



Department  
for Transport

From the Secretary of State  
**The Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling**

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Dear Colleague,

23 February 2017

**Re: High Speed Rail (London – West Midlands) Act 2017 - Royal Assent**

The HS2 Phase One Hybrid Bill has now received Royal Assent. This is a significant milestone for the project, but I know it will also be a time of concern for your constituents.

I am writing today to reiterate our commitment to working with those communities affected by HS2 and to providing them with information and support as we enter the construction phase. I am also setting out details of further help that will now be available.

As reaching this milestone shows, this Government is getting on with creating the infrastructure the country needs to prosper. HS2 will become the backbone of our national rail network, create thousands of jobs and help build an economy that works for the whole of the UK. Now we have the powers we need to press ahead with the job of constructing the railway, we must also continue to ensure affected communities get appropriate support.

The Government has previously set out plans for a comprehensive package of support to provide flexibility and choice to those directly affected by HS2, as well as compensation to those whose properties are needed to build or operate the railway. Now Royal Assent has been achieved, more schemes will open to applicants. This includes the Homeowner Payment (HOP) scheme for Phase One which opens today. This is available to property owners in rural areas who live between 120 and 300 metres from the future rail line wherever it is not in a deep tunnel. Eligible property owners can apply for £7,500, £15,000 or £22,500, depending on how close they live to the proposed line.

We have written to all those we believe may be eligible for a Phase One HOP scheme payment. Copies of the letter, a leaflet on the scheme and the guidance and application form are enclosed. Copies are available on request from HS2 Ltd's helpdesk by emailing [HS2enquiries@hs2.org.uk](mailto:HS2enquiries@hs2.org.uk), or by telephone on 020 7944 4908.

Today also marks the launch of £70 million additional funding to provide support for communities that will be impacted by the forthcoming works. Two funds, worth £40 million, are open for applications today: the Community and Environment Fund (CEF) and the Business and Local Economy Fund (BLEF).

The CEF will help enhance community facilities, improve access to the countryside and conserve the natural environment, while the BLEF will support local economies in areas where businesses may experience disruption from the construction of HS2. The CEF and BLEF together make up £40 million and will be allocated at a regional level: £15 million for the Central area (Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Buckinghamshire), £7.5 million for Greater London and £7.5 million for the West Midlands (Birmingham, Solihull and Coventry). The remaining £10 million will fund cross-border or route wide projects. The online portal for applicants is here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-community-and-business-funds>

A further £30 million road safety fund will go towards local road safety schemes in areas not currently accustomed to construction traffic. This will help provide a legacy of improvements for areas adversely affected by Phase One traffic. Further details on the scheme will be announced shortly. We will also shortly announce details of our proposed urban compensation scheme.

As well as commencing the schemes mentioned above, Royal Assent is the point at which HS2 Ltd needs to access the land and property required for the new railway. Where possible we have acquired land by agreement with property owners and we will continue to engage directly with those affected as our plans develop. HS2 Ltd has built up its engagement activity in preparation for this new phase; anyone whose land is affected in the next three months will shortly receive a letter setting out when access or possession to their land is needed. I am determined this process is carried out with the utmost care and respect for those concerned.

I hope we can continue an open dialogue as the railway takes shape, in particular to ensure communities have all the support they need throughout this process.



**Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP**

**SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT**