



Campaign to Protect  
Rural England  
OXFORDSHIRE

## **CPRE Oxfordshire News Release**

**Date**  
11.03.10

### **CPRE Oxfordshire reactions to High Speed 2 rail proposals: this will impact seriously on local environment and will need to be mitigated.**

CPRE Oxfordshire [1] understands from the Government's High Speed 2 (HS2) Paper published on Thursday 11 March that the impact of the preferred route on the county of Oxfordshire [2] is not likely to be as severe as once feared. However, it will have substantial environmental impacts on a small area of the County and the neighbouring counties of Buckinghamshire and Warwickshire.

From the published map of the route, it is proposed to cross the eastern edge of Oxfordshire between Brackley and Buckingham passing very close to the villages of Finmere, Mixbury, and Newton Purcell.

In detail, the new route follows the old disused railway in Buckinghamshire which runs just south of Aylesbury, across the A41 near Waddesdon, and northwest up to the village of Calvert, where it ends. The route then continues northwest up to Brackley, cutting across the A4421 near Newton Purcell, and the A421 just west of Finmere, and then passing northeast of Brackley, along the line of the old Great Central Railway. The line then continues northwest into Warwickshire, crossing the B4525 and the A361 near Chipping Warden.

CPRE notes that using existing and disused transport corridors, as well as tunnelling, will help to lessen the various environmental impacts. But the route in Warwickshire, where the line is proposed to run through open countryside, will be a major concern.

Helena Whall, Campaign Manager for CPRE Oxfordshire, said:

“Wherever the route eventually goes, we believe that the physical impacts of high speed trains on local environments will be serious and need to be mitigated.

And in terms of the role of HS2 in the nation's future transport system, we consider it essential that it should be complemented by a package of

improvements to the existing rail network and that it should genuinely contribute to a low carbon future.”

CPRE Oxfordshire would therefore set out four key requirements for this project:

**1. Local environments affected by HS2 should be protected as far as possible.**

Damage to the countryside - including landscape, heritage and tranquillity - should be minimised. New lines should run along existing road and rail lines wherever possible, and adverse impacts can be mitigated by extensive tunnelling, landscaping and noise barriers.

**2. There should be investment in the existing rail network capacity to complement investment in HS2.**

One of the main rationales for HS2 is to create more capacity overall in the UK rail system but for the vast majority of people this means seeing improvements in their local train services – not premium price high speed rail. The huge investments required for HS2 should be part of overall improvements for existing lines and should integrate with them.

**3. HS2 should genuinely tackle climate change and contribute to a low carbon future.**

There are still questions about the relative benefits of HS2 in terms of energy and carbon and these need to be resolved before the project is approved.

**4. HS2 should materially assist in achieving regional planning and regeneration aims.**

Public/private funding may well be scarce in the coming years and it is vital that major new transport infrastructure projects like HS2 make a real and lasting contribution to the South East’s planning objectives and sustainability.

Helena Whall continued:

“We will of course be studying the published paper carefully to see precisely what this will mean for the residents of Oxfordshire. We will also be talking to local Parishes and CPRE colleagues in other counties who are likely to be affected by the preferred route.

In due course we will be making strong representations on the HS2 proposals and the four issues we have identified.”

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**NOTES FOR EDITORS**

1. CPRE Oxfordshire promotes the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of rural Oxfordshire by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country. We are part of the national CPRE charity. For more information see: [www.cpreoxon.org.uk](http://www.cpreoxon.org.uk)

2. In January 2009, a new company was formed by the government, High Speed 2, to consider the case for new high speed rail services from London to Scotland. As a first stage the

company has been asked to develop a proposal for an entirely new line between London and the West Midlands, which would enable faster journeys to other destinations in the North of England and Scotland using both existing lines and a new high speed rail network. For more information see the HS2 website: <http://www.hs2.org.uk>

**For Further Information**

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