

News story: Work under way on Phase One of HS2 a year on from Royal Assent

- on the first anniversary of Royal Assent for Phase One of HS2 (23 February 2018), work is under way between London and the West Midlands to build Britain's future railway
- £70 million of funding has begun to be distributed to those affected by the railway construction
- over £13 million of homeowner payments remain unclaimed and are still available for those living near the Phase One route in rural areas

Just one year after Her Majesty the Queen granted Royal Assent for Phase One of HS2, significant work is under way in preparation for Britain's new high speed railway line, with over £13 million of homeowner payments still available for those living along the route.

The government is encouraging eligible homeowners in rural areas to [apply for a payment under the Homeowner Payment \(HOP\) scheme](#) which launched on February 23 last year – the same day that Parliament approved the [High Speed Rail \(London – West Midlands\) Hybrid Bill](#).

The scheme was set up as a way of sharing the future economic benefits of the railway with local people. Over £7 million of payments have already been made under the HOP scheme, with more than £13 million still to be claimed.

Nusrat Ghani, HS2 Minister, said:

HS2 will be the backbone of our national rail network – improving vital links between some of our biggest cities, driving forward economic growth and regeneration and helping us build a Britain fit for the future.

One year on from Royal Assent we are making real progress, with significant contracts boosting jobs and prosperity whilst we ensure the new railway is not limited to providing faster, better journeys for passengers, but leaves a lasting legacy of improvements along the route for generations to come.

Over £7million has already been paid to homeowners living near Phase One of the route under the HOP scheme. I urge those who are eligible to take full advantage of the £13 million still available under the scheme to ensure the future economic benefits of the railway are shared with rural communities affected by the line.

Construction has already begun along the Phase One route, which will run from London to the West Midlands and is due to be mostly completed by 2025. The first train services are expected to run on the line from 2026.

Enabling work has already begun, contracts for the main civil engineering works including bridges, tunnels, embankments, viaducts and station designs have been awarded, and procurement of the Euston master development partner and London stations, rolling stock and rail systems contracts are under way.

In addition, £70 million of funding has begun to be distributed to those affected by the railway construction, with more funding available for communities and businesses.

Mark Thurston, Chief Executive of HS2 Ltd said:

Since Royal Assent there has been significant progress at HS2 in developing our capability to deliver Europe's largest infrastructure project, and our focus is on designing and preparing the way for the new railway.

Over the last year HS2 has awarded major contracts that will support 14,000 jobs, the National College for High Speed Rail opened its doors to train the future members of our industry, all alongside a major programme of early works.

As construction work continues to ramp up, we remain acutely aware of our responsibilities to those communities that we impact. Minimising disruption is at the heart of our design, while we retain our aim of creating a 'green corridor' consisting of new woodland, wildlife habitats and new amenity facilities to leave a lasting legacy of high quality green spaces all along the route, including the planting of 7 million trees.

Since Royal Assent:

- enabling works are under way in various locations along the line of route – these include archaeological work uncovering the hidden history of Britain, extensive environmental works to mitigate the impact of the railway on the countryside, site clearance and essential utility works
- first recipients of the £40 million [Community and Environment Fund \(CEF\) and Business and Local Economy Fund \(BLEF\)](#) have been awarded funding for projects along the Phase One line of route, with a further £5 million made available for communities along the HS2 Phase 2a route from the West Midlands to Crewe
- allocations for local authorities under the £30 million Road Safety Fund have been announced, delivering high quality road and cycle safety projects to ensure that England's roads remain among the safest in the world
- the £5 million [Woodland Fund](#) has opened for applications, helping local landowners create new native, broadleaf woodlands and enhance existing woodland sites
- main works civils contracts worth an estimated £6.6 billion awarded to construct the bridges, tunnels, embankments and viaducts needed to drive economic growth and provide seamless journeys

- station design contracts have been awarded, appointing leading creative firms to ensure passengers on our world-class railway will experience modern and accessible stations
- procurement processes are under way for the Euston master development partner, London stations construction contracts, rolling stock contract and rail systems contracts
- land assembly programme is under way
- first temporary track closures necessary for the on-network works have taken place
- Old Oak Common depot decommissioning is under way

HS2 will create around 25,000 jobs during construction as well as 2,000 apprenticeships. It will also support growth in the wider economy, worth an additional 100,000 jobs.