

Intention to remove Golborne Link from HS2 Bill announced with alternative options to be explored

June 7, 2022



The government says it is committed to leaving no stone unturned when it comes to finding the right solution to take HS2 trains to Scotland.

The Department for Transport has announced its intention to remove the Golborne Link from the current HS2 Bill and explore alternatives that it says will deliver similar benefits, within the £96 billion envelope of the Integrated Rail Plan.

The Golborne Link – a high speed rail link connecting HS2 to the West Coast Mainline – will, subject to Parliamentary, be removed from the High Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester) Bill after its second reading following clear recommendations set out in last year's Union Connectivity Review.

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- [HS2 announces start of construction on UK's longest railway bridge](#)
- [More courses added to HS2's fast track job training programme](#)

The government is updating safeguarding boundaries to align with the HS2 Bill, but will maintain safeguarding for the Golborne Link during the work on possible alternatives – meaning impacted residents and small businesses can continue to apply under the property compensation schemes.

The independent Union Connectivity Review undertaken by Sir Peter Hendy claimed that the Golborne Link does not resolve all the current capacity constraints on the West Coast Main Line between Crewe and Preston.

In line with this review, the government has committed to exploring a number of alternatives that could deliver similar benefits within the framework of the Integrated Rail Plan – ranging from upgrading existing infrastructure to brand new high speed links.

Scotland is already set to benefit from the boost in connectivity and huge economic benefits HS2 will bring with services between London and Glasgow set to be available, based on current timetable assumptions, once HS2 trains start running onto the conventional rail network.

HS2 Minister Andrew Stephenson said: “HS2 is a once-in-a-lifetime project that will transform travel across the entire UK as we know it and serve millions of people for hundreds of years to come and it’s absolutely vital that we get this right from the outset.

“Removing this link is about ensuring that we’ve left no stone unturned when it comes to working with our Scottish counterparts to find a solution that will best serve the great people of Scotland.”

The Union Connectivity review recommended a full exploration of alternative options to the Golborne Link and the UK government is working with the Scottish Government and other devolved authorities to implement recommendations from it.

This is just one part of the £96 billion Integrated Rail Plan – the biggest ever public investment in Britain’s rail network – and the first of 3 new high speed lines being planned, to add more seats, shorten journey times, support local services and deliver a modern, fully connected transport network.

The High Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester) Bill was introduced in January with the goal of bringing faster, greener and more reliable train services as well unparalleled economic benefits to the north and will have its second reading when parliamentary time allows.

Photo credit: HS2 Ltd