



High Speed Rail to go ahead - campaign grows to ensure that our interests are fully included in Government's consultation plans for high speed rail route.

The interests of everyone along Route 2.5 for HS2, which includes Speen, North Dean and Lacey Green, could be at risk once the chosen route for High Speed 2 consultation is announced.

The Speen Area Action Group has launched an official complaint to the Information Commissioner after failing to receive satisfactory re-assurances about exactly how the consultation will work.

The decision on the consultation route is expected within the next few weeks, possibly sooner, as more details are released by Transport Secretary Philip Hammond following the recent Comprehensive Spending Review.

HS2 Ltd, the government-run company behind the scheme, will not confirm the route in advance of the official statement, but there is growing belief it will be the preferred route, known as Route 3 which runs through Great Missenden and Wendover rather than Route 2.5.

At a recent Hs2 Ltd technical seminar, SAAG discovered that no work has been undertaken on any other route since March of this year.

Philip Hammond has also made strong indications that Route 3 will be selected

for consultation on during his recent meetings with local MPs and selected local residents. However, he refuses to exclude Routes 2.5 and 4 from consideration.

Once the route is officially announced, consultation will take place in the New Year, probably starting in February and running for several months.

However, it is unclear what would happen if the consultation resulted in a change from Route 3, and whether Route 2.5 could then be used without any further debate.

It is very disturbing that the Government will not publicly state that Routes 2.5 and 4 are no longer under consideration, nor will they give any indication that they will be excluded if, as we expect, Route 3 is chosen.

There is clear evidence that property blight exists along all three routes, even though compensation under the Exceptional Hardship Scheme, announced on August 20th, only applies to Route 3.

We will provide an update on the website when we hear back from HS2 Ltd or the Information Commissioner. We expect this to be by mid-November.

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High Speed Consultation:

The consultation process is expected to launch in February 2011, and will cover four aspects of the scheme:

- The principle of High Speed Rail
- The corridor it will follow
- The chosen line of route
- The approach to blight

High Speed 2: The story so far

It only seems like yesterday that a public meeting was held in the Speen Village Hall to raise awareness of the High Speed 2 rail proposals, but in fact, that meeting took place on June 23rd.

Since then, there have been a great many developments and we have been very active across a broad spectrum of activities relating to HS2. You may be aware of many developments via the HS2 area of the Speen website, which we try to keep updated on a regular basis. You may also have seen our coverage in the last issue of the Speen and North Dean News. This newsletter is intended to provide a summary of where we are, what we have been doing, and where we believe we need to go next.

High Speed 2 was first announced in the dying throes of the last Government and the new coalition Government has continued to throw its support behind what has now grown to be a £35 billion project.

Despite the enormous squeeze on public finances, the recent Comprehensive Spending Review confirmed the Government's intention to press ahead with High Speed Rail.

Other recent developments have included the start of the Exceptional Hardship Scheme, publication of the Mawhinney report into linking HS2 with Heathrow, the announcement that the route will be extended in a 'Y' shaped alignment to Manchester and Leeds, and the Treasury "Spending Challenges" website, which sought input to the Comprehensive Spending Review. In early October, Philip Hammond visited MPs along the route, to hear local views.

So how has SAAG responded to these developments? Our strategy takes a three-tiered approach:

Tier 1: - Challenge HS2 on the basis of its overall viability.

Tier 2: - Challenge why a new High Speed Railway has to come through the Chilterns.

Tier 3: - Try to prevent route '2.5' being used and protect the immediate area. This is the route which runs through North Dean, Speen and Lacey Green.

Events of the past few months have confirmed that the only possible way to challenge and defeat the HS2 proposals

is to address the high level national arguments that this project is not needed, is based on hugely exaggerated passenger forecasts, is not affordable and does not provide a low-carbon solution.

These arguments are still valid; however know from our local MP and public statements from Philip Hammond, HS2 Ltd and others that the Government is now positioning HS2 as being in the 'National Interest', which implies that all other considerations, most noticeably the weaknesses of the business case - can be swept aside.

This means that we have to additionally focus on challenging the concept of National Interest, as there is little or no evidence of regional regeneration either within the HS2 proposals themselves, or based on international experience.

Philip Hammond has made it clear in TV interviews, in meetings with MPs and at the Parliamentary Lobby day that he regards "local issues" as NIMBY-ism which can be easily dismissed. All of these comments reinforce our belief that efforts must be concentrated on Tier 1 activities at this stage.

TIMELINE OF ACTIVITY

October 2010

Comprehensive Spending Review

November 2010

Route for consultation announced

February 2011

Consultation commences

July 2011

Consultation ends

End 2011

Government decisions announced

2012

Environmental Impact Assessment

2013

Hybrid Bill prepared for Parliament

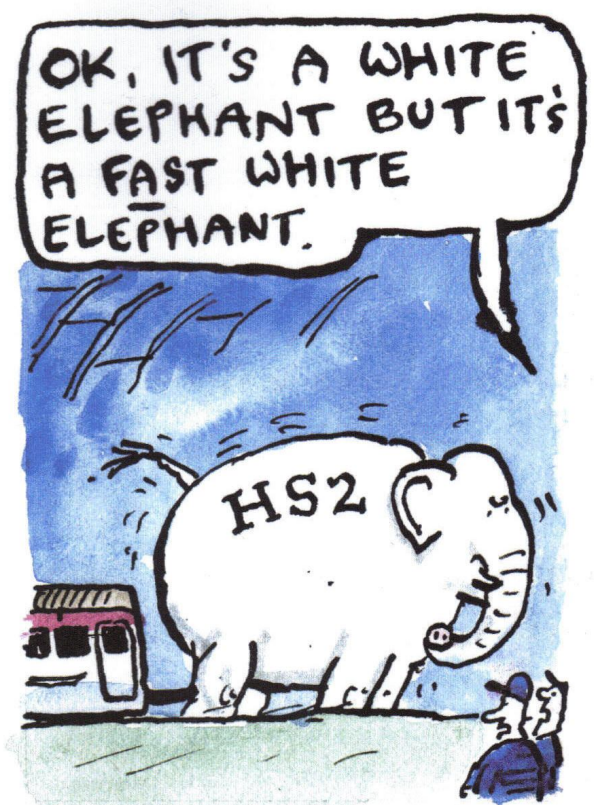
2013 / 14

Hybrid Bill passed

2015 - 2026

Construction

Note: This is a provisional timeline



Regional Regeneration - the new myth

The Comprehensive Spending Review was a milestone, as this could have signalled the end of High Speed 2 although we predicted that the project would be funded.

The Department for Transport has now said that £750 million will be spent over the next four years, a figure which we believe is understated, as this does not include any contingencies, which HS2 Ltd estimated would take the figure over £1 billion.

The Treasury has just published the 'National Infrastructure Plan 2010' which includes several references to High Speed Rail, such as: *And, just as the UK made bold choices in the past, we need to embrace the options opened up by new technology for example, in the roll out of superfast broadband, in offshore wind arrays and in high speed rail.*

Government and HS2 Ltd are dogmatically focussed on the notion of 'National Interest'

The next milestone will come within the next few weeks, when the Government announces the route that has been chosen for consultation, including, we hope, the consultation timetable. This will provide the next major opportunity to influence policy.

There is a key task in advance of the consultation, however, as it is crucial that pressure is maintained on exposing the weaknesses of the business case, and the fallacy of the low-carbon case. This is particularly important as we need to educate and energise people in other parts of the country to the issues.

In addition, attention must now be focussed on the myth that HS2 will lead to regional regeneration and is therefore in the National Interest..

High Speed 2 is now promoted by the Government as an "economic lifeline for the great cities of the north", despite the fact that this concept is not proven in any of the HS2 work to date and according to an OECD report, the wider economic benefits are admitted to be very small.

Moving the goalposts to the 'National Interest' highlights the need for the campaign against Hs2 to become a national movement to dispel the myth, and highlight the investments that are

How SAAG has been working on your behalf

As part of the wider campaign, we hold monthly committee meetings and members of the committee have represented SAAG at a variety of events. We have also undertaken a range of activities relating to HS2. These include:

- Meetings of the High Speed Two Action Group Chairs, which take place monthly.
- HS2 presentations and attendance at other group meetings, such as Hughenden, Princes Risborough and Fairford Leys.
- Briefings with attendees of the recent Philip Hammond meetings with John Bercow and David Lidington.
- Representation at the 2 Bucks CC summits on HS2 (Business Case and Environment)
- Participation in HS2 Ltd Technical Seminars.
- Publication of HS2 articles in local magazines.
- Lobbying national news media.
- Representing the area on the Chiltern Society Action Committee.
- Providing local groups and HS2 Action Alliance support with information, sound recordings etc;
- SAAG Members face to face meetings with David Lidington.
- Participation in the October 25th Parliamentary Lobby Day
- Extracting information from Hs2 Ltd using Freedom of Information Act

You may also have seen that we have been active in promoting actions to influence the two 'consultations' which have taken place so far: the EHS consultation and the 'Spending Challenges' treasury website.

not being made because of HS2.

We believe that individuals should continue to contact their MP, the Transport Select Committee and the Treasury, to demand an explanation of the Government's actions in light of the business case / carbon / regeneration issues.

We also believe it is important to use your personal network of friends, contacts and business associates elsewhere in the country to plant the seeds of doubt in their mind, so that the Government will not be able to steamroller this project through because of national resistance, not just local people who are too easily dismissed as NIMBYs.

We are working closely with all of the organisations involved in the campaign against HS2, and developing plans to create national Public Relations and Lobbying campaigns to influence opinion across the country.

Part of a bigger picture

To put our activities into context we are working closely with the High Speed 2 Action Alliance, StopHS2 and others to develop arguments and strategies

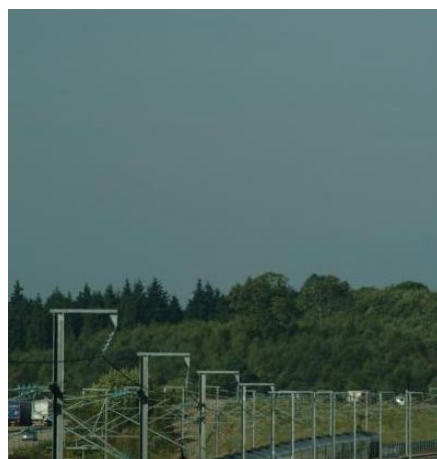
aimed at challenging and ultimately defeating this project.

There are now over 50 action groups involved in the campaign and other organisations, such as the Taxpayers Alliance, the Campaign to Protect Rural England and other national organisations are being worked with to broaden and strengthen our efforts.

More details

Remember that full details of our activities, related documents and latest news and updates are available on the Speen website:

www.speenbucks.org.uk



High Speed 2: What do you think?

The SAAG committee has been actively discussing a number of issues and suggestions and rather than take unilateral action, feel that we should solicit your views before proceeding:

There have been suggestions we should put more visible posters and other signage around the villages to demonstrate our concerns with HS2, such as can be seen in Wendover and Gt. Missenden.

Do you think this is a good idea, or do you think it would exacerbate blight problems and spoil the area?

We are trying to use the Speen website as our primary means of sharing information as it can be kept up to date easily, and costs us nothing but time, although we recognise that not everyone has access to the internet, or uses it regularly.

Do you think this is effective, and if not what changes would you like us to make?

Would you like us to produce a regular newsletter, such as this one, and if so, how frequently?

We have been considering holding a further Public Meeting to share the latest developments and provide a better forum for discussion and feedback.

Do you think this is a good idea, and when would you suggest this should be held?

If we were to hold another Public Meeting, are there any guest speakers you would particularly like to hear?

If you could let us have your feedback, ideally by November 12th, with any other thoughts and comments, we will plan accordingly.

For those with internet access, please email your responses to hs2@speenbucks.org.uk

For those who would prefer to write, please put your comments in the boxes at Speen & Lacey Green Stores.

Treasury site: Spending Challenge

- 100,000 ideas in total
- 63,000 from public sector
- 1830 'distilled' ideas under consideration
- 17 Government departments
- 45 ideas under DfT
- 1 idea is 'Stop HS2'
- 3 ideas mentioned in CSR
- £6 million savings p.a.

Were they really listening?

Will they take any further action?

What do they do now?

The advert below was produced by the High Speed 2 Action Alliance for inclusion in the 'Government Gazette'. Copies can be downloaded from the Speen website

"HS2 is 'green' – it's part of the low carbon economy"	"HS2 will deliver wider economic benefits to the regions"	"HS2 is a sound investment"	"Only a new railway can solve the rail capacity problem"	"HS2 will eliminate domestic air travel"	"UK lacks a fast national railway network"
NO – Even DfT say it doesn't reduce CO ₂ emissions, but is 'broadly neutral' (and HS2 Ltd's sums flatter HS2). 360km/h trains use more than twice the power of 200km/h trains. 84% of journeys on HS2 will indisputably create more emissions – all new journeys (27%) and those switching from conventional rail (57%). A showcase transport investment should contribute to our target to reduce emissions by 80%, by 2050.	NO – HS2 Ltd say there are benefits (worth £3.6bn) but this is mainly from additional local transport using freed-up existing capacity – not faster connectivity. The redistributive effects will benefit London – not the regions. DfT's assumptions mean trips to London will grow at 3 times the rate of those from London to the regions – taking money from the regions to London.	NO – Commercially it loses money: it has £25.5bn of extra costs, but only £15bn of extra fares. The economic justification depends on greatly overestimated time-saving benefits eg. all time on trains is assumed to be wasted. The case is driven by huge (267%) projected increases in demand. HS2 Ltd say if demand drops more than 20% below forecast, the benefit to subsidy ratio is under 2 (the minimum acceptable). The cost of damaging the environment and property blight is excluded.	NO – An extra 65% capacity can be gained with just additional rolling stock on WCML and there is massive potential on Chiltern Railways. These improvements come without disruption. Also DfT's own alternative to HS2 (Rail Package 2) de-bottlenecks WCML, delivering the capacity by running more and longer trains (for just £2bn) and gives a better (3.63) NBR* than HS2 (2.7). Everything can be done incrementally against need – not relying on long-term forecasts. * NBR = Net Benefit Ratio	NO – To get enough modal shift from air travel (8% of HS2 journeys) HS2 Ltd project a 178% increase in domestic air by 2033 – but this assumes a third runway at Heathrow. Growth in domestic air is between places poorly connected by surface transport. Domestic air traffic for London is actually declining, including with the NW and Scottish Lowlands. Opportunities to displace air travel by HS2 have been reducing, not increasing.	NO – The UK, unlike Europe, has had a fast national railway network for a long time. As Sir Rod Eddington said, the UK has extensive fast inter-city services. We already have quicker rail journey times between the capital and the five largest cities than in other major West European countries: averaging 145 mins in UK; 151 mins Spain; 184 mins Italy; 221 mins France; and 244 mins Germany.

'The great enemy of the truth is very often not the lie - deliberate, contrived and dishonest - but the myth - persistent, persuasive, and unrealistic'

JF Kennedy, 1962