultation on the Government's proposed plans for the development of a national high speed rail network, and on the proposed route between London and the West Midlands. Your response was one of almost 55,000 responses that the Government received, from people in all areas of the UK.

I am writing to let you know that, following the consultation, the Government has decided to proceed with the plans for a Y shaped national high speed rail network, beginning with a new line from London to the West Midlands.

I have carefully considered all the views and evidence put forward as part of the consultation, and I have concluded that building a new high speed network is the best way to provide the essential extra capacity that is required on our railways.

However, I recognise the comments, suggestions and concerns raised by many respondents about the impact of the proposed route on local communities. As a result I have decided to make several changes to the route, including greater use of tunnels and deep cuttings to avoid environmental, visual and noise impacts, including in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

I have asked HS2 Ltd to continue to look at ways to reduce these impacts further by carrying out a full Environmental Impact Assessment on the route.

The Hybrid Bill process will give those affected a further chance to comment. A cross-party group of MPs on a select committee will consider the case for further mitigation.

I have also decided to introduce a package of measures to help those whose properties would be affected by the new line.

Additionally, there will be more opportunities for the public to get involved and have their say on the detail of this work in the coming months.

The enclosed leaflet provides more information on my decisions and the next steps for the HS2 project. You can find more information online at <http://www.dft.gov.uk/topics/high-speed-rail/>, including the Government's Command Paper *High Speed Rail: Investing in Britain's Future - Decisions and Next Steps*, which explains the Government's decisions in detail. You can view regular updates about HS2 by visiting HS2 Ltd's website at <http://www.hs2.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely

Justine Greening MP
Secretary of State for Transport