

# HS2 dig deep as work begins on two of the route's longest cuttings

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**HS2 Ltd** has begun work on two of the longest cuttings on the new high speed rail project, where the equivalent of more than twenty Royal Albert Hall's worth of rock and earth must be excavated to provide a level bed for the railway.

The Barton Hartshorn to Mixbury cutting, near Brackley, will be the project's longest cutting at 2.5 miles, with a whopping 1.3 million cubic metres of material set to be excavated in stages over the next three years.

Nearly two million cubic metres of rock and earth is to be excavated to create the two cuttings, which will run across the boundaries between Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, enough to fill the Royal Albert Hall more than twenty times. The excavated material, expected to be a mix of clay, sand, gravel and limestone, will be reused elsewhere on the project to help sculpt embankments, noise barriers and landscaping.

The cutting will be up to 11 meters deep, and when complete will be crossed by six road, foot and bridleway bridges in order to keep communities connected.

Rohan Perin HS2 Ltd's project client said: "Construction is now well under way across the whole first phase of the HS2 project, with almost 28,000 jobs now supported across the UK and our initial earthworks made good progress over the summer. Some of the longest cuttings will be in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, reducing noise and visual impact for local residents while carrying the new high speed line under a series of road and railway bridges. It's great to see a strong start to work on site."

Excavation also recently started at the nearby Calvert cutting, which will take the line for 2.1 mile (3.4km) past the Buckinghamshire villages of Calvert Green and Steeple Claydon, roughly following the route of the disused Great Central Railway, which closed in the 1960s.



*Calvert excavation work*

The cutting will take the line under four road bridges and the new East West Rail route, which is also currently under construction.

Around 685,000 cubic metres of material will be excavated to create the Calvert cutting which will be up to 9.7 metres deep and wide enough to allow extra local railway lines to be added alongside the HS2 main line at a later date. Other major cuttings, at Turweston in Northamptonshire, Waddesdon in Bucks, and Ladbroke, in South Warwickshire, are also well under way.

Construction of the two cuttings is being led by HS2's main works contractor, **EKFB** – a joint venture between Eiffage, Kier, Ferrovial Construction and BAM Nuttall.

Dan Hockey EKFB's deputy project director said: "The earthworks at our longest cuttings are well underway and progress is steaming forward. While our works continue to progress, we have our local communities in mind and we're continuously using our internal site access road to move people and materials around, reducing the impact on the local roads around our site areas."

Across the 80km section of the HS2 route through Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and West Northants, EKFB will need to shift approximately 36 million cubic metres of earth and rock over the next three years. Around 99% of this will be moved within HS2 land using a dedicated network of haul roads to reduce traffic on public roads.