

# Government lifting the safeguarding directions for HS2 between the West Midlands and Crewe

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The Transport Secretary Mark Harper has announced that he is formally lifting the safeguarding directions for HS2 Phase 2a between West Midlands and Crewe. He says in doing so, the government is delivering on a commitment made in the command paper [Network North: transforming British transport](#), published on 4 October 2023.

Safeguarding is a planning tool used to protect the land needed for the HS2 scheme from potential conflicting development. The safeguarding directions require the local authority to consult with HS2 Ltd on planning applications within the safeguarded land.

By lifting safeguarding, the government provides certainty to people along the former route of HS2 and makes development easier, as HS2 Ltd will no longer object to proposed development in the area to which the safeguarding directions had applied.

The Transport Secretary said: "To allow Phase One of HS2 to connect to the West Coast Main Line I am

continuing to safeguard land close to Handsacre. This connection at Handsacre will allow passengers to travel on HS2 trains through to Manchester, Liverpool and Scotland, joining the West Coast Main Line for the rest of their journeys.

“It will also reduce the journey time between London and Manchester by nearly half an hour (down to 100 minutes), facilitated through an upgrade of Handsacre Junction which will allow more trains to reach key destinations north of Birmingham.”

He adds that for areas where safeguarding has been removed, he has also closed the Rural Support Zone, Extended Homeowner Protection Zone and Homeowner Payment schemes and will review existing applications on a case-by-case basis.

He said: “This is because these schemes were established to support those impacted when the government intended to build Phase 2 of HS2. The Need to Sell scheme remains open for now as a ‘safety net’, for those who meet the criteria and have a compelling need to sell, until the blighting effect of HS2 has fully receded. Further information can be found on the [claim compensation if your property is affected by HS2](#) webpage.”

HS2 Ltd is writing to the owners of properties affected by this update explaining what these changes mean to them personally. The Network North command paper also committed that Phase 2b safeguarding will be amended by summer 2024, to allow for any safeguarding needed for Northern Powerhouse Rail.

He said: “I can confirm that this work is underway and I will set out further details regarding those areas that will come within the scope of these new safeguarding directions in due course.

“The lifting of safeguarding is separate from the programme for disposing of any property no longer needed for the HS2 project which will begin shortly. More details will be set out soon.

“I am depositing the High Speed 2 Handsacre connection to the West Coast Main Line safeguarding directions and guidance, the Handsacre West Coast Main Line safeguarding directions plans and the Handsacre West Coast Main Line safeguarding directions key plan in the libraries of both Houses.”

*Photo credit: HS2 Ltd*