

Transport Secretary acts on HS2 ancient woodland clearances during Oakervee review

Secretary of State for Transport Grant Shapps has today (16 September 2019) ordered that removals of ancient woodlands for HS2 be stopped during the [independent review into the project](#) – unless they are shown to be absolutely necessary to avoid major cost and schedule impacts, should the scheme proceed as planned.

The Transport Secretary told HS2 Ltd to review its ancient woodlands clearance programme – and assess what removals can be halted until after the examination of HS2, led by Doug Oakervee, has reported in autumn.

He recognised the concerns of local residents and campaigners that clearing ancient woodland is irreversible.

The Transport Secretary told HS2 Ltd today that these removals will only be allowed during Oakervee's work if they are shown to be absolutely necessary to prevent major cost and schedule impacts.

HS2 Ltd will continue with other important preparatory works which, if delayed, would have a damaging impact on cost and schedule if HS2 were to continue.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

There is no sense in hiding the challenges HS2 faces, or masking the difficult decisions that need to be taken.

So, as Douglas Oakervee's review continues, we must take a sensible approach and recognise that some works simply cannot be undone later.

Having listened to the concerns of affected residents and Parliamentary colleagues, I have ordered HS2 Ltd to consider what works affecting ancient woodland clearances can be delayed for the duration of the review. This ensures we avoid irreversible decisions without major impacts on cost and schedule. HS2 may be a complex project overall, but I think this request is just common sense.