

HS2 COMMUNITY COHESION PUBLIC RESEARCH



SYSTRA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The Department for Transport (DfT) wishes to minimise the impact on rural communities affected by the construction and operation of HS2. Householders might choose to move away from their local area for a variety of reasons, potentially affecting the stability and cohesion of communities along the route.

The DfT commissioned SYSTRA Ltd to undertake research to understand:

- Perceptions of the impact of HS2, and factors that may influence homeowners' decisions to leave an area, even if their property is not required for construction; and
- Awareness, understanding and likelihood of homeowners applying to property compensation schemes, including Rural Support Zone (RSZ), Homeowner Payments (HOP) and Need to Sell (NTS), and how eligibility may influence their decisions to leave the area.

Overview of research

Forty-eight in-depth, qualitative interviews were undertaken with owner-occupiers living in rural areas within 60-500m of the HS2 route. Interviews were spread over 12 areas along Phase 1, 2a and 2b of the route. As some interviews were conducted with joint property-owners/household decision makers, 79 individuals took part in the research.

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- Understand opinions and perceptions of HS2 and its impact;
- Gain insight into how HS2 makes homeowners feel about leaving/remaining;
- Identify the issues homeowners weigh up during their leave/remain decision;
- Gain insight into awareness and understanding of property assistance schemes; and
- Understand what information homeowners are basing decisions on and what sources of information they used.

Key findings

Awareness, Perceptions and Perceived Impact of HS2

Whilst there was high awareness of HS2 and the approximate location of the route in relation to interviewees' properties, there was a lot of uncertainty about when construction would commence locally, and what operation of HS2 would be like e.g. how frequently trains would run.

There was a negative overall perception of HS2, and much concern over the negative impacts on individuals and local communities from both the construction and operation of HS2. Most notably these concerns related to increases in noise, reduced road access, generation of dust, dirt and mud, and decreases in property values. It was widely considered that these issues are not sufficiently understood by HS2 Ltd.

Intentions to Stay or Leave the Area

About half of interviewees indicated they were intending to stay in the area, the other half were either undecided or were intending to leave.

Key influencing 'stay' drivers were identified as:

- Attachment to the local area;
- The negative impact of HS2 on their property value;
- Qualities of their own property; and
- Their older age.

Those intending to leave the area, specifically because of HS2, reported key drivers as:

- Noise levels, both during construction and operation; and
- Construction specific impacts, such as changes to roads and access and increases in dust and dirt.

Some interviewees still remain undecided about whether to stay or leave the area, and are still in the process of weighing up their options, taking into consideration factors they identified driving them to stay or leave. There were also interviewees who intend to leave the area for personal reasons, unrelated to HS2.

Property Assistance Schemes

There were mixed levels of awareness with regards to the various property assistance schemes offered by HS2 Ltd and many, but not all, interviewees eligible for RSZ options or HOP payments were aware and intending to apply for the assistance.

Most households within the RSZ were aware of their option to either take a 'cash offer' of 10% of their un-blighted market value, or have HS2 Ltd purchase their property at un-blighted market value ('voluntary purchase'). Most households had decided which option they were intending to apply for, dependent on whether they wished to leave the area or not, and some remained undecided. Some interviewees may be influenced to remain in the area for longer, and potentially indefinitely, if voluntary purchase remained an option once the cash offer had been taken (currently unavailable).

Not all interviewees living in the HOP bands were aware that there was an application process to be followed, with a few expecting that any compensation would be provided automatically by HS2 Ltd.

None of the interviewees were currently applying for NTS, although some were considering it. The main factors influencing a decision on whether or not to apply to NTS was the experience of neighbours and friends in applying for the scheme, and confusion relating to eligibility.

Information and Engagement

Information received from HS2 Ltd and the government was generally considered to be reliable, however there was a concern that the information goes out of date quickly. The preference was for HS2 Ltd to continue sending tailored/personalised information to homeowners, and to continue running public events which would provide more opportunities for one-to-one engagement. Suggested improvements to public events included holding them more locally and at accessible times of the day, ensuring venues are sufficient for the numbers likely to attend, and ensuring they are attended by HS2 Ltd representatives able to answer questions on wide-ranging topics, including specific to the local area.

Whilst the abundance of information provided by HS2 Ltd online was acknowledged, there was frustration at the lack of specific information available, especially for the local area and at household level and with regards to property assistance schemes. There was also difficulty in interpreting some

information which was considered too technical, and difficulty accessing desired information as the overall volume available was overwhelming.

There was a strong desire to receive more information on the impacts of construction and operation of HS2, and the timetable relevant to the local area.

Conclusions and implications for policy makers

What do interviewees think about HS2 and the impact it will have?

Interviewees have a generally negative perception of HS2, perceiving very little local benefit, and expressing many concerns relating to the impact of construction and the more unknown impacts of operation. Whilst interviewees themselves acknowledge that their concerns are speculative, and not necessarily based on information provided by HS2 Ltd, their concerns about the negative impacts are powerful enough to incite some to leave, and some to consider leaving the area within which they currently reside and are otherwise happy. There is a clear incentive for HS2 Ltd to mitigate against these concerns as far as possible, including action to enable some fundamental ‘myth-busting’.

To improve the current perception of HS2, there is also a need to further extol its benefits and the benefits of any mitigation and compensation measures, specifically for local residents. HS2 is not considered to bring local benefits to the populations impacted by its construction and operation and it is clear that messaging around the benefits of the scheme at national level will not affect the current perception of HS2 at local level. To change perception, significant messaging is required on any benefits the development will bring to the local area, where possible, and the efforts being made by HS2 Ltd to understand the impact on communities and the mitigation measures being put in place.

This study found little suggestion that interviewees living on Phase 1 of the route were more informed, or required less information on specific topics, than interviewees living on Phase 2a and 2b of the route. This suggests that similar communication strategies are currently required across all Phases. Due to the staggered nature of delivery, there is still opportunity to monitor the effectiveness of any newly rolled-out Phase 1 communications, to assess the level of impact and the potential benefits for Phase 2 residents.

What makes interviewees want to leave the area, and what could HS2 Ltd do to alleviate concerns and increase the likelihood of homeowners staying?

Whilst interviewees did not cite uncertainty as an explicit reason for wanting to leave the area, there was, nevertheless, a lot of uncertainty expressed regarding the impacts of HS2. Concern and lack of control over anticipated changes to day-to-day village life has made some interviewees consider leaving the area within which they currently reside. The sense of community is important to the lives of interviewees, frequently cited as created from friendly and familiar neighbours and village events and amenities. HS2 will shortly become a neighbour in these village communities and therefore must find a way of becoming a ‘good neighbour’, as is their aim, by further examining ways to actively minimise negative impacts of the development of HS2 on communities and/or by addressing existing dislikes of the local area e.g. congestion, that may be exacerbated by the development of HS2.

Interviewees currently require a great deal of reassurance on the impacts of construction, particularly relating to noise and road access, and want to see evidence of HS2 Ltd considering and addressing concerns through mitigation strategies.

How do property assistance schemes impact decisions to stay or leave the area?

For those within the RSZ, there is some suggestion that the potential for voluntary purchase to remain open after accepting the cash offer may incentivise residents to remain in the area for longer, and potentially indefinitely, by eliminating fears that they will be unable to sell their property in the future. However, several interviewees were not interested in this option, having already made up their mind to leave the area, indicating that, if the change were to occur, it would benefit from being rolled out as quickly as possible, before minds are firmly made up to leave and more resistant to considering staying. There is also a suggestion that the timeframe for applications requires shortening and should be made increasingly transparent, so that homeowners would not be dissuaded by the potential of having to go through two application processes and therefore choose to directly apply for voluntary purchase.

There is little indication that eligibility for HOP impacts decisions to stay or leave the area, although there is some confusion over whether eligibility for HOP may prevent NTS application. There is some indication that HOP draws interviewees' attention to the property's distance from the HS2 route, with payments only considered to be compensation for disruption, noise impacts and/or impact of property value. Significant strategies will be required to change the HOP narrative from one of being 'compensated for the detrimental impacts of construction/operation' to the official message of 'sharing the wealth/benefit'.

Application to the NTS is currently perceived as disproportionately onerous leading to an increased negative perception of HS2 Ltd. It may benefit the perception of HS2 Ltd to provide further clarity that eligibility for NTS is carefully defined, hence the necessity for detailed questioning and, if possible, assess whether there are any areas of the application process that could be made less onerous for applicants.

What information do homeowners want to receive?

Uncertainty, 'fear of the unknown' and feelings of lack of engagement with HS2 Ltd are also significant contributing factors to homeowners leaving or considering leaving the area. There is the opportunity to remedy this with strategic, locally tailored messaging, or better dissemination of existing local area engagement plans, which may influence some homeowners to stay. Interviewees stated they would like to receive information about:

- Noise levels during construction and operation, including impact of mitigations measures;
- Road access during construction and operation, including impact of mitigations measures; and
- Any other mitigation measures being put in place to reduce impact.

Whilst it is not possible for HS2 Ltd to communicate on the information requirements described in the report in the short-term, as the information simply does not yet exist (dependent on Phase and stage of development), short-term messaging could acknowledge the intent to deliver information as soon as it is available, preferably with a timescale commitment.

In what format do homeowners want to receive information?

Despite the negative perception of HS2, interviewees generally considered information from HS2 Ltd to be reliable, and therefore messaging should continue from the same source.

Awareness of property assistance schemes in particular is lower than would be desirable, and awareness was not higher in Phase 1, which is considerably more advanced in terms of timescale and

information provision, including letter and leaflet drops. In order to increase scheme awareness, improvements could be made to the way in which these messages are delivered and absorbed.

Continuing to provide personalised and tailored information is likely to assist in homeowners absorbing messages. Wherever practicable, letters should continue to be addressed, by name, to the homeowner, and any information contained in leaflet drops should be tailored to a more local area than they currently are, if possible this should be at village or street level.

Mitigation strategies and their tangible benefits in particular could be communicated in the form of a 'You Said – We Did' format to highlight the active engagement of HS2 Ltd within local communities.

Improving ease of access to more geographically tailored information will also likely improve homeowners' ability to absorb information that is relevant to them. The current split of information across the government and HS2 Ltd website does not serve to benefit homeowners seeking local personalised information. Providing adequate search functionalities is key to providing helpful information through website sources. This could include an address based search, presenting:

- Distance of property from route;
- Eligibility (or not) for any property assistance schemes;
- Summary of property assistance scheme application process;
- Upcoming dates for local events;
- Online versions of previous letters/leaflets sent to the property to date;
- Options to sign-up for an emailing list; and
- Construction and operation timelines, including dates for the local area.

Online accounts, verified to homeowners, could be used for residents to manage the information they receive, in the format they wish, in addition to facilitating any property assistance scheme applications.

Expansion of the HS2 Ltd CommonPlace platform could be considered to achieve access to tailored information, however the study found no evidence of awareness of the platform, and therefore it would require improved dissemination, which could be incorporated into the overall communications strategy.

Further opportunities for one-to-one face-to-face engagement would be welcomed by interviewees, and the principle of community events led by HS2 Ltd was well-received. However, there are clear opportunities to improve these events, with suggestions including:

- Run events at a more local level, in order to discuss community-level impacts;
- Provide more opportunities for one-to-one engagement at the events, or follow-up opportunities; and
- Ensure that appropriate well informed HS2 Ltd staff members attend the event, in anticipation of the information that will be required and requested.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study context

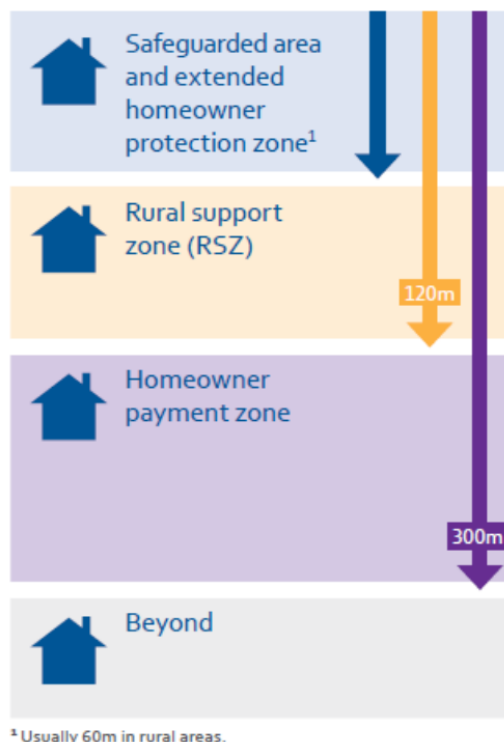
1.1.1 The Department for Transport (DfT) wishes to minimise the impact on rural communities affected by the construction and operation of HS2. Householders might choose to move away from their local area for a variety of reasons, potentially affecting the stability and cohesion of communities along the route.

1.1.2 The majority of properties purchased by HS2 Ltd have not been required for the construction and operation of the HS2 route. Reducing the number of such properties purchased by HS2 Ltd will reduce costs, and assist with keeping communities together.

1.1.3 As such, DfT commissioned SYSTRA Ltd ('SYSTRA') to undertake research with rural homeowners whose properties are not required for the construction of HS2, to understand their perceptions of the impact of HS2, the factors that may influence their decisions to remain in or leave the area, and the information sources which they have used to inform their understanding.

1.1.4 The research also sought to understand homeowners' awareness of, understanding of and likelihood of applying for property compensation schemes, including Rural Support Zone (RSZ) options, Homeowner Payments (HOP) and Need to Sell (NTS); and how eligibility may influence decisions to leave the area.

Figure 1. Property compensation zones (source: HS2 Ltd)



1.1.5 Only rural areas were targeted in this study as these are where the widest range of compensation schemes currently operate. This in turn reflects the Government's view of where the greatest impact from the operation of the railway will be felt.

1.2 Study objectives

1.2.1 The specific objectives of the study are to:

- Understand opinions and perceptions of HS2 and its impact;
- Gain insight into how HS2 makes homeowners feel about leaving/remaining;
- Identify the issues homeowners weigh up during their leave/remain decision;
- Gain insight into awareness and understanding of property assistance schemes; and
- Understand what information homeowners are basing decisions on and what sources of information they used.

1.2.2 The draft findings have fed into a Government-led review of HS2 Ltd's non-statutory property compensation schemes undertaken during 2018. It is expected that the findings of this report are to be used to inform HS2 Ltd's future community engagement methods.

1.3 Study overview

1.3.1 In-depth, qualitative interviews were undertaken with owner-occupiers living in rural areas within 60-500m of the HS2 route, but outside of the Safeguarded Zone¹. Interviews were spread over 12 areas along Phase 1, 2a and 2b of the route.

1.3.2 In total, 48 interviews were undertaken. As some interviews were conducted with joint property-owners/household decision makers, 79 individuals took part in the research. The findings of these interviews are presented in this report.

1.3.3 Interviewees were split equally between men and women, who were generally over the age of 35, living without dependent children, either working or retired, owned their property outright and in ABC1 (a higher socio-economic grouping). The interview sample broadly reflects the demographics of the areas interviewed in.

1.3.4 The full methodology and sample profile is provided in Appendix A.

1.4 Analysis and reporting

1.4.1 With consent from all participants, each interview was digitally voice recorded and written up. Verbatim quotes have been provided throughout this report, for which the Phase, compensation zone, working status and household composition (including whether they live with dependent children or not) is provided.

1.4.2 As with all qualitative research, it should be noted that:

- The sample selected for this study is not statistically representative, rather interviewees with a wide range of geodemographic characteristics are represented in the research;
- Whilst numeric values have not been applied to the findings, descriptors such as 'few', 'some', 'many' and 'most' have been used to provide an understanding of the prevalence of thought across the interviews;
- Where the views of different groups are compared, the small sample sizes in the different groups should be taken into consideration when interpreting findings; and
- The views and opinions reported are those of interviewees, and are not necessarily factually correct.

¹ Land protected from other developments and in which property owners may be eligible to serve a Blight Notice.

1.4.3 Lists of perceived impacts and other factors throughout the report are provided in decreasing order of frequency of occurrence (i.e. those mentioned by the most people are listed first). The most prevalent points are discussed further.

1.5 Report structure

1.5.1 The research findings are provided in the remainder of the report, as follows:

- Chapter 2 provides a summary of interviewees' views on their area and factors that create a sense of community;
- Chapter 3 provides a summary of interviewees' views on HS2 and its perceived impacts;
- Chapter 4 discusses interviewees' intentions to stay or leave the area;
- Chapter 5 provides interviewees' awareness of property assistance schemes;
- Chapter 6 presents sources of information interviewees have used;
- Chapter 7 presents interviewees' suggestions for improvements in community engagement; and
- Chapter 8 provides conclusions and policy implications.

1.5.2 The following are provided in the report appendices:

- Appendix A: Methodology and Sample Profile;
- Appendix B: Recruitment Script;
- Appendix C: Topic Guide; and
- Appendix D: Show Cards.

2. A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This chapter summarises what interviewees like and dislike about their local area, and whether they perceive there to be a sense of community. This provides context about the areas and perception of the areas in which the interviews were undertaken.

2.2 Perceptions of the local area

2.2.1 Most interviewees had spent much of their adult life in the area, for some this included raising children in the property they currently live in.

2.2.2 Interviewees described a wide range of factors that originally attracted them to the area in which they live. Many of these are the same as the factors that they still like about living in the area. These factors can be summarised as follows²:

- The peace, quiet and tranquillity of village life, including low levels of traffic, the relaxing sounds of the local wildlife, the abundance of fresh air and the availability of green land and open spaces;
- Being attracted by 'village life', and the idea of a close-knit community, with friendly neighbours and a safe neighbourhood;
- Accessibility, such as good transport links, or being close to their place of work;
- Being closer to family or friends, particularly important for more elderly interviewees, or those with health issues, as it meant that help was always nearby;
- Familiarity with the local area, having grown up there or raised a family there;
- The availability of various amenities / facilities, including local shops, the village hall, and local schools;
- Liking a specific property and the affordability of property and land; and
- The range of cultural diversity within the local population.

2.2.3 Whilst a substantial number of interviewees reported that there is nothing they dislike about their local area, those who did provided the following reasons³:

- An increased number of building developments in recent years and the resulting loss of green land;
- A lack of amenities / facilities in the village, including the absence of shops, doctors, dentists and local schools;
- A lack of public transport services in their local area including the lack of bus services, and an absence of suitable rail links to other towns;
- Unwanted noise, due to the area becoming increasingly busy (e.g. traffic and aircraft noise);
- Concerns about increasing levels of crime, including an attribution to the increasing number of vacant properties as residents leave the area in advance of HS2 construction;
- The prospect of HS2 and the uncertainty of its impacts; and
- Not liking village lifestyle, including local politics, the formation of cliques and general lack of anonymity.

² Provided in decreasing order of frequency of occurrence

³ Provided in decreasing order of frequency of occurrence

2.3 Factors that contribute to a sense of community

2.3.1 The majority of interviewees suggested that their local area has a sense of community, referencing the following factors as contributors:

- Friendly neighbours/local people, alongside willingness of others to help those in need;
- Friends and family in the area, including a network of friends from children growing up in the area/local schools;
- Village events e.g. street parties to celebrate royal weddings, summer fetes and festivals;
- Village amenities e.g. pubs and shops, which serve as communal areas;
- Social clubs e.g. gardening and bridge clubs;
- People tending to stay in the area for a long time, so are familiar;
- Local groups e.g. Parish Council and Residents' Associations, seen to represent the ideals of community-wide input into how the local area should be run;
- Feeling of a safe environment;
- Shared anti-HS2 sentiment, which acts to galvanise community spirit by providing a common goal; and
- Social media groups.

2.3.2 In contrast, a few interviewees suggested that there is no sense of community in their local area. Of these, a couple stated that this lack of community spirit was ingrained in the village, due to the development of cliques and a culture of secretiveness. However other interviewees suggested that HS2 is directly responsible for the fragmentation of their local community by causing people to move away.

3. AWARENESS, PERCEPTIONS AND PERCEIVED IMPACT OF HS2

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This chapter summarises interviewees' knowledge and awareness of HS2; key perceptions of HS2; and key perceived impacts of HS2, both during construction and operation.

3.2 Knowledge and awareness of HS2

3.2.1 Most interviewees were familiar with the approximate route and interchange points of HS2, identifying that it will run from London to the North of England, with some identifying station stops in London, Birmingham, Crewe, Manchester and Leeds. Additionally, the majority knew where the route will run in relation to their property, with many able to provide approximate distances from the proposed route to their property boundary. Interviewees living closer to the route (in the RSZ/HOP zones) were more likely to report that they were aware of the route in relation to their property than those residing in the Beyond Zone. Interviewees from Phase 2b demonstrated the lowest levels of awareness of where the route will run in relation to their property.

3.2.2 Most interviewees were, however, uncertain on the timescales for construction of the route, especially regarding when construction would start locally. Many interviewees were also concerned that plans for the line of the route and construction timeline kept changing and suggested that they would continue to change.

"I've heard different stories that it won't be going into Crewe, there's going to be a station sort of outside and then it's not going to be high speed trains from there on, and then it's going to it is [sic] Manchester Airport and then it might be going to Leeds." (Phase 2b, Beyond Zone, retired couple, no dependent children)

3.2.3 Interviewees also expressed (often misguided) awareness and uncertainty regarding other factors, including frequency of trains and hours of operation; journey time savings; freight usage; use of cuttings/embankments/stilts/tunnels; and cost of the scheme. This confusion often led to them feeling uninformed about the concept of HS2.

3.3 Perceptions of HS2

3.3.1 Most interviewees had a negative perception of HS2. It was often perceived that only small time savings would be made through the use of HS2 either for themselves or for other travellers. Many suggested that this was because the closest HS2 station to them was a drive or additional train journey away, negating proposed time savings. Additionally, a few interviewees felt that justifying HS2 on time saved was negated by people working during train journeys and therefore making use of the journey time.

"There's absolutely no benefit to us because we've no local station here, [HS2] is not gonna stop near us so all it's doing is causing disruption and bringing no benefit to the local community." (Phase 2b, Beyond Zone, retired couple, no dependent children)

3.3.2 Some interviewees bemoaned the use of taxpayers' money and a few noted the potential inflation of the budget due to unforeseen construction works. Many interviewees also felt that the budget for the scheme would be better spent elsewhere; suggestions included improving local rail services (i.e. increasing capacity), funding the NHS, improving

broadband coverage across the UK and addressing traffic flow on motorways. Interviewees from Phase 2a were more likely to voice concerns over the cost of the scheme, as were those living in the Beyond Zone, and retired interviewees.

3.3.3 Many interviewees considered there to be inadequate justification for the scheme, believing that⁴:

- There will be little demand for the scheme, due to limited connectivity, especially at a local level. A few interviewees suggested that HS2 was London-centric;
- Sufficient infrastructure, in the form of pre-existing railways and road networks, would be more time efficient than using HS2;
- Modern telecommunication technology, such as videoconferencing, allows for remote working, therefore negating the need to travel cross-country for work commitments or family; and
- The country is not big enough to warrant a high-speed North-South connection.

“Half of that money, even a quarter of that money, could have been spent on the current system...extra carriages, longer platforms, these sort of things could solve some of the issues.” (Phase 2b, Beyond Zone, retired couple, no dependent children)

3.3.4 Additionally, many interviewees felt that HS2 Ltd failed to understand the impact of the scheme on local communities, including⁵:

- Loss of village amenities, such as village halls and local cycle/pedestrian routes;
- Changes to the population of the community, such as the increasing number of tenants in the local community, who are perceived not to value the community as much as property owners;
- Accessibility into villages due to the route severing main road arteries;
- Concerns over increases in derelict properties and associated crime; and
- Concerns over the maintenance of properties owned by HS2 Ltd.

3.3.5 Interviewees from Phase 1 of the scheme were the most likely to suggest that HS2 Ltd do not understand the impacts that the project will have on local communities.

“We end up living in a rented area...first of all [the houses are] boarded up for quite a while, which doesn’t look very nice...with alarm systems, everything is covered up...it looks like a bit of a ghetto and then you don’t know who is moving into them.” (Phase 1, RSZ/HOP, working, one person household)

3.3.6 The few interviewees who had a positive perception of HS2 saw it as being an improvement to the country’s rail network; providing more modern, clean rail options; or a way of encouraging housing development, therefore alleviating the country’s housing shortage.

3.4 Perceived impacts of construction

3.4.1 The majority of interviewees felt that there would be negative impacts from the construction of HS2, although there was uncertainty around the level of effect each impact would have. The figure below visually presents the perceived impacts of

⁴ Provided in decreasing order of frequency of occurrence

⁵ Provided in decreasing order of frequency of occurrence

construction raised across all interviews. The size of each word represents the frequency with which the thought or issue arose. Each issue is subsequently discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs.



Figure 2. Impacts of construction

Traffic impacts

3.4.2 Almost all interviewees were concerned over potential changes in traffic flow resulting from construction works, notably:

- Increases in the number of construction vehicles using local roads and motorways, causing delays in their daily commutes, especially as roads are already very busy and local roads are not wide enough for construction vehicles. Additionally, a few interviewees noted that an increase in construction traffic would create wear on roads, increase pollution and reduce safety for pedestrians and cyclists; and
- Changes to road access, causing delays in daily commutes. Additionally a few noted that this could reduce emergency medical services' access and have the potential to cut the village off, with negative effects on access to local schools and businesses.

“They talked about shutting a road that is part of my route to work. That would have been an absolute disaster but that seems to have changed...I’d have to retire, I’d never get to work.” (Phase 2b, Beyond Zone, working, one person household)

Construction noise, dust and dirt

3.4.3 The majority of interviewees also showed concerns over the increased level of noise, dust and dirt/mud resulting from major construction works.

3.4.4 Changes in noise were envisaged from the use of heavy machinery, such as piledrivers, and diggers. Noise was of particular concern to those who identified themselves as being located nearer to the route or near construction depots, especially as it was believed by many that construction would take place both during the night and day. A few interviewees felt that they would not be able to have their windows open or sit in their garden without noise disturbance.

“I suppose noise...I think [construction] will be a mess, I think it’ll be noisy, I think it’ll be muddy...I suppose the time it takes will make a big difference. If it was years it’ll be horrendous...once they start digging and pulling trees down, I think it’s going to be quite traumatic.” (Phase 2b, Beyond Zone, working, one person household)

3.4.5 Amongst those concerned with increases in dust and dirt, there were concerns this would impact⁶:

- Their personal health;
- Air quality;
- Their household chores, such as hanging out the washing;
- The cleanliness of their property, including cars; and
- The wildlife, with the suggestion that plants will die, birds (such as owls and kestrels) will move away from the area, and farm animals will be affected.

Household and community impacts

3.4.6 Many interviewees showed concern over the impact of construction on their household and community. Concerns included:

- That the construction of HS2 would significantly decrease their property value and ability to sell the property. A few interviewees suggested that this creates financial uncertainty in their own and their children’s future. Retired interviewees were particularly concerned about this issue; and
- Concerns over changes in their community due to people moving away from the area, whether that be through compulsory purchase, a property assistance scheme or a private sale.

“This house is our pension, so [construction] is going to impact on our old age... our son is autistic, this [house] is his security. If we lose a huge quantity of value on this, this is going to be life-changing and that makes me sick to the stomach that [HS2 Ltd are] so blasé.” (Phase 2b, Beyond Zone, working couple, dependent children)

Environmental impacts

3.4.7 The land take required for the construction of HS2 raised environmental concerns for many interviewees, specifically:

- Concerns over the loss of trees where the route cuts through woodland. One interviewee suggested that this would also impact flora and fauna as trees with vast ground cover provide a protective barrier for ground plants; and
- Concerns over disruptions to wildlife, such as changes to the habitats of badgers, birds, deer and newts, including rare and protected species. One interviewee valued the wildlife surveys being conducted by HS2 Ltd but noted that the upheaval of wildlife was still concerning. Another interviewee felt that HS2 Ltd should work closely with environmental groups during the construction of the route to better understand the impact of the route on such wildlife.

⁶ Provided in decreasing order of frequency of occurrence

3.4.8 A few interviewees felt that any mitigations or safeguards taken by HS2 Ltd for protection of the environment during construction of the route will never make up for the loss of green space envisaged and will also be overlooked by building contractors.

3.4.9 No references were made to any mitigation measures which HS2 Ltd are due to put in place.

Other construction impacts

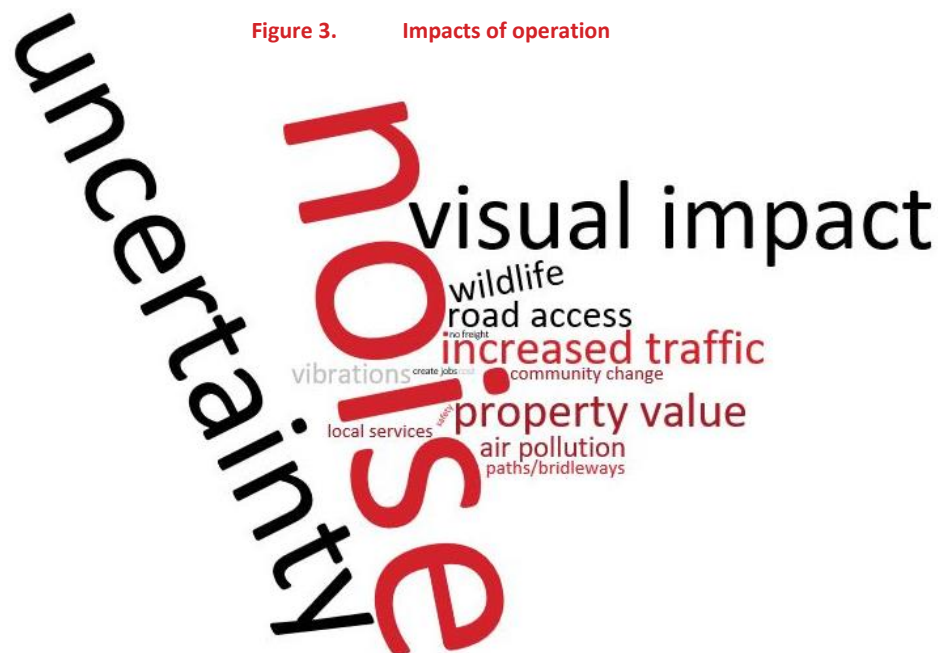
3.4.10 Construction impacts cited less frequently included⁷:

- Visual impact, including light pollution, and the piling of excavated earth;
- Business impacts, including the loss of operational farmland, and the compulsory purchase of businesses resulting in a loss of business and jobs in the local area. The latter was reported as a key issue by one interviewee;
- Leisure impacts, with concerns over a loss of access to green space used for dog walking, cycling and running;
- Concerns over subsidence, including construction over unmapped mineshafts or land predominantly made up of sand; and
- Increases in the number of construction workers in the local area. A few interviewees believed that these workers would not be local and could create trouble in local towns during their free time. On the other hand, one interviewee felt construction workers would be local, therefore creating jobs in the local area.

3.5 Perceived impacts of operation

3.5.1 Whilst there was more uncertainty over the operational impacts of HS2 than the construction impacts, many interviewees felt that the impacts of operation would be less than those of construction. However, the majority still envisaged many negative impacts from the operation of HS2.

3.5.2 The figure below visually presents the perceived impacts of operation raised across all interviews. The size of each word represents the frequency with which the thought or issue arose. All impacts are outlined in more detail in the following paragraphs.



⁷ Provided in decreasing order of frequency of occurrence

Uncertainty of operational impacts

3.5.3 As with construction, interviewees expressed concern over the uncertainty of operation impacts, noting that⁸:

- There is uncertainty over the level of noise that trains will make, especially as train designs have not been finalised;
- There is uncertainty surrounding the level of demand for the scheme and the associated frequency of trains and noise impact;
- Any negative health impacts of the scheme are not evident; and
- The proposed HS2 route in their area is uncertain.

“I think the disruption will be building it. The years up to it opening in 2026. I think that’s the biggest thing for homeowners and the community. Once [the route] is open I don’t think the disruption is gonna be as bad and people will just get used to it.” (Phase 1, Beyond Zone, working couple, dependent children)

Operational noise

3.5.4 The majority of interviewees envisaged noise disturbance from the operation of the train line, with a few also noting the potential for noise from maintenance depots, especially at night. Disturbance was expected in sleep and relaxation periods. Interviewees residing on Phase 2b of the route were the most likely to express concerns over the potential noise of the trains; as were those who reside in the RSZ/HOP zones and interviewees who were currently working. Reasons for this concern included⁹:

- Trains will be running at high frequency;
- The route will be carrying freight, especially at night;
- The track will be elevated, extending the noise impact;
- The train will have similar operation noise to the French high-speed rail, which is perceived to be noisy; and
- The route will be passing on a curve, therefore slowing the train down, and creating a long-lasting noise impact.

“You chose to move here because it’s quiet...you could say your sleep’s going to be affected if they’re doing it [trains running] all the time.” (Phase 2a, RSZ/HOP, not working, no dependent children)

3.5.5 A few interviewees, including those concerned over noise, suggested that operational noise may not be as impactful as originally envisaged, because¹⁰:

- The noise will become familiar over time;
- The trains will be passing at high-speed and therefore the noise will not be long-lasting;
- They are located too far away from the line to be impacted by any noise; and
- There may be a change in the acuteness of their hearing by the time the scheme is in operation, meaning they will not be able to hear the operational noise.

⁸ Provided in decreasing order of frequency of occurrence

⁹ Provided in decreasing order of frequency of occurrence

¹⁰ Provided in decreasing order of frequency of occurrence

3.5.6 A few interviewees made reference to the use of sound booths at local HS2 Ltd meetings, noting that the proposed train operation sound levels were either worse or better than they were expecting.

3.5.7 A few elderly interviewees did not expect to experience noise impacts from the operation of HS2 as they anticipated passing away before the scheme’s completion.

Visual impact

3.5.8 Many interviewees anticipated visual impacts resulting from the operation of HS2, with interviewees on Phase 2 of the route most likely to cite this as being a potential issue. Specific concerns surrounded the aesthetic impact arising from the use of raised embankments, gantries and wires, and one interviewee referred to the visual impact of maintenance depots. Visual impacts were of particular concern to those in locations where they would be particularly noticeable, for instance, in small villages and properties surrounded by open, green space.

“Who wants to look at a 30ft railway outside your front window when you’ve got beautiful fields and what have you.” (Phase 2b, RSZ/HOP, working/not working couple, no dependent children)

3.5.9 A few interviewees envisaged minimal visual impacts from the operation of HS2, suggesting that they expect it to be futuristic, modern and clean in design. One interviewee anticipated that the design would mimic that of Japan’s ‘bullet train’ (Shinkansen).

Household and community impact

3.5.10 Many interviewees expected some form of impact on their property and the surrounding community as a result of HS2 operation. Specific concerns raised included¹¹:

- Expected decreases in property value, with many interviewees feeling concern for their own and their children’s future financial stability;
- Changes in the local population, with a few interviewees noting that people will move away from the area as a result of HS2;
- Reduced access within villages, with a few interviewees stating that the route bisects main road arteries; and
- A concern over the availability of affordable housing in the local area, with one interviewee believing that new, affordable developments will not be built locally as people will not want to live near HS2.

“[Property] is what you leave your children, and that worries me...they can’t afford to buy...will we be able to afford to leave them stuff” (Phase 2b, RSZ/HOP, working couple, dependent children)

“We’ll be cut off from the village. This railway actually bisects Hopton village into two.” (Phase 2a, RSZ/HOP, retired couple, no dependent children)

¹¹ Provided in decreasing order of frequency of occurrence

Other operational impacts

3.5.11 Other negative operational impacts envisaged by fewer interviewees included¹²:

- Local traffic flow impacts, including increased congestion at interchange points and local maintenance depots, and freight not being taken off the road network and onto the railway;
- Pollution, with interviewees showing concerns for potential increases in air pollution levels;
- Disruption to wildlife due to increased noise and concerns over animals crossing the route, including concerns that mitigation measures aimed at aiding animal crossings, such as providing tunnels under the route, will not work;
- Vibrations;
- Changes to local rail services, including concerns that existing local rail services may be cancelled as a result of HS2 providing the route instead;
- Leisure impacts, including that paths and bridleways running parallel to the route will be negatively impacted as people will not want to use them and will not be able to take horses down them, for fear of them spooking;
- High cost to the tax payer, including concerns over the impact of HS2 operation on ongoing taxation;
- Lack of local job creation; and
- Concerns over safety, including the running of the high-speed train around a curve.

¹² Provided in decreasing order of frequency of occurrence

4. INTENTIONS TO STAY OR LEAVE THE AREA

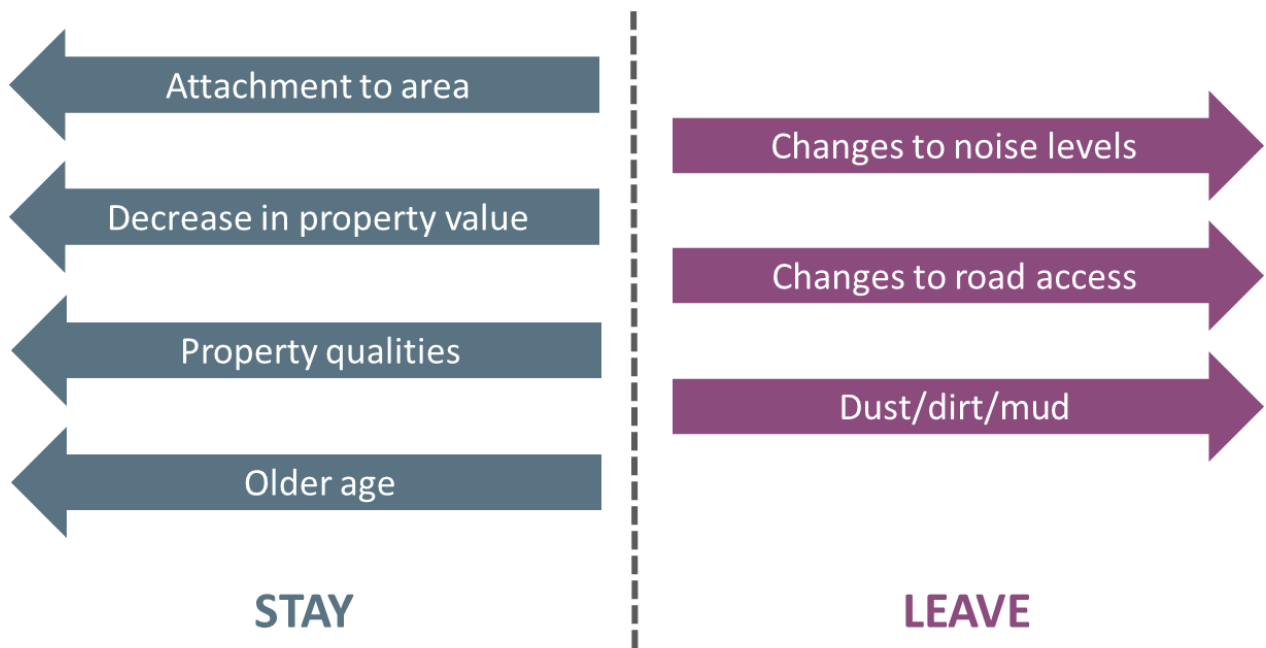
4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 This chapter presents interviewees' decisions on whether to stay or leave the area in which their property resides, detailing the factors which influence their decision and the timeline in which their decision was/will be made.
- 4.1.2 Despite interviewees envisaging multiple impacts from the construction and operation of HS2 (as detailed in Chapter 3, Awareness, Perceptions and Perceived Impact of HS2), not all interviewees' decisions regarding whether to stay in or leave the area are influenced by these impacts. A few interviewees noted that impacts would have to be extremely drastic to make them want to leave their property.
- 4.1.3 High levels of uncertainty surrounding the impacts of HS2 led to interviewees often speaking of their intention to stay or leave the area in hypothetical terms. Additionally, whilst interviewees placed themselves in 'stay', 'leave' or 'undecided' categories at the time of the interview, these categories might be subject to change in the future as they only reflect their intention at a given point in time.
- 4.1.4 Those impacts that did have an influence on interviewees' decisions to either stay in the area ('Stay factors') or leave the area ('Leave factors') are discussed in more detail below.

4.2 Intentions to stay in or leave the area

- 4.2.1 Around half of the interviewees intended or believed they were likely to stay in the area in which their property resides. Of these, a few suggested that they would leave their current property and move within the area, to a location further away from the route.
- 4.2.2 The remaining interviewees were equally split between:
- Those who were undecided on whether to leave the area or not, noting that there are too many unknowns to make a decision on whether to move because of HS2;
 - Those who intended or believed they were likely to leave the area because of HS2; and
 - Those who intended or believed they were likely to leave the area because of factors unrelated to HS2.
- 4.2.3 The following diagram summarises the key stay and leave drivers reported by interviewees. Each factor is subsequently expanded on in more detail.

Figure 4. Reported Key Stay and Leave Drivers



4.3 Stay factors

Attachment to the local area

4.3.1 Just over half of interviewees felt that their attachment to the local area is an influencing factor in their decision to stay in the area and their property. Attachment was created through¹³:

- Having family and friends close-by;
- Familiarity with their home and the local area;
- Living in the area for a long time and bringing up their family there; and
- Feeling a sense of community (as discussed in Chapter 2: A Sense of Community).

“I had intended to stay...I have four children...they visit a lot, I've got grandchildren too so definitely now, with the new generation, there was an attraction with staying in what was their childhood home and it's got a big garden etc, etc” (Phase 1, Beyond Zone, retired, one person household)

Property qualities

4.3.2 Many interviewees suggested that specific qualities belonging to their property had or would encourage them to stay in their property. These qualities, each cited a few times or less, included¹⁴:

- The property being equipped or appropriate for their disability requirements, such as living in a bungalow due to mobility issues;
- The property having a garden or land, with a few noting that they needed land to keep horses or sheep;
- The property having a garage or multiple garages;
- The property having a certain number of bedrooms; and

¹³ Provided in decreasing order of frequency of occurrence

¹⁴ Provided in decreasing order of frequency of occurrence

- The property not being overflowed by flights to/from Heathrow.

“I’ve always had strong bonds to this particular house and my garden. It would take a lot to make me move... it’s my ideal home... I’ve got arthritis as well so a bungalow is quite an important factor.” (Phase 2b, Beyond Zone, working, one person household)

Age

4.3.3 Many of the elderly interviewees felt their age meant that they had chosen, or felt compelled, to stay in their property. Specifically, a few elderly interviewees suggested:

- They would likely have passed away before the operation of HS2, meaning there was no need for them to leave the area in the meantime; or
- They were ‘too old to move’ and therefore had to stay. A few elderly interviewees connoted moving with fears of isolation, suggesting that moving away from an area with good access to local amenities, public transport and friends and family to help them, would cause them to become isolated, especially if they later lost the ability to drive.

“We are intending to stay, because we’re too old to move...we need public transport, we cannot move to the idyllic house in the Cotswolds, because as soon as we can’t drive, we’re immobile.” (Phase 1, Beyond Zone, retired, no dependent children)

Impact of HS2 on property value

4.3.4 Some interviewees indicated that the impact of HS2 on their property value had influenced or could influence a decision to stay. They believed they would not be able to sell their property at all or at a fair market price; they would not be able to afford to move; and/or they would not be able to buy a property with similar qualities.

4.3.5 Of these interviewees, a few reported feeling trapped, indicating that they would prefer to leave the property/area if they felt they had a choice or were seriously considered by estate agents.

“We have no option [but to stay] really, because we’re outside any of the support zones. Yet we realise that inevitably, the property would not be as saleable as it would’ve been without the HS2 plans.” (Phase 2a, Beyond Zone, retired couple, no dependent children)

Other stay factors

4.3.6 Other stay factors noted by a fewer interviewees included¹⁵:

- The locality of their employment, with interviewees noting the ease of their commute to work;
- The upheaval of moving and uncertainty of where they would move to, with interviewees making reference to the stresses related with moving home, the hassle of packing a lifetime of possessions, and the difficulty in finding an alternative property;

¹⁵ Provided in decreasing order of frequency of occurrence

- Good transport links locally, with interviewees noting the access they have to public transport and motorways;
- Good access to local amenities, with interviewees highlighting access to local hospitals, doctors, shops and leisure facilities, such as cinemas, paths and bridleways;
- Investment in their property, with interviewees suggesting that they were intending to stay in their property as they had spent a lot of money on it, whether that be through renovation or through the payment of their mortgage. A few interviewees suggested that they would lose some of this investment if they were to sell their property, especially due to the impact of blight;
- Having (grand)children in local schools or having access to highly rated schools for children who are yet to start their education;
- Being in close proximity to open space, wildlife and nature;
- The amount of compensation received from HS2, with one interviewee suggesting that if the compensation received allowed them to purchase double-glazing they would be more likely to stay in their property; and
- The proficiency of their local council.

4.4 Leave factors related to HS2

Changes in noise generated by construction and operation

- 4.4.1 Just over half of all interviewees felt that changes in noise as a result of HS2 could or would influence them to leave the area. Of these, a few made particular reference to the potential increases in noise resulting from construction of the route and a few made particular reference to increases in noise resulting from operation of the train. Additionally, a few interviewees felt that HS2-related noise would encourage them to leave more if it was experienced in combination with other local noise sources, such as motorways, airports, landfill sites and Crossrail construction works. Interviewees residing on Phase 2b of the route were most likely to make reference to the noise of HS2 as being a potential leave factor, as were interviewees who reside in the RSZ/HOP zones.

“During construction, if it was getting unbearable for going anywhere then I might think about moving, if there’s lorries parked up everywhere, and there’s noise and builders everywhere.” (Phase 2b, Beyond Zone, working couple, dependent children)

Construction impacts: road access and dirt/dust

- 4.4.2 Beyond noise, many interviewees identified other construction impacts as factors which would encourage them to leave the area. For instance, a few interviewees raised construction in general as a factor which was influencing or would influence them to leave and many raised factors such as changes to roads and access, and increases in dirt and dust. Interviewees living in the RSZ/HOP zones were more likely to report this as being a potential leave factor than those living in the Beyond Zone.
- 4.4.3 A few interviewees noted that these factors would have a larger impact over a longer construction period, or as they became more drastic, especially in relation to concerns over pollution and associated health impacts (as discussed in Chapter 3: Awareness, Perceptions and Perceived Impact of HS2).

“I know personally, I will have to move from here before [the construction] starts because I have respiratory problems, asthma and allergy problems.” (Phase 1, Beyond Zone, retired, one person household)

4.4.4 HS2 related leave factors noted by fewer interviewees included¹⁶:

- Wildlife and environmental impacts, with interviewees signifying that they would leave the area if there was a blight to the countryside as a result of HS2;
- Community impacts, with interviewees stating that they would leave the area if HS2 changed the nature of the local village/town, with references made to changes in the community spirit as well as neighbours;
- An understanding of the finalised route and location of depots, with interviewees suggesting that they would leave their property if the finalised HS2 route and depots were close(r) to their property than currently envisaged;
- Visual impacts, with interviewees believing that they would leave their property if HS2 could be seen from it, or if HS2 made the area look industrial;
- Property value impacts, with interviewees stating that they would choose to leave the area before the depreciation of their property value, in order to receive a good price;
- The amount of compensation received, with interviewees believing that the receipt of generous HS2 Ltd compensation would aid them in moving; and
- Business impacts, with one interviewee suggesting that they would leave their property if HS2 had an impact on their business as a mobile farmer.

4.5 Leave factors unrelated to HS2

4.5.1 Leave factors unrelated to HS2 were reported less than leave factors related to HS2. Despite this, many interviewees felt they would be likely to leave the area due to¹⁷:

- Growing age and deteriorating health, with middle aged and more elderly interviewees noting the influence of:
 - Social isolation as they grow older;
 - Ability, both in maintaining their home and moving around it i.e. mobility issues creating the need for a bungalow or house with smaller/no garden; and
 - Dust and dirt on respiratory issues.
- A need to downsize, with interviewees highlighting the influence of:
 - Number of occupants, with interviewees suggesting a need to move now that fewer people live in the property (i.e. fewer children or parents needing care).

“If I had a major health problem then I might have to consider moving to get care.” (Phase 1, RSZ/HOP, retired, one person household)

¹⁶ Provided in decreasing order of frequency of occurrence

¹⁷ Provided in decreasing order of frequency of occurrence

“There’s only two of us here now and we’ve got five bedrooms. We don’t really need all that now.” (Phase 2b, Beyond Zone, retired couple, no dependent children)

4.5.2 Additionally, fewer interviewees noted that they would be likely to leave the area due to¹⁸:

- Changes in family circumstance, for instance:
 - Moving closer to relatives, with a few interviewees noting that they might leave their property to be closer to relatives who warrant care or who could provide care for them; or
 - The passing of a parent they care for, with one interviewee suggesting that this might encourage them to leave, as they would no longer have family ties or caring responsibilities in the area.
- Poor local transport links, with interviewees referencing the provision of poor public transport, notably bus services, which would encourage them to leave the area once they were unable to drive, and existing high levels of congestion on local road networks which they envisaged would only get worse;
- New housing development impacts, with interviewees suggesting that new housing development industrialises the area and results in increases in local traffic and reduced access to amenities due to increases in population. Interviewees felt that they would leave the area if it became industrialised or resources became stretched;
- Poor local amenities such as doctors and shops; and
- Job relocation, with one interviewee suggesting that they would leave the area if the locality of their job changed.

4.6 Characteristics of 'stay', 'leave' and 'undecided' interviewees

4.6.1 The following table outlines differences between interviewees who indicated they had decided to stay, leave or remained undecided. These factors relate to the general awareness and attitudes more prevalent in the three different groups, and were not specifically reported by interviewees as stay/leave drivers. However, they may be contributors to their decisions.

Figure 5. Characteristics of 'Stay', 'Leave' and 'Undecided' Interviewees

	'STAY'	'UNDECIDED'	'LEAVE'
A sense of community existing within their local area	More likely to report	Less likely to report	Less likely to report
Awareness of the HS2 route and key interchange points	More likely to report	Less likely to report	Less likely to report

¹⁸ Provided in decreasing order of frequency of occurrence

Fewer concerns regarding the potential impacts of construction	More likely to report	Less likely to report	Less likely to report
Perceived ability to tolerate any noise generated by HS2 operation	More likely to report	Less likely to report	Less likely to report
Receiving information on property assistance schemes through friends, neighbours or hearsay	Less likely to report	More likely to report	Less likely to report
Concerns with potential dust, dirt or spoil from construction	Less likely to report	More likely to report	Less likely to report
Uncertainty of where else they could live if they were to leave their property	Less likely to report	More likely to report	Less likely to report
Concerns with the upheaval and disruption that moving to a new house would bring	Less likely to report	More likely to report	Less likely to report
Dissatisfaction with the levels of compensation offered by HS2 Ltd	Less likely to report	Less likely to report	More likely to report
Concerns relating to the potential impacts of HS2 on their property value	Less likely to report	Less likely to report	More likely to report
Dissatisfaction with the information provided by HS2 Ltd regarding either the project in general or property assistance schemes	Less likely to report	Less likely to report	More likely to report
A desire for clearer information on the construction timescales for their local area	Less likely to report	Less likely to report	More likely to report

4.6.2 Whilst uncertainty around the impacts of construction and operation was not reported as an explicit leave factor by interviewees, it was consistently reported as a concern by those that indicated their intention was to stay or to leave and by those who remained undecided, and is therefore likely to be an additional contributor.

4.7 Decision timeline

4.7.1 Some interviewees were able to identify when their decision to stay in the area or leave the area had been made or would be finalised.

4.7.2 Of these, a few or less suggested that they had made a decision:

- After the announcement of the scheme; or
- After information on the route location was announced.

4.7.3 Furthermore, a few or less suggested that they would make their decision when¹⁹:

- They retire;
- Their health deteriorates and they have to move in order to receive care;
- They see the impacts of Phase 1 construction and operation; and/or
- They receive finalised information from HS2 Ltd, specifically information on local construction and the route.

4.7.4 A few interviewees also suggested that they would want to move specifically before construction begins, or before operation begins, due to the perceived impacts of both, particularly in relation to anticipated changes in property values.

“We made the decision a while ago...we decided we don’t want to live here when [HS2] start the construction of the railway, and we don’t particularly want to stay round the area near where’s there going to be railway and work.” (Phase 2a, RSZ/HOP, retired couple, no dependent children)

“We don’t want to be here when they dig the first hole.” (Phase 2b, RSZ/HOP, working/not working couple, no dependent children)

¹⁹ Provided in decreasing order of frequency of occurrence

5. PROPERTY ASSISTANCE SCHEMES

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This chapter outlines interviewees' awareness of property assistance schemes; their understanding of their own eligibility; their views on the schemes, whether they were considering applying for assistance and the factors behind their decisions.

5.2 Awareness of property assistance schemes

5.2.1 There were mixed levels of awareness of the various property assistance schemes offered by HS2 Ltd. The majority of interviewees residing in the RSZ referred to the area by its official name, and knew that HS2 Ltd offered homeowners in the RSZ either a cash payment or voluntary purchase of their property at unblighted market value.

5.2.2 However, few interviewees living in the HOP or Beyond Zones knew of the schemes by their official names. Instead, many interviewees made reference to colours, zones, bands or monetary values (such as £15,000 or £7,500). The majority of these interviewees were aware that levels of compensation were based on the distance of their property in relation to the HS2 centre line.

"There were two zones of how far you were away. If you was in any of the two zones the compensation would be for the devalue of your house." (Phase 2b, RSZ/HOP, working couple, no dependent children)

5.2.3 Whilst very few interviewees living in the HOP or Beyond Zones were aware of schemes by name, those who were aware were well informed on the specific details that determine eligibility, as well as the processes that are followed.

5.2.4 There were no reported differences in level of awareness for the HOP scheme between interviewees residing along different phases of the HS2 route. However, those living in the RSZ/HOP zones were slightly more likely to be aware of HOP and other schemes than those residing in the Beyond Zone.

5.2.5 Many interviewees were aware that HS2 Ltd have acquired a number of properties through compulsory purchase; whilst a couple of interviewees were aware of applications for compensation through Statutory Blight notices.

5.2.6 Several interviewees were unaware of any schemes offered by HS2 Ltd; all but one of these households fell in the Beyond Zone with one falling in the HOP zones. A few commented that they were not interested in any of the schemes, as they would be unlikely to benefit from them, given that they live further away from the proposed track lines.

"I don't think we would be [eligible for any property schemes], no. We are too far away from [the HS2 route]...I don't even know what they [property assistance schemes] are and what they do. I've not got a clue what's the point in them?" (Phase 2b, Beyond Zone, working couple, dependent children)

5.3 Perceived eligibility

5.3.1 The majority of interviewees living in the RSZ knew that they were eligible for property assistance, as they were aware of how far their property was from the proposed route. Of those who made reference to the cash payment, the majority knew that this was worth either 10% of the unblighted property value, or a minimum payment of £30,000 (whichever is the greater). However, one interviewee from the RSZ was unsure as to whether they were eligible for the RSZ scheme, because the exact route has been subject to change.

5.3.2 Many interviewees living in the HOP or Beyond Zones were not sure if they were eligible for any property assistance schemes offered by HS2 Ltd. Whilst many of these knew that their eligibility for compensation related to their distance from the proposed route, a few were unsure whether they would meet specific eligibility criteria for the NTS scheme, such as HS2 Ltd's 'other factors'.

"I know that if you can make out a strong case for having to leave then you can ask HS2 to buy your property, but does that only apply within 300m of the track?" (Phase 1, Beyond Zone, retired couple, no dependent children)

5.3.3 Whilst several interviewees in the HOP zones demonstrated unprompted awareness that they were eligible for some form of financial compensation, many of these were not sure of the exact amount, or the specific compensation band which applied to them. Furthermore, a few interviewees on the boundary of the HOP and Beyond Zones were unsure as to whether they qualified for compensation at all.

"It's quite difficult to know exactly where I was [from the track]... So I am aware of what the compensation is, but I'm not sure which applies to me." (Phase 2b, RSZ/HOP, retired, one person household)

"I think we're right on the edge of the compensation... My house is right on the line... It wasn't clear whether I was eligible." (Phase 2b, Beyond Zone, retired/not working couple, no dependent children)

5.3.4 For a few interviewees, their confusion over their eligibility for compensation came through their difficulty in interpreting maps and other materials produced by HS2 Ltd. These sources of information are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

5.3.5 A few interviewees thought that they should be contacted automatically by HS2 Ltd to inform them if they were eligible for compensation or not²⁰, rather than the onus being placed on them to find out this information themselves.

"I take on board that as individuals we should have looked into [compensation], but my thoughts were if [the route] was so close we would have been contacted." (Phase 2b, Beyond Zone, working couple, dependent children)

²⁰ Whilst HS2 Ltd contact residents eligible for compensation, they do not inform residents who do not fall with the RSZ or HOP bands.

5.4 Views on property assistance schemes and application intentions

Interviewees living in the Rural Support Zone (RSZ)

Motivations for choosing the Cash Offer or Voluntary Purchase

5.4.1 Ten households interviewed for the study lived within the RSZ, meaning their property is located approximately 60-120m from the HS2 route. All but one of these households were aware of their options, to either take a Cash Offer of 10% of the property's un-blighted market value²¹, or have HS2 Ltd purchase their property at the un-blighted market value. All but one of the interviewees who were aware of the options offered by the RSZ property assistance scheme indicated they were likely to make use of one of them.

5.4.2 Several interviewees suggested that they would be more likely to apply for Voluntary Purchase than the Cash Offer. A range of reasons were provided²²:

- Most were hoping to leave the area because of:
 - The anticipated noise and disruption generated by construction;
 - The anticipated noise generated by the operation of HS2;
 - An increasing number of vacant properties, resulting in fears over personal safety;
 - Loss of familiar neighbours, resulting in a reduced sense of community.
- One commented that the Cash Offer was too low to be a viable alternative to Voluntary Purchase; and
- One did not think they would be able to sell their house in the future due to the proximity of HS2, so saw Voluntary Purchase as their only opportunity to leave the area.

“Even though there is that Cash Offer available, it would still mean that you wouldn't actually be able to actually sell the house afterwards, in my opinion.” (Phase 2b, RSZ/HOP, working, dependent children)

5.4.3 A few interviewees residing in the RSZ suggested that they were more likely to apply for the Cash Offer than Voluntary Purchase, as they wanted to continue living in their current property. Of these:

- One had a mobility impairment, and the cash would allow them to make modifications to their home to improve their mobility. This in turn would make the property more comfortable for them to live in; and
- One wanted to remain in their property due to the sense of community in the local area, and their relationship with neighbours.

5.4.4 A few interviewees were currently undecided as to whether they would be applying for the Cash Offer or Voluntary Purchase. Of these:

- Two households did not want to rush into a decision, and wanted to keep their options open:
 - One was planning to wait and see how disruptive the construction and operation of HS2 would be before making a final decision; and

²¹ There is a minimum payment of £30,000 and a maximum payment of £100,000.

²² Provided in decreasing order of frequency of occurrence

- One felt it would be difficult to leave their property if they were to accept the Cash Offer but change their mind at a later date; as this may require them to go down the Need to Sell route.
- One household had originally submitted an application for the Cash Offer, but the delay in receiving a response from HS2 Ltd (five weeks) had created a sense of uncertainty for them. This uncertainty had led the interviewees to question whether they should consider leaving the area instead of continuing to pursue the Cash Offer.

“We don’t know how bad the construction phase will be yet, or the operational phase, so we’ll wait and see... You’ve got to keep your options open really.” (Phase 1, RSZ/HOP, working couple, no dependent children)

5.4.5 One interviewee was leaving the area for health reasons, but was not applying for Voluntary Purchase or Cash Offer. Instead, they were selling their property through the regular market, as they felt this would enable them to leave the area much faster than if they sold through HS2 Ltd or applied for payment, as the application processes were perceived to be convoluted.

Interviewees’ views on the RSZ

5.4.6 Interviewees provided a wide range of comments regarding what they thought of RSZ schemes in general, and suggestions for how they thought the schemes could be improved. Most interviewees felt the level of compensation offered by HS2 Ltd in the Cash Offer is too low, considering the extent to which property prices in the area could decrease. Several provided alternative suggestions for what they felt would be a more appropriate offer, with one recommending a minimum payment of £50,000, and another suggesting that the Cash Offer should be one-third of the un-blighted property value. Furthermore, one interviewee felt that HS2 Ltd’s Cash Offer was deliberately low, to incentivise interviewees to leave their properties, as a strategy to remove those who are opposed to HS2 from the area.

“I thought it was 30%, but if [10%] is what it is, I mean that’s hopeless, that’s a pathetic offer in my view, because [HS2] will devalue the house far more than that, I’m certain.” (Phase 2b, RSZ/HOP, working, no dependent children)

5.4.7 One interviewee was confused by how much compensation they would be entitled to if they applied for the Cash Offer. They did not understand the principle of being paid 10% of their un-blighted property value, leading them to believe that the £30,000 minimum payment is all they would be able to claim from HS2 Ltd if they chose to apply for the Cash Offer. As their house had been valued by an independent estate agent at £510,000, they thought that HS2 Ltd were significantly under-valuing their house.

5.4.8 The notion that interviewees in the RSZ should be entitled to the same level of support as those in the Safeguarded Zone was shared by many interviewees. Specifically, interviewees wanted greater support with moving costs, whereby HS2 Ltd would cover the costs of legal fees, and/or stamp duty. This sentiment was particularly pertinent amongst interviewees whose properties fell just outside the Safeguarded Zone.

“It’s tough luck, I’ve got to pay for all that, it feels very unfair. I’m going to end up seriously out of pocket from this, I’m sure of it... I’m at a financial disadvantage for something I’ve got no control over.” (Phase 2b, RSZ/HOP, working, no dependent children)

- 5.4.9 Several interviewees commented that the application processes for both the Cash Offer and Voluntary Purchase were arduous and lengthy, making house moves more difficult and uncertain. In most instances, this perception came from what interviewees had been told by their neighbours, who had been delayed for a number of months when they were trying to move out of their property.

“We got an application form... We filled it in, and we sent it off. We sent it off with all that information. I sent all sorts in to prove we’ve got the house, all that sort of thing. Then they sent it all back, and sent us another application form to fill in!” (Phase 2b, RSZ/HOP, working couple, no dependent children)

- 5.4.10 A few interviewees commented that the boundaries for the RSZ should be revised. One interviewee suggested that the Safeguarded Zone should be extended to include properties up to 100 metres from the centre line of the track; whilst another argued that 120 metres is too small a distance for the RSZ to end, as property values will be affected beyond this boundary. Furthermore, a couple of interviewees proposed that a graded system needs to be introduced, with properties that fall close to the boundary between the RSZ and Safeguarded Zones receiving an enhanced level of support compared to the regular RSZ scheme, such as having their moving costs paid. One interviewee suggested that residents living in HOP zones currently get a better deal than those living in the RSZ, as those within the HOP bands are entitled to compensation despite facing less disruption during construction and operation.

“I think this side of the road they could have gone half way, say ‘right, we’ll pay all your moving costs for you, or we’ll pay you 10% and you pay your own moving costs’... I think it’s a little bit unfair that they’ve had the whole thing opposite, but just this side of the road we’re getting none of it... A graded system would be more fair.” (Phase 1, RSZ/HOP, retired couple, no dependent children)

- 5.4.11 A few interviewees suggested they would have difficulty finding a property of similar size and quality to the one they currently own. These interviewees either resided within recently-built housing, considered that their current neighbourhood offered the best value for money in their local area, or had made significant investment in improving their property over a number of years. As such, they believed that if they were to move out of their current property, they would be forced to either downsize, or spend extra money on finding an equivalent property, leaving them out of pocket.

- 5.4.12 A few interviewees suggested that due to their old age, they would have difficulty in getting a mortgage if they decided to leave their property, thus resulting in them feeling trapped in the property, or having to significantly downsize in order to move.

- 5.4.13 A couple of interviewees drew attention to technicalities that currently exist within the RSZ scheme, which they felt unintentionally disqualify residents from applying for the Cash Offer, or incentivise them to leave the area:

- One interviewee suggested that many households in their neighbourhood have signed their property over to their children. As such, they are unentitled to compensation due to the eligibility criteria. They propose that these residents should still be entitled to claim for the Cash Offer, as they had been living in the properties well in advance of when HS2 was announced; and
- One couple commented that the current process of not being able to apply for Voluntary Purchase once you have accepted a Cash Offer from HS2 Ltd means that some neighbours in their area decided to sell their properties when they would actually have preferred to stay, either long-term or until they could fully understand the impacts of construction and/or operation. Instead, these residents decided that waiting was too high risk, and therefore took Voluntary Purchase.

Views on having the option of Voluntary Purchase after accepting a Cash Offer

5.4.14 When prompted on the currently unavailable option of taking the Cash Offer and still being eligible for Voluntary Purchase (with the Cash Offer deducted off the purchase price) several interviewees were not interested by the option of being able to accept the Cash Offer and still be eligible for Voluntary Purchase at a later date. Of these interviewees:

- A few were adamant they were leaving, so had no interest in the Cash Offer. Of these, one interviewee was leaving due to health difficulties, so just wanted to leave their property as quickly as possible, and one described the Cash Offer as an insult, with no value being adequate;
- One suggested that if the value of the Cash Offer would be taken off the property purchase value, the exercise would be futile, as households would still be receiving the same amount of compensation overall; and
- One was not interested as they had no intentions of leaving the area, so they were taking the Cash Offer only.

5.4.15 A few interviewees showed interest in having the option available:

- For one household, having an ongoing option of Voluntary Purchase would make them more likely to accept the Cash Offer, with the reassurance that if they changed their mind, they could still sell their property at a later date. They indicated that this may result in them staying in the area in the longer term; and
- One interviewee suggested that having the option of cash now, Voluntary Purchase later means interviewees can take time to make a more informed decision on whether they really want to leave the area. For instance, they might consider whether any other areas have similar amenities or conveniences (e.g. the ability to commute into towns). They did however state that they would want the sale of the property to be guaranteed if such a scheme was introduced.

“That would have been nice, if that would’ve been have your 10% and if you stay, well and good, but if at some point you think, actually I don’t really want all this, obviously you lose the 10%, you know, that goes off the price. That’s fine, because that’s what you would expect, but it would be nice for them [HS2] just to say ‘yes, we’ll have it [the property], because we’ve made it difficult for you to stay there’. That part of the compensation scheme seems a bit unfair. This may cause us to sell, when we may not have done. If at some point, we think, actually is it going to be worth staying, and perhaps we just better get out. Whereas if we knew we could go at any point, then you know, we might end up staying. That just seems like a little bit of a technicality that could be made easier.” (Phase 1, RSZ/HOP, retired couple, no dependent children)

- 5.4.16 One couple were divided in their opinions towards this offering. One felt that no Cash Offer would sway their decision to solely opt for Voluntary Purchase, whilst the other felt they might consider it as an option, but only if the Cash Offer was over 20% of the un-blighted value of their property, and preferably nearer 50%. They considered that taking the Cash Offer first would still be a high risk strategy, as they were concerned by how their property price may be affected once the railway is in operation.

“Cash Offer – I don’t think it’s sufficient... It’s risky, because you don’t know what the value of your house will be when the railway is operational.. It would have to be pretty high I think. More than 20%, I’d be thinking 50%.” (Phase 2a, RSZ/HOP, retired couple, no dependent children)

Interviewees living in the Homeowner Payment (HOP) scheme bands

- 5.4.17 Fourteen households that fell within the HOP bands were interviewed for this study. Most, but not all, of them were aware they were eligible to receive a payment. However, not all were aware that there was an application process to be followed, with a few expecting that any compensation would be provided automatically by HS2 Ltd.
- 5.4.18 Many expressed a number of reservations about the scheme. A few interviewees commented that the HOP bands are arbitrary. Of these, some argued that the zones are subject to change, whilst others were unclear as to how the distance from the HS2 track line was calculated. Furthermore, one interviewee was frustrated that the HOP bands appear to be based on noise impact rather than other factors, such as extent to which an individual’s property value has been decreased by HS2.

“I feel very sorry for the people who are just on the boundaries and particularly with the way this estate is built... the house on the corner doesn’t get anything and I imagine it’ll be equally as affected... some people lose out quite badly.” (Phase 1, RSZ/HOP, working, one person household)

- 5.4.19 Several interviewees commented that the compensation levels for each HOP band are not high enough, considering the potential disruption that local residents will face during both the construction and operation of HS2.

“£22,000 quite frankly is peanuts for what it’s doing to our lives... It’s not a life-changing amount. It wouldn’t buy a decent car. Quite frankly, what they’re doing to us, it’s an insult.” (Phase 2a, RSZ/HOP, retired couple, no dependent children)

- 5.4.20 A few interviewees suggested that solely giving money as compensation is inadequate. They believed that HS2 Ltd should consult more closely with local residents to provide customised support for interviewees. For instance, HS2 Ltd could provide advice on how to effectively soundproof properties, or provide other recommendations on how interviewees should prepare their property to minimise disruption from HS2 operations.
- 5.4.21 A few interviewees did not think the timescales for receiving compensation were clear. They felt that compensation should be provided straight away before construction begins.
- 5.4.22 One interviewee was concerned by how much the HOP scheme will cost the taxpayer.

- 5.4.23 One interviewee was concerned that if compensation is being offered by HS2 Ltd, then they must feel as though there will be significant disruption to local residents' lives during construction and operation.

"[HOP] is if you stay, you get compensation. That's what makes me think there's going to be a noise problem, if you're going to get £7,500 for being that close to the railway line. People won't want to give you money if they think there's no problem to you." (Phase 2b, RSZ/HOP, retired, one person household)

- 5.4.24 A few interviewees had applied for the Homeowner Payment Scheme (HOP) and generally suggested that the process was simple. Of these, one suggested the process would have taken around 2-3 weeks if they had not had work commitments, and one suggested the forms are easy to follow and self-explanatory. One interviewee was very satisfied with the amount of information HS2 Ltd provided them with, making reference to letters sent by HS2 Ltd, roadshows, and discussions with HS2 Ltd representatives. However, they were displeased with how long the process of applying for and receiving compensation took. They understood the reasons why the process has to be rigorous, but they still felt it was too onerous.

"[The application forms] are very explanatory, it's very easy. Once you start reading it, it explained itself, you could follow it and what you needed to do to get the compensation." (Phase 2b, RSZ/HOP, working/retired couple, no dependent children)

Views on the Need to Sell (NTS) scheme

- 5.4.25 A few interviewees commented that the HS2 Ltd compensation bands for the NTS scheme are arbitrary. These comments were based on the perceptions that interviewees living in the Beyond Zone could be impacted to the same extent as those within the HOP bands, but they cannot receive any compensation unless they choose to leave the area. One interviewee suggested that the eligible distances for compensation should be extended, making specific reference to how the French government managed their equivalent of the NTS scheme during the construction of the TGV.

"The way [HS2 are] looking at [compensation] seems to be the noise impact, rather than the impact on property value. If I'm 280m away from HS2 or 320m away, I would argue that the property is going to be devalued by the same amount." (Phase 2b, Beyond Zone, retired couple, no dependent children)

- 5.4.26 A few interviewees were irritated that they would have to demonstrate the adversity of their personal situation to HS2 Ltd if they wanted to sell their property. Of these, a few suggested HS2 Ltd ask too many questions to interviewees applying to the scheme, with one suggesting that the questions are too intrusive. Interviewees residing in the Beyond Zone were more likely than others to express negativity towards having to make a case to HS2 Ltd in order to sell their property through NTS.

"You can't sell your property now, unless you sell it to HS2. And the questions they want to know, from what I'm told, are too personal. Why do they want to know what your bank balance is and things like that? Some really impertinent questions." (Phase 2a, RSZ/HOP, retired couple, no dependent children)

5.4.27 A few interviewees commented that they felt as though they were being forced out of their home, as there is no option for them to claim compensation. For those in the Beyond Zone, the only way to receive any form of settlement with HS2 Ltd is by leaving the area, as there is no form of monetary compensation available.

5.4.28 A few interviewees did not think the Need to Sell scheme was worthwhile, and instead suggested that Statutory Blight Notices are a more effective way of obtaining compensation. Of these, one interviewee did not think that NTS applied to them, as they believed the land they owned fell within 50 metres of the track. As such, they thought they were entitled to Statutory Blight and the eventual purchase of their house, without going through the NTS processes.

“I think several of the properties round here have been actually disposed of to HS2 through a Statutory Blight notice, not through one of the schemes, which tells you something. Maybe the schemes aren’t working very well.” (Phase 2a, Beyond Zone, retired couple, no dependent children)

5.4.29 Additional concerns of a few interviewees regarding the NTS scheme include:

- No moving costs are covered by the scheme;
- Uncertainty on timescales for receiving compensation; and
- Uncertainty/mistrust on how un-blighted property values are calculated.

Factors influencing Need to Sell application decisions

5.4.30 In addition to the factors that influence interviewees’ decisions to leave the area in which they live (previously discussed in Chapter 5), the following factors influenced interviewees decisions to apply to the Need to Sell scheme specifically²³:

- The experience of neighbours and friends in applying for NTS, which led interviewees to distrust HS2 Ltd’s calculations of un-blighted property values;
- Eligibility for HOP, as a few interviewees were unsure if they could apply for NTS after receiving HOP compensation;
- A preference for renting their property out to others, enabling interviewees to leave behind any potential disruption, without losing ownership of the property;
- Whether NTS would still be available after the completion of the construction period;
- Their perceptions of whether their application would be successful, or if the process would be drawn-out; and
- Whether they believed they could sell the property without the help of NTS.

5.4.31 Several interviewees suggested that the experiences of their friends and neighbours has an impact on whether they would choose to apply for the NTS scheme in the future. The negative experiences of others acted as a deterrent; for instance, one interviewee would distrust any un-blighted property valuation they receive from HS2 Ltd, as one of their neighbours felt that HS2 Ltd undervalued their property during their NTS application.

²³ Provided in decreasing order of frequency of occurrence

“When I discussed [NTS] with the chap across the road and he said in the end that he decided against accepting the offer that was made [by HS2 Ltd] because he didn’t feel that it represented the value of their house adequately, that made me think that [NTS] probably wasn’t worth it.” (Phase 1, Beyond Zone, retired couple, no dependent children)

- 5.4.32 A few interviewees suggested that their eligibility for HOP compensation would influence whether they apply for NTS. They were under the impression that if they were to accept monetary compensation for HOP, it may prevent a NTS application.
- 5.4.33 One interviewee spoke of their preference of moving-out of the property, but renting it to tenants. This would enable them to leave behind any potential disruption caused by construction and operation of HS2, without losing ownership of the property. However, they were unsure as to whether anyone would want to move into the property if the construction of HS2 caused significant disturbance to the local area.
- 5.4.34 One interviewee stated that their application for Need to Sell would depend on whether they would be able to sell their property after the construction period has been completed. This would allow them to coincide selling the property after they have made their final mortgage payments and own the property outright.
- 5.4.35 One interviewee was unlikely to apply for the NTS scheme, as they believed their application would be rejected by HS2 Ltd. They thought that HS2 Ltd would require interviewees to demonstrate exceptional hardship before they would be willing to purchase the property.
- 5.4.36 A few interviewees felt that the NTS scheme was unnecessary, as they believed that they would not have an issue selling their property on the regular property market.

“We haven’t noticed that the houses have gone down in value, in fact, they’ve all gone up.” (Phase 1, Beyond Zone, retired couple, no dependent children)

6. INFORMATION AND ENGAGEMENT

6.1 Sources of information

6.1.1 Table 1 outlines the different sources of information interviewees used to inform their views on both HS2 and property assistance schemes.

Table 1. Sources of Information

SOURCE	FEEDBACK
<p>Information from HS2 Ltd provided in letter, leaflet formats, through public events, and through the website</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most respondents considered the information they receive from HS2 Ltd to be reliable, as they saw no reason why HS2 Ltd would be dishonest with residents. However, a few respondents commented that they thought occasionally some information is withheld from them, and that HS2 Ltd were not transparent in providing reasons for the decisions they make, for example, changes around Meadowhall. • Many respondents perceived that the information provided goes out of date regularly, due to changes in e.g. route location. • Many respondents had used online materials, and found them, particularly maps, difficult to use. Some found that the information was too technical for them to understand, or that the amount of information available was overwhelming, making it difficult to navigate to relevant information. There were requests for the online materials, including maps, to be simplified. <p style="background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <i>“You had to know it was page 205 or something to go to it, or you’ve gotta go through them all... People don’t know the references... They want to search by the village... The idea they’re all referenced by a 6 digit number was a bit of a problem.”</i> (Phase 2b, Beyond Zone, retired/not working couple, no dependent children) </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many respondents had attended public events and some felt that they were not always held at convenient locations/times and not appropriately staffed by HS2 Ltd representatives who could answer questions relevant to the local area. <p style="background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <i>“Whenever [HS2 Ltd have] done any of their talks, they’ve been at times when nobody can get there because it’s in the middle of the day and everybody’s at work...half the time we didn’t even know it was happening.”</i> (Phase 1, Beyond Zone, working couple, dependent children) </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many respondents considered letters/leaflets un-tailored to local area/individual address and were frustrated by the lack of specific information they receive from HS2 Ltd through written communication, and difficulty in finding the right person to contact for their specific queries, and that staff are inadequately informed. • There were requests for more one-to-one engagement and more proactive distribution of relevant information, particularly with regards to eligibility for property compensation schemes.

SOURCE	FEEDBACK
	<p><i>“I would expect [HS2 Ltd] to tell us [what we are entitled to]...why would they not, if we’re eligible.” (Phase 1, Beyond Zone, working couple, dependent children)</i></p>
<p>Neighbours, friends and hearsay</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many respondents noted that a large proportion of their information on HS2 comes from word of mouth, whether it be from their neighbours, friends, or other family members. • For information on property assistance schemes, information obtained from neighbours, friends, or through hearsay had led respondents to either be impressed or unimpressed with the processes behind the property assistance schemes. <p><i>“It was my neighbour that prompted me [to read a letter about the compensation schemes in more detail], I had read it but not really taken it in...the neighbours went, ‘Oh, have you claimed your money?’” (Phase 1, RSZ/HOP, working, one person household)</i></p>
<p>Action groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several respondents suggested that action groups pass on lots of information to residents in their local area. Whilst these groups tend to pass on information by emailing those who have signed-up to distribution lists, there are some who prefer to speak face-to-face with local residents. <p><i>“Just through a group of people who, you know, it started off under one of the action groups originally, but it’s basically sifting the news and what comes out from the government.” (Phase 2a, Beyond Zone, retired couple, no dependent children)</i></p>
<p>MPs and local politicians</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few respondents stated that information on HS2 is often disseminated through their local MP, or other politicians. These updates come in the form of emails to constituents, as well as distributing materials during face-to-face visits with residents. <p><i>“Our MP is quite active. He sends out an email I think once a month, telling his constituents what he’s doing and it’s invariable he’s got something on HS2 every month.” (Phase 2a, RSZ/HOP, retired couple, no dependent children)</i></p>
<p>Media (not HS2 Ltd provided)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few respondents made reference to various forms of media as sources of information on HS2, including: local newspapers, or magazines; social media; national newspapers, news broadcasts on TV, or posters that have been put up in their village. <p><i>“[Another local resident] is on Facebook, and he always updates. He updates if he’s been to a meeting, or if he’s had any information, and he puts it on and</i></p>

SOURCE	FEEDBACK
	<i>other people share it.” (Phase 2a, RSZ/HOP, not working, no dependent children)</i>

6.2 Further information required on HS2

6.2.1 Table 2 outlines additional information interviewees would like to receive on HS2.

Table 2. Additional Information Interviewees Would Like to Receive on HS2

INFORMATION REQUIREMENT	COMMENTS
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many interviewees requested more information relating to when construction would start and finish in their local area specifically, as opposed to receiving an overview for the whole phase. Many stated that this knowledge would help to prepare themselves in advance of any potential disruption. This information was more likely to be requested by Phase 2b interviewees, interviewees living with children and interviewees currently working. <div style="background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p><i>“If someone could say, ‘we are going to do this between such and such a date and such and such a date’, you’d have an idea but it’s the whole of the [2b route] taking ten years. It’s not quite precise for this area.” (Phase 2b, RSZ/HOP, retired, one person household)</i></p> </div>
Railway operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many interviewees would like to know how frequently the trains will run once HS2 is in operation and the hours of operation. Many wanted reassurance that trains would not run at night.
Noise levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many interviewees wanted information on the projected noise levels during both construction and operation. These concerns relating to noise included how the trains would sound, as well as whether maintenance on tracks would take place overnight, which could potentially disturb sleep. <div style="background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 10px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p><i>“These things are gonna be travelling pretty quick, so there will be a lot of noise. But is that gonna radiate out, or up? Is it likely to go ‘whoosh’, or is it going to be a significant noise.” (Phase 2b, Beyond Zone, retired/not working couple, no dependent children)</i></p> </div>
Road access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many interviewees were concerned about restrictions to traffic in their area, or if there would be any road closures. Some wanted to be made aware of when roads would close and re-open, if any new roads would be constructed to alleviate congestion, and the specific routes that construction traffic would take.

INFORMATION REQUIREMENT	COMMENTS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This further information issue was most likely to be requested by respondents residing along Phase 1 of the HS2 route. <p><i>“It would be better if they could put something up about road closures or anything, a bit of information, more than just saying this is the route for construction... If they put a little notice of what roads would be affected.”</i> (Phase 1, RSZ/HOP, working couple, dependent children)</p>
Railway route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several interviewees made a request to receive more information on the route design, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How the track will look visually; The finalised route/location of the track; Whether the route will be tunnelled/run through underpasses/on a raised platform etc. <p><i>“There’s also been various plans as to how they are gonna build it. Some people are saying there’s gonna be an underpass or a cutting, so we don’t know what the final plans are.”</i> (Phase 2b, Beyond Zone, retired couple, no dependent children)</p>
Mitigation measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A few interviewees wanted to know more about what HS2 Ltd was doing to mitigate the potential impacts of both construction and operation in their local area, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether noise barriers will be put up around the tracks to reduce noise during train operations; and Whether plans had been put in place to minimise the impact of construction traffic in their area. <p><i>“We don’t know the speed at which [the trains will] be travelling when they’re going past us, whether there are going to be any barriers put up and also the effect of surrounding roads.”</i> (Phase 1, RSZ/HOP, working, one person household)</p>
Property value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A few interviewees wanted to receive additional information on how property values in the area would be affected by the arrival of HS2.
Other developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A few interviewees spoke more generally about their desire to be informed of any new developments in their local area by HS2 Ltd, even for seemingly more minor developments, such as whether local supermarkets will be affected. One interviewee suggested that HS2 Ltd appoints a full-time communications officer whose job is to ensure that villages are kept up to date with all the latest news, and to act as a liaison with local residents. <p><i>“And also, anything new. New development – they should inform us by email. Sometimes we don’t go on the website, and er, we just live with it assuming it is ok, and suddenly something new [happens]. They should have alerts</i></p>

INFORMATION REQUIREMENT	COMMENTS
	<i>sometimes like that.</i> " (Phase 1, RSZ/HOP, working couple, dependent children)

6.3 Further information required on property assistance schemes

6.3.1 Many interviewees asked to receive tailored information on their compensation eligibility. They would prefer it if HS2 Ltd contacted eligible interviewees rather than if they had to seek out this information themselves. For many interviewees, this also included information on how much compensation they were eligible for. However, one interviewee in particular wanted to know if an application for the Homeowner Payment Scheme (HOP) would impact their eligibility for Need to Sell (NTS) in the future.

"If you're in those parameters, it would be nice if [HS2 Ltd] wrote to you to tell you you're in the parameter, and what your options were... Them reaching out rather than you having to go find." (Phase 2b, RSZ/HOP, not working, no dependent children)

6.3.2 Many interviewees wanted to receive more specific information on the application processes. This information would include details of cut-off dates or deadlines, as well as the steps that must be followed in order to claim for compensation. Interviewees living in the RSZ/HOP zones were more likely to request information on the application process than those living in the Beyond Zone.

6.3.3 A few interviewees stated that they have received information from HS2 Ltd in the past about property assistance schemes, but did not read the materials as they did not think they applied to them.

6.3.4 A few interviewees wanted to know how property values have been impacted by the announcement of HS2 (including information on how blighted property values have been calculated). Likewise, a few were unsure as to how distance from the track had been calculated, which could impact upon which property assistance schemes they could be eligible for. They wanted to know whether measurements were taken from the centre line of the track, or the edge of the track, or distance from maintenance depots.

"There could be more information as to what exactly [HS2] mean [by distance from the track]. Do they actually mean the centre of the track, the edge of the track? Do they mean like the fact that they're going to put a depot here? Is it within the distance of the depot, what is it?" (Phase 1, RSZ/HOP, retired, one person household)

6.3.5 A couple of interviewees requested that HS2 Ltd provide more information on what they intend to do with regards to improving people's properties, rather than just offering financial compensation. Other information requested by one interviewee was data on the success rates of applications, as well as clarification of the terminology and technical language used in the materials.

“I think they should be more liberal with their double-glazing, well triple-glazing further out, because we’re all gonna be affected by it, but it doesn’t seem to be mentioned at all that there’s any compensation [outside 300 metres from the track].” (Phase 2b, Beyond Zone, retired couple, no dependent children)

6.3.6 However, a small number of interviewees did not want to receive further information on property assistance schemes.

“It’s all on the internet, we don’t need any [information] coming through the door because we’ve just got to Google it and find the information...its readily available so we don’t need to be spoon-fed information in our letter box.” (Phase 1, Beyond Zone, retired couple, no dependent children)

6.4 Suggested channels for information on HS2 and property schemes

6.4.1 A variety of channels were suggested by interviewees as to how they would like to receive information on HS2. Unless stated otherwise, the format in which interviewees would like to receive further information was the same for both information regarding HS2, and the various property assistance schemes. These were:

- Post, including letters and leaflets addressed personally;
- HS2 Ltd website;
- One-to-one meetings/discussions with HS2 Ltd representative(s);
- Email, addressed personally;
- Public meetings;
- Social media (*information on HS2 only*); and
- Local newspapers and magazines.

“It should be a letter saying, ‘You live within 500m of the new HS2 and this is what you’re going to get for it’ and HS2 should know who is affected because they planned the route in the first place.” (Phase 1, Beyond Zone, working couple, dependent children)

7. SUGGESTED MITIGATION MEASURES, IMPROVEMENTS AND CHANGES

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 A wide range of changes and initiatives that could be implemented by HS2 Ltd to mitigate and compensate individuals and local communities, and improve their situation, were suggested. The implementation of some such measures were perceived as valuable in building community relations and in some cases encouraging interviewees to stay, thus strengthening community cohesion. These initiatives and measures are described in the following sections.

7.2 Mitigation suggestions

7.2.1 Many interviewees requested that noise breakers are built around the tracks or construction sites. These noise breakers could consist of either sound walls or banks of trees.

“What kind of barriers could they erect? More tree lining, a denser tree lining might suppress the noise. Something like that. There’s a number of things they could inform me about that they maybe do, or are thinking of doing.” (Phase 2b, RSZ/HOP, retired, one person household)

7.2.2 Several interviewees suggested that HS2 Ltd should make improvements to local roads to reduce the impacts of increased traffic in the area. Specific changes that were proposed by interviewees included the construction of bypasses or relief roads to divert traffic away from villages, as well as building bridges to alleviate congestion in the local area.

7.2.3 A few interviewees suggested that HS2 Ltd should compensate for tree felling by planting new trees. However, even for some interviewees, this would not be enough to satisfy them, as they believe you cannot compensate for the age of a tree, or the wildlife that it is home to.

7.3 Compensation suggestions

7.3.1 A few interviewees suggested that HS2 Ltd could either:

- Offer a greater level of monetary compensation for affected residents;
- Offer a wider range of monetary compensation schemes; or
- Offer different forms of compensation, such as sound proofing properties, or installing double/triple glazing to homeowners.

“I think [compensation] is very important because when you’ve seen your house [has] been going up in-line with normal inflation of house prices and then to be suddenly blighted by something like this and suddenly the price is depressed, obviously the question of monetary compensation is foremost in your mind.” (Phase 1, Beyond Zone, retired couple, no dependent children)

7.3.2 A few interviewees proposed that HS2 Ltd could offer to compensate communities as a whole, by improving the public realm of the areas that will be impacted. Of these interviewees, a few suggested that money could be invested into developing playing

fields, or other recreational facilities in their area. In addition, one interviewee commented that HS2 Ltd could introduce flood defences in their area, whilst another suggested that local public transport services should be improved.

7.4 Other suggestions for HS2

7.4.1 A couple of interviewees suggested that HS2 Ltd could better manage the houses they have bought, either through compulsory purchase, or the Need to Sell (NTS) scheme. For instance, if they continue to choose to let these properties, they should ensure that tenants look after the property properly. Alternatively, HS2 Ltd could re-sell the properties, even if they make a small loss.

“I see no reason why [HS2] shouldn’t sell [properties they’ve bought unnecessarily] at a loss, the loss isn’t going to be that great. But the alternative is that those houses are going to be let for the next ten years until the first train comes through, which is having a devastating effect on village life.” (Phase 1, Beyond Zone, retired couple, no dependent children)

7.4.2 One interviewee suggested that HS2 Ltd receive their construction deliveries via railway freight or internal site roads, to reduce impacts on local traffic.

7.5 Suggestions for abandoning HS2 or changing the route

7.5.1 Many interviewees suggested that the HS2 track line should either be re-routed, or the plans for HS2 should be abandoned altogether. Of those who requested that tracks were re-routed, a few proposed that HS2 should run parallel to existing motorways or ‘A’ roads, to reduce noise and visual impacts during operations. A few interviewees suggested that the route should be diverted away from environmentally valuable land, such as canals and woodlands.

7.5.2 Of those who suggested abandoning the concept of HS2 altogether, a few suggested the money could be re-invested into other sectors of society, such as the NHS.

7.5.3 A few interviewees specifically suggested that the existing rail infrastructure should be utilised, rather than build new routes. Of the interviewees who made this suggestion, one felt that utilising existing tracks would prevent the destruction of environmentally and economically valuable land; whilst one thought that the existing infrastructure should be upgraded instead.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY MAKERS

8.1 What do homeowners think about HS2 and the impact it will have?

8.1.1 Interviewees have a generally negative perception of HS2, perceiving very little local benefit, and expressing many concerns relating to the impact of construction and the more unknown impacts of operation. Whilst interviewees themselves acknowledge that many of their concerns are speculative, and not necessarily based on information provided by HS2 Ltd, speculation on the extent of impacts is powerful enough to incite some to leave, and some to consider leaving the area within which they currently reside and are otherwise happy. There is a clear incentive for HS2 Ltd to mitigate against these concerns as far as possible, including action to enable some fundamental 'myth-busting'.

8.1.2 To improve the current perception of HS2, there is also a need to further extol its benefits and the benefits of any mitigation and compensation measures, specifically for local residents. HS2 is not considered to bring local benefits to the populations impacted by its construction and operation and it is clear that messaging around the benefits of the scheme at national level will not affect the current perception of HS2 at local level. To change perception, significant messaging is required on any benefits the development will bring to the local area, where possible, and the efforts being made by HS2 Ltd to understand the impact on communities and the mitigation measures being put in place.

8.1.3 This study found little suggestion that interviewees living on Phase 1 of the route were more informed, or required less information on specific topics, than interviewees living on Phase 2a and 2b of the route. This suggests that similar communication approaches are currently required across all Phases. Due to the staggered nature of delivery, there is still opportunity to monitor the effectiveness of any newly rolled-out Phase 1 communications, to assess the level of impact and the potential benefits for Phase 2 residents.

8.2 What makes homeowners want to leave the area, and what could HS2 Ltd do to alleviate concerns and increase the likelihood of homeowners staying?

8.2.1 Concern and lack of control and understanding over anticipated changes to day-to-day village life has made some interviewees consider leaving the area within which they currently reside. The sense of community is important to the lives of interviewees, frequently cited as created from friendly and familiar neighbours and village events and amenities. HS2 will shortly become a neighbour in these village communities and therefore must find a way of becoming a 'good neighbour', as is their aim, by further examining ways to actively minimise negative impacts of the development of HS2 on communities and/or by addressing existing dislikes of the local area e.g. congestion, that may be exacerbated by the development of HS2.

8.2.2 Interviewees currently require a great deal of reassurance on the impacts of construction, and the degree to which they will be affected personally, particularly relating to noise and road access. They want to see evidence of HS2 Ltd considering and addressing concerns through mitigation strategies.

8.3 How do property assistance schemes impact decisions to stay or leave the area?

- 8.3.1 For those within the Rural Support Zone (RSZ), there is some suggestion that the potential for voluntary purchase to remain open after accepting the cash offer may incentivise residents to remain in the area for longer, and potentially indefinitely, as it helps eliminate fears that they will be unable to sell their properties in the future. However, several interviewees were not interested in this option, having already made up their mind to leave the area, indicating that, if the change were to occur, it would benefit from being rolled out as quickly as possible, before minds are firmly made up to leave and more resistant to considering staying. There is also a suggestion that the timeframe for applications requires shortening and made increasingly transparent, so that homeowners would not be dissuaded by the potential of having to go through two application processes and therefore choose to directly apply for voluntary purchase.
- 8.3.2 Due to the staged nature of delivery of HS2, it would be possible to survey those completing their voluntary purchase, in order to gain further insight into the main reasons voluntary purchase was chosen and any factors that may have influenced their decision to stay in their property and take the cash offer. A very brief questionnaire could be added at the end of application. The closed questionnaire could be designed using findings from this study.
- 8.3.3 There is little indication that eligibility for HOP impacts decisions to stay or leave the area, although there is some confusion over whether eligibility for HOP may prevent NTS application. There is some indication that HOP draws attention to the property's distance from the HS2 route, with payments only considered to be compensation for disruption, noise impacts and/or impact of property value. Significant strategies will be required to change the HOP narrative from one of being 'compensated for the detrimental impacts of construction/operation' to the official message of 'sharing the wealth/benefit'.
- 8.3.4 Application to the Need to Sell Scheme is currently perceived as disproportionately onerous leading to an increased negative perception of HS2 Ltd. It may benefit the perception of HS2 Ltd to provide further clarity that eligibility for NTS is carefully defined, hence the necessity for detailed questioning and, if possible, assess whether there are any areas of the application process that could be made less onerous for applicants.

8.4 What information do homeowners want to receive?

- 8.4.1 Uncertainty, 'fear of the unknown' and feelings of lack of engagement with HS2 Ltd are also significant contributing factors to interviewees leaving or considering leaving the area. There is the opportunity to remedy this with more strategic, locally tailored messaging, or better dissemination of local area engagement plans, which may influence some homeowners to stay. Key information interviewees wish to receive are:

- Information required on **noise during construction**:
 - Timeframe of construction in local area;
 - Hours of labour, including identified clear restrictions;
 - Volume of HGV movements;
 - Location, type and impact of sound barriers; and
 - Any other mitigation measures being put in place to reduce impact.
- Information required on **noise during operation**:

- Hours of operation;
- Frequency of trains;
- Type of trains (freight or passenger);
- Relatable noise metric of sound of train passing i.e. not decibels;
- Sound barriers to be put in place and their effectiveness; and
- Any other mitigation measures being put in place to reduce impact.

○ Information required on **road access during construction:**

- Timeframe of construction in local area;
- Named access roads to be used by HGVs;
- Road restrictions/closures;
- Volume of HGV movements;
- Hours of HGV movements, including time of restrictions; and
- New roads/bridges/access routes being created.

○ Information on **road access during operation:**

- Impact of road access during operation, if any, and mitigation measures put in place.

○ A wide range of other information requirements were also cited, including:

- Mitigation against dust/dirt/mud on roads;
- Anticipated impact on local property values;
- Mitigations against pollution/environmental impacts;
- Train operating frequency and hours of operation; and
- Anticipated level of user demand.

8.4.2 Whilst it is not possible for HS2 Ltd to communicate on all these matters in the short-term, as the information simply does not yet exist (dependent on the Phase and stage of delivery), short-term messaging could acknowledge the intent to deliver information as soon as it is available, preferably with a timescale commitment.

8.5 In what format do homeowners want to receive information?

8.5.1 Despite the negative perception of HS2, interviewees generally considered information from HS2 Ltd to be reliable, and therefore messaging should continue from the same source.

8.5.2 Awareness of property assistance schemes in particular is lower than would be desirable, and awareness was not higher in Phase 1, which is considerably more advanced in terms of timescale and information provision, including letter and leaflet drops. In order to increase scheme awareness, improvements could be made to the way in which these messages are delivered and absorbed.

8.5.3 Continuing to provide personalised and tailored information is likely to assist in interviewees absorbing messages. Wherever practicable, letters should continue to be addressed, by name, to the homeowner, and any information contained in leaflet drops should be tailored to a more local area than they currently are, if possible this should be at village or street level.

8.5.4 Mitigation strategies and their tangible benefits in particular could be communicated in the form of a 'You Said – We Did' format to highlight the active engagement of HS2 Ltd within local communities.

8.5.5 Improving ease of access to tailored information will also likely improve homeowners' ability to absorb information that is relevant to them. The current split of information across the government and HS2 Ltd website does not serve to benefit homeowners seeking local personalised information. Providing adequate search functionalities is key to providing helpful information through website sources. This could include an address based search, presenting:

- Distance of property from route;
- Eligibility (or not) for any property assistance schemes;
- Summary of property assistance scheme application process;
- Upcoming dates for local events;
- Online versions of previous letters/leaflets sent to the property to date;
- Options to sign-up for an emailing list; and
- Construction and operation timelines, including dates for the local area.

8.5.6 Online accounts, verified to homeowners, could be used for residents to manage the information they receive, in the format they wish, in addition to facilitating any property assistance scheme applications.

8.5.7 Expansion of the HS2 Ltd CommonPlace platform could be considered to achieve access to tailored information, however this study found no evidence of awareness of the platform, and therefore it would require improved dissemination.

8.5.8 Further opportunities for one-to-one face-to-face engagement would be welcomed by interviewees, and the principle of community events led by HS2 Ltd were well-received. However, there are clear opportunities to improve these events, with suggestions including:

- Running events at a more local level, in order to discuss community-level impacts;
- Provide more opportunities for one-to-one engagement at the events, or follow-up opportunities; and
- Ensure that appropriate well-informed HS2 Ltd staff members attend the event, in anticipation of the information that will be required and requested.

Appendices

The HS2 Community Cohesion Public Research report appendices include:

- Appendix A: Methodology and Sample Profile
- Appendix B: Recruitment Script
- Appendix C: Topic Guide
- Appendix D: Show Cards

Appendix A – Methodology and Sample Profile

Introduction

Appendix A outlines the methodology used to complete this study. The approach to sampling, recruitment, interview conduct, and analysis and reporting are described in turn.

Sampling

As this is a qualitative study, the sampling approach was designed to maximise the range of demographic and geographic characteristics of research respondents.

In total, 12 areas along the HS2 route were selected and in each area three to six interviews were conducted. The areas varied in size and included clusters of hamlets, a village or multiple villages, and a town, including properties dispersed outside conurbations that still fell within the 500m border. The process of selecting these areas is outlined in the rest of this section.

Potential stretches of the route that could be targeted for interview were provided by HS2 Ltd. These were selected by HS2 based on the following criteria:

- All areas were 'rural' i.e. the Rural Support Zone was in operation;
- All areas were residential – i.e. areas with large numbers of commercial properties/business parks were excluded;
- All areas had a high proportion of owner-occupiers i.e. areas with high levels of social housing were excluded (as they were outside the scope of the study).
- Areas that were primarily within the safeguarding zone were excluded (as they were out of scope for this research); and
- Areas that had a high proportion of people who have accepted property assistance schemes were excluded.

Sections of the route were provided to SYSTRA on the above basis and SYSTRA examined each by mapping a number of features characteristics. The following features and characteristics were layered on top of a geographic map:

- Census demographics at output area level;
- The HS2 route;
- A 500m buffer from the centreline of the route;
- Property compensation bands; and
- Individual properties (using AddressBase software).

Once all the data had been layered on a map, the route sections were examined for a number of factors in order to select the areas to target for interview. These factors included:

- Number of properties – each area selected required at least 150 properties to make it viable for recruitment (with the expectation of a minimum 30% success rate for matching telephone numbers to properties). Some areas were discounted because they had too few properties and some were expanded to include more properties/hamlets/villages, taking care that this did not impact the geographic makeup;
- Dispersal of properties – some areas were selected to contain properties that were very dispersed, whilst others were more tightly clustered;

- Diversity of characteristics – as being used for a qualitative study, the purpose was to locate areas where participants would exhibit a wide range of characteristics and therefore provide the widest possible demographic spread (as opposed to being statistically representative). Areas were therefore chosen on the basis of having higher rates of certain characteristics, in order to make it more likely people exhibiting those characteristics would be selected for interview. The characteristics included:
 - Higher rates of ethnic diversity;
 - Younger populations;
 - Ranges of SeC;
 - Detached and non-detached homes;
 - Higher levels of disability;
 - Higher rates of unemployment; and
 - Higher levels of households with children.
- Levels of property ownership – a number of areas were discounted due to having lower areas of property ownership; and
- Split between zones - at an overall level, the areas needed to include a roughly even split of properties within the RSZ/HOP area (60-300m from route) and 'Beyond Zone' (300-500m from route);
- Split between Phases 1, 2A and 2B of the route in the proportions requested by DfT.

The location and demographic characteristics of the final interview sample achieved is outlined in Table 1. Whilst the areas were chosen to reflect higher variations of e.g. ethnic diversity, these numbers were still small, however we are confident that our final sample is reflective of the demographic make-up of the areas targeted for interview. Likewise the low number of younger people reflects the low number of young owner occupier living in rural areas.

Table 1. Final Interview Sample

CHARACTERISTIC	DESCRIPTION	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Owner-Occupier	N/A	79
Location	Phase One (Calvert, Burton Green, Ickenham, Turweston)	26
	Phase 2a (North of Rugeley, Hopton)	13
	Phase 2b, Manchester leg (Lostock Green/Northwich, Lowton Common)	17
	Phase 2b, Leeds leg (Barlborough, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Austrey, Mexborough)	23
Compensation Zone	RSZ or HOP	35

CHARACTERISTIC	DESCRIPTION	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
	'Beyond Zone' (300-500m)	44
Ownership	Owns outright	67
	Owns with mortgage	12
Age	18-34	1
	35-64	39
	65+	39
Households with/without children	With children under 18 years	15
	Without children under 18 years	64
Working status	Working	30
	Not working	6
	Retired	43
SEG	ABC1	57
	C2DE	22
Gender	Male	39
	Female	40
Ethnicity	White British	76

CHARACTERISTIC	DESCRIPTION	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
	Not White British	3
Disability	Has disability	15
	No disability declared	64
Property type	Detached	51
	Other (non-detached, flat etc.)	28
Length of occupancy (Areas 1-4)	Before March 2010	24
	After March 2010	2
Length of occupancy (Areas 5-11)	Before January 2013	50
	After January 2013	3

Figure 1 marks the locations of the 12 areas selected for interviews. Due to the qualitative nature of the study, the areas selected are not representative of the entire route, but reflect areas of geodemographic diversity, as outlined above.

Figure 1. Map outlining interview areas



Recruitment

Telephone numbers were matched to the areas of interest using a national database, and a recruitment questionnaire was used to ensure participants were in-scope for the research. The full recruitment script can be found in Appendix B.

In addition to their location, to be in scope participants needed to:

- Own their property (either outright or with a mortgage, and including shared-ownership);
- Live at the address at which they were contacted; and
- Have not applied for and decided to accept a property assistance scheme.

If in-scope, participants were asked whether they would like to take part in the interview individually, or with the joint property owner/decision maker, and whether they would like to undertake the interview at home or at another nearby location.

The interview was then arranged at an appropriate time. Most interviews were undertaken jointly at the household address.

In three areas, the smaller number of highly dispersed properties meant that not enough telephone numbers could be secured and therefore a small number of interviews were arranged by face to face recruitment at the interview location, using the same recruitment questionnaire.

Conducting interviews

The 48 interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format with the assistance of a topic guide. Interviews lasted approximately one hour and covered the following topic areas:

- Thoughts on the area and whether there is a sense of community;
- Knowledge and awareness of HS2;
- Perceived impacts of the construction and operation of HS2;
- Intentions to stay or leave the area and contributing factors;
- Awareness, eligibility and likelihood of applying for a property assistance scheme;
- Sources of information used to form awareness and opinions; and
- Thoughts on how HS2 Ltd could improve community engagement.

The full topic guide is provided in Appendix C and the show cards used are provided in Appendix D.

Appendix B – Recruitment Script

HS2 COMMUNITY COHESION

RECRUITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

IDENTIFICATION TABLE

Client/Project owner	Department for Transport
Project	HS2 Community Cohesion
Type of document	Recruitment Questionnaire
Date	02/05/2018
File name	20180502 Recruitment Questionnaire_Final_FINAL_v2.docx
Reference number	107335
Number of pages	10

APPROVAL

Version	Name		Position	Date	Modifications
1	Author	E Robertson	Project Manager	03/04/2018	
	Checked by	C Stephenson	Project Director	05/04/2018	
	Approved by	C Stephenson	Project Director	05/04/2018	
2	Author	E Robertson	Project Manager	12/04/2018	Modifications in line with comments
	Checked by	C Stephenson	Project Director	12/04/2018	
	Approved by	C Stephenson	Project Director	12/04/2018	
3	Author	E Robertson	Project Manager	18/04/2018	Modifications in line with GDPR requirements
	Checked by	C Stephenson	Project Director	19/04/2018	
	Approved by	C Stephenson	Project Director	19/04/2018	

QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction

Good morning / afternoon, my name is and I'm calling from Protel Ltd, an independent research company.

I am currently recruiting people to take part in interviews over the next 2-3 weeks, regarding High Speed Two (HS2), to understand residents' views on both the impact of HS2, and on HS2 property assistance schemes available to them.

This research is being conducted by an independent research company, SYSTRA Ltd, on behalf of the Department for Transport. The Department has, as part of its functions as a government department, commissioned this survey and is responsible for ensuring that your personal data is handled in accordance with data protection law.

The Department for Transport and HS2 Ltd want to understand how much people living in your area know about the plans for HS2 and the property schemes available, where you found out about them, and the sort of factors you might consider when weighing up whether to apply for any of the schemes. Understanding this will help to improve communications with people living near the HS2 route.

If you would like to take part in an interview and you are eligible to do so, the interview will be undertaken by a member of the SYSTRA research team, and will last about one hour. It will take place at a date and time convenient to you. The interview can take place at your home, or a nearby public location of your preference. You can undertake the interview by yourself, or with a joint property owner. You will receive £30 as a 'thank you' for your time, or £50 for an interview that includes the joint property owner.

The interview is completely confidential and results will be reported anonymously. Your responses will be combined with responses from other people taking part in the survey and your details will not be passed onto HS2 or DfT. The interview and the discussion we are having comply with the Market Research Society Professional Code of Conduct, the Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). If you would like more information on this we are able to provide it.

If you would like information about how DfT meets its obligations under data protection law, and what your rights are in relation to the use of your personal data by SYSTRA and Protel, as agents of DfT, please go to: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/about/personal-information-charter>

Does taking part in the interview sound like something you would be interested in?

Yes/no *(If yes, continue, if no, thank and close)*

I need to ask you a few questions before I can tell you if you are eligible to take part in an interview, as we need to ensure we speak to lots of different types of people in this survey. This will only take a few minutes.

Everything you say is confidential and information you give to us, Protel, as part of this call will be transferred securely to our partners, SYSTRA. You can withdraw from the research at any point and ask that we no longer hold your data. You have lots of rights in relation to how we treat your data and we can post/email you full details (please note, this will be sent from 25th May).

This call is being recorded for training and quality checking purposes, and so we have a record that you have agreed to take part in this call. Are you happy to proceed?

Yes/no *(If yes, continue, if no, thank and close)*

Please can you confirm that you are happy to proceed with some questions about yourself; they include questions on home ownership, ethnicity and whether you have a disability or not? If there are any questions you prefer not to answer you can indicate that you prefer not to answer.

Yes/no *(If yes, if no, thank and close)*

Section 1

Q1.	Do you own or rent your home? <i>(Interviewer to prompt in response to initial response)</i>
a	Owns outright (including shared ownership)
b	Own with mortgage (including shared ownership)
d	Rents (privately or from Local Authority, with or without housing benefit) <i>(Thank & close)</i>
e	Lives here rent free <i>(Thank & ask if the property owner lives at the address and how can we contact them)</i>

Q2.	Which of the following age groups are you within?
a	Under 18 <i>(Thank & close)</i>
b	18-34
c	35-64
d	65+

Q3.	Do you or any members of your family work for the Department for Transport, HS2, or as a market researcher or a journalist?
a	Yes <i>(Thank & close)</i>
b	No

Q4.	We are looking for people who live within 500m - that's just under a third of a mile - of the proposed HS2 route. To check whether this is true of you, and therefore that you are eligible for the research, please can you confirm your address?
a	<i>Recruiter to cross-check with records. If it does not match or fall within area, thank and close. Recruiter to enter address below</i>

Q5a.	There are various property assistance schemes available to people along the HS2 route. Have you applied for or are you considering applying for an HS2 property assistance scheme? <i>(Interviewer to prompt responses relating to the initial response)</i>
a	Never heard of any schemes
b	No – have not considered it
c	No – but are considering it
d	No – but in process of pulling required information together
e	Yes – have submitted application form and awaiting outcome
f	Yes – have received an offer and considering decision
g	Yes – have submitted application form and made decision to accept/have accepted the offer <i>(If in areas 1-4 go to Q5b; if in areas 5-11 thank and close)</i>
h	Yes – have submitted application and been turned down

Q5b.	Which property assistance scheme have you accepted the offer/going to accept the offer for?	
	a	Homeowner Payment Scheme (HOP)
	b	Other <i>(Thank & close)</i>

Section 2

Q6.	Which of the following best describes the people <u>living</u> in your household?	
	a	One person household
	b	Couple with no children
	c	Couple with at least one child aged under 18 years
	d	Couple with child/children all aged 18 years and over
	e	Lone parent with at least one child aged under 18 years
	f	Lone parent with child/children all aged 18 years and over
	g	Other household type

Q7.	Are you currently?	
	a	Working full/part-time (including self-employed)
	b	Not working (excluding retirement but including full-time study)
	c	Retired

Q8.	What is the occupation of the main income earner in your household? <i>(Only ask sufficient questions to code social grade)</i>	
	<i>Occupation title:</i>	
	<i>Position/ Rank/ Grade and no. of staff responsible for:</i>	
	<i>Industry/ Type of company:</i>	
	<i>Qualifications/ Degrees/ Apprenticeships:</i>	
	a	ABC1
	b	C2DE

Q9.	With which gender do you most identify?	
	a	Male
	b	Female
	c	Other
	d	Prefer not to say <i>(do not read out)</i>

Q10.	Which of the following best describes your ethnic background?	
-------------	--	--

a	White British
b	White Irish
c	White Other
d	Mixed white and black Caribbean
e	Mixed white and black African
f	Mixed white and Asian
g	Mixed other
h	Asian/ Asian British Indian
i	Asian/ Asian British Bangladeshi
j	Asian/ Asian British Pakistani
k	Asian/ Asian British Chinese
l	Asian/ Asian British Other
m	Black/ Black British Caribbean
n	Black/ Black British African
o	Black/ Black British Other
p	Other (<i>please specify</i>)
r	Prefer not to say (<i>do not read out</i>)

Q11a.	Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?
A	Yes, limited a lot
b	Yes, limited a little
c	No
d	Prefer not to say (<i>do not read out</i>)

Q11b.	[If Q11=a or Q11=b] Which of the following best describes your long term health problem or disability?
A	Visual impairment
b	Mobility impairment
c	Hearing impairment
d	Mental health illness
e	Learning difficulty
f	Other (<i>please specify</i>)
g	Prefer not to say (<i>do not read out</i>)

Q12.	Which of the following best describes your property type?
a	Whole house or bungalow: Detached

	b	Whole house or bungalow: Semi-detached
	c	Whole house or bungalow: Terraced (including end-terrace)
	d	Flat, maisonette or apartment: Purpose-built block of flats or tenement
	e	Flat, maisonette or apartment: Part of a converted or shared house (including bed-sits)
	f	Flat, maisonette or apartment: In a commercial building
	g	Caravan or other mobile or temporary structure

Q13.	When did your household acquire the property?	
	a	Year:
	b	Month:

Screen out text

If respondent is not in-scope:

Thank you for your interest in this research, however we need to speak to *[either, as applicable]*:

- property owners only
- people with a wide range of demographic characteristics and we have already spoken to enough people with your characteristics

therefore you do not meet the criteria required to take part.

Please can you confirm that we can hold your name, address and telephone number, with a note saying you are not in scope, so that we do not contact you again? Your details will not be used for any other purpose or passed to any other company. We will then delete all of this data at the end of the research study recruitment period, no later than 31st August.

If you would like more information on the property assistance schemes, I can give you a government website to visit or a free phone number for the HS2 helpdesk *(interviewer to give to those who are interested)*:

- <https://www.gov.uk/claim-compensation-if-affected-by-hs2>
- HS2 Ltd helpdesk: Freephone 08081 434 434 or Minicom 08081 456 472

If you have any questions on the research, I can give you contact details for the SYSTRA research manager *(interviewer to give to those who are interested)*:

- Eve Robertson: erobertson@systra.com

If you would like to check the legitimate nature of Protel or SYSTRA as independent research agencies, or to check the legitimate nature of the research I can give you relevant contact details *(interviewer to give to those who are interested)*:

- To check legitimacy of research agencies: Market Research Society's Freephone verification service 0800 975 9596
- To check legitimate nature of the research: DfT research manager David James: david.james@dft.gsi.gov.uk

If respondent is in-scope:

Thank you for your time so far. You are eligible to take part to the interview. Would you still like to take part at a time to suit you?

Yes/No *(If yes, continue, if no thank and read out section relating to information about further details)*

Would you like to take part in the interview individually, or with the joint property owner/decision maker?

Would you like to undertake the interview in your home, or at another location nearby?

Please can I check your home address and the best number of reach you on?

We are interviewing in your area over these dates xxxxx to xxxxx. What is the best date and time for you?

Please can I take your name (if relevant) and the name of the joint property owner who will be present?

To confirm, we will be passing these details and your responses to our previous questions to SYSTRA who will be undertaking the full interview. Please can you confirm you are happy for me to do this?
Yes/No *(If yes continue, if no thank and read out section relating to information about further details)*

What will happen next? We will post you an information card with the details of the interview. You will receive a confirmation phone call the day/morning before your interview.

Recruiter to complete:

Interview Details	
Single or joint interview?	
Name(s) of participant(s)	
Area of interview (1-11)	
Location of interview	
Participant address (if different from location)	
Participant contact number	
Date of interview	
Time of interview	

Further Information Details

If you would like more information on the property assistance schemes, I can give you a government website to visit or a free phone number for the HS2 helpdesk *(interviewer to give to those who are interested)*:

- <https://www.gov.uk/claim-compensation-if-affected-by-hs2>
- HS2 Ltd helpdesk: Freephone 08081 434 434 or Minicom 08081 456 472

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- To check legitimacy of research agencies: Market Research Society's Freephone verification service 0800 975 9596
- To check legitimate nature of the research: DfT research manager David James: david.james@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Revoking consent

If, at any point during the call, the participant revokes consent:

Please can you confirm that we can hold your contact details only (name, address and telephone number), with a note saying you do not wish to take part in this study, so that we do not contact you again? Your details will not be used for any other purpose or passed to any other company. We will then delete all of this data at the end of the recruitment period, no later than 31st August.

HS2 COMMUNITY COHESION PUBLIC RESEARCH

TOPIC GUIDE

IDENTIFICATION TABLE	
Client/Project owner	Department for Transport
Project	HS2 Community Cohesion Public Research
Type of document	Topic Guide
Date	18/05/2018
File name	20180518 Community Cohesion Topic Guide_Final.docx
Reference number	107335
Number of pages	7

Objective & Scope of Interview

Aims:

- Gather opinions and perceptions of HS2;
- Gain insight into how HS2 makes owner-occupiers feels about leaving/remaining;
- Identify the issues and risks homeowners weigh up during the sell/remain decision; and
- Understand what information homeowners are basing decisions and what sources of information they used.

Findings used to:

- Feed into a review of property schemes; and
- Inform HS2 on how to improve community engagement techniques.

INTRODUCTION (5 MINS)

Explanation of research purpose

- Interviewer to introduce self and SYSTRA – an independent research agency.
- Explain that research is being conducted on behalf of, but independently from, DfT and HS2.
- Aim of research is to understand:
 - the impact of HS2 on local communities;
 - what influences homeowners' decisions to leave or remain in the area; and
 - what homeowners think about property schemes available to them.
- A wide range of people are being spoken to as part of the research, across all Phases of the route.

Explanation of interview session

- Interview to last about an hour.
- Structure of questions:
 - About you and the area;
 - Your views on HS2;
 - Considerations and intentions to remain/leave the area;
 - Thoughts on property schemes;
 - Views on what else HS2 could be doing.
- Everything you say will remain confidential and no personal data or identifiers will be passed onto DfT or HS2.
- The research is taking place in accordance with the MRS Code of Conduct, Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- If agreed, this session will be recorded. Recording will only be listened to by the SYSTRA project team to assist interview write ups and destroyed by February 2019.
- Conducting 40 interviews (some with multiple people). Once interviews are completed, the data will be amalgamated and the results will be analysed and reported on anonymously.
- The report will subsequently be published and available on the gov.uk website.

Use of personal data

- As part of this research we are collecting personal data from you. Therefore, before we proceed, please can I ask you to read this information sheet. The purpose of this sheet is to make sure you understand exactly what data we have/are collecting from you and what we'll do with it, so you can make an informed decision about whether to proceed with the interview.

Interviewer to give two copies of the information sheet to (each) participant and run through each point with them. If consent is given, request one copy to be signed by each household owner present and kept, and leave one copy with the participant(s) for future reference.

- *(After information sheet has been run through and written consent obtained):* Do you have any questions before we begin?
- If a joint interview, interviewer to run through additional closed questions with respondent who did not answer questions during recruitment.

ABOUT YOU AND THE AREA (10 MINS)

- Who else, if anyone, lives in the property with you?
- How long have you lived in the area, and in this property?
- What attracted you to the area when you first moved here?
- What do you like about living in this area?
- What do you dislike about living in this area?
- Do you think there is a sense of community in the area?
- Can you tell me why you say that?
 - Prompt only as necessary (if sense of community): local connections/neighbours/family; schools; village activities e.g. fetes; local amenities e.g. local pubs, community centre, libraries, playgrounds, religious centres?
- Before HS2 was announced, had you intended to stay or leave the area?

VIEWS ON HS2 (10 MINS)

- Can you tell me what you know about HS2?
 - Prompt if necessary: timescale, construction period, route?
 - Do you know where this property is in relation to the (proposed) route?
- What do you think about HS2 and why?
- Firstly, how do you think the *construction* of HS2 will impact on the local area?
 - Prompts if necessary: impact on quality of life; impact on property values?
- How do you think the *construction* of HS2 will impact you/your household?
 - Prompt if necessary: construction periods are estimated to be 2018-2026 (Phase1); 2020-2027 (Phase 2a); and 2023-2033 (Phase 2b).
- How do you think the *operation* of HS2 will impact on the local area?
 - Prompts if necessary: impact on quality of life; impact on property values?
- How do you think the *operation* of HS2 will impact you/your household?
 - Prompt if necessary: HS2 will be in operation from 2026 (Phase 1); 2027 (Phase 2a); 2034 (Phase 2b).
- What are the main issues for you and why?
- What sources of information have you used to form these opinions?
 - Prompts if necessary: info from DfT/HS2/Government e.g. website, social media, consultation material, leaflets/letters, public events, MP; national or local media e.g. newspapers, TV, radio, websites, social media; action groups e.g. websites, social media, leaflets, local events; through friends/family/neighbours.

- For each source of information: how reliable do you think this information is?
- How easy or difficult have you found accessing information on HS2?
- Is there any information you would like to hear more about?

INTENDED BEHAVIOUR (20 MINS)

- Are you currently: intending to stay in this property/the area; leave the property/area; or undecided?
- (If leave) About how long ago did you start to think you may want to leave?
- Who else is involved in the decision making process?
- What has influenced your decision/is influencing the decision-making process?
 - Prompt if necessary: jobs; schools; family proximity; caring responsibilities; access to local services/businesses/medical facilities etc.
- What factors are making you want to go?
- What factors are making you want to stay?

Interviewer to write out in table for later use

'GO' FACTORS	'STAY' FACTORS

- Which is the most important 'go' factor for you? And the next most important etc.?
- Which is the least important 'go' factor for you?
- Which is the most important 'stay' factor for you? And the next most important etc.?
- Which is the least important 'stay' factor for you?
- Overall, which is the factor (or factors) that is influencing/has influenced your decision the most?
 - Prompt if necessary: do you know what other people in the local area are intending to do? To what extent does that influence your decision?
- At what point in time did you make/do you think you will make your decision? To what extent is your decision related to the HS2 timeline, or other personal factors?
 - Prompts on HS2 timeline if necessary, using show card:
 - Announcement of preferred route;
 - Introduction of hybrid bill i.e. necessary powers given for construction and operation;
 - Royal Assent i.e. becomes Act of Parliament, legislative powers given;
 - Construction;
 - Operation.
- What sources of information have you used to form these opinions?
 - Prompts if necessary: info from DfT/HS2/government e.g. website, social media, consultation material, leaflets/letters, public events, MP; national or local media e.g.

newspapers, TV, radio, websites, social media; action groups e.g. websites, social media, leaflets, local events; through friends/family/neighbours.

- For each source of information (if not already explored): how reliable do you think this information is; how useful is the information?
- Is there any other information you would like? What is it, and how would you like to receive it?

PROPERTY SCHEMES (5-10 MINS)

For all:

- Are you aware of any HS2 property assistance schemes? (Some people might refer to them as property compensation schemes, and may refer to zones or specific schemes.)
- (If yes) Which ones?
- Do you think you are eligible for any of the property assistance schemes offered by HS2?
- (If yes)
 - What do you think you might be entitled to?
 - Do you know how long you have to apply for the scheme(s)?
 - Do you know how long the application process takes?
- What sources of information, if any, have you used to gather information about the property assistance schemes?
 - Prompts if necessary: info from DfT/HS2/government e.g. website, social media, consultation material, leaflets/letters, public events, MP; national or local media e.g. newspapers, TV, radio, websites, social media; action groups e.g. websites, social media, leaflets, local events; through friends/family/neighbours.
- For each source of information (if not already explored): how reliable do you think this information is; how useful is the information?

Using show material, interviewer to run through all relevant assistance schemes as follows:

- *Rural Support Zone: RSZ show card (and NTS show card if unaware)*
- *Homeowner Payment Zones: HOP and NTS show cards*
- *Beyond zone: NTS show card*

- Is there anything just explained that you were not aware of?

For those in RSZ who are aware they are (i.e. who have made reference to the Cash Offer and/or Voluntary Purchase Scheme):

- Do you think you are more likely to choose the Cash Offer or Voluntary Purchase Scheme?
- What factors are influencing your decision? Why?
 - Are you aware of anyone else applying for Cash Offer or VPS? To what extent does this influence your decision, or not?
- Currently there is no option to take the Cash Offer now and still have the option to apply later for the Voluntary Purchase scheme. However I am interested in whether, in theory, if this were possible, would it influence your decision? In what way? Why? (*Moderator note: you must mention that the cash offer amount would be subtracted from the property purchase payment.*)

For those in RSZ who are not aware they are (i.e. who have not made reference to the Cash Offer or Voluntary Purchase Scheme):

- Do you think you are likely, or unlikely, to apply for a property assistance scheme?
- What factors are influencing your decision? Why?
 - Are you aware of anyone else applying for a scheme? To what extent does this influence your decision, or not?

For those not in RSZ (i.e. in the HOP or 'beyond' zone):

- Do you think you are likely, or unlikely, to apply for the Need to Sell (NTS) Scheme?
- What factors are influencing your decision? Why?
 - Are you aware of anyone else applying for NTS? To what extent does this influence your decision, or not?
- (If in HOP and aware) To what extent does being in the HOP zone influence your decision to apply for NTS? Why? *(Moderator note: They could take payment and later apply to NTS, with cash payment deducted from purchase price.)*

For all:

- What type of information on property assistance schemes would you like, if any?
 - How would you like to access this information?
 - Prompt if necessary: information delivered directly e.g. through the door, email etc., or sources identified to access it e.g. through websites, attending events etc.

IMPROVING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT? (5-10 MINS)

Interviewer to refer to table of go/stay factors. For each 'go' factor (or if many, a few most important to the participant):

- Finally, I'd like to go back to the issues you raised earlier in the interview. What, if anything, could HS2 Ltd do to (help) alleviate this concern?
 - Prompt for each: is there any information you would need? How would you like to receive the information (e.g. letter, email, roadshow etc.)?
- Is there anything else HS2 Ltd could do/provide that would make you more likely to stay in the area? Why do you say that?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

- Is there anything else you would like to add before we finish?

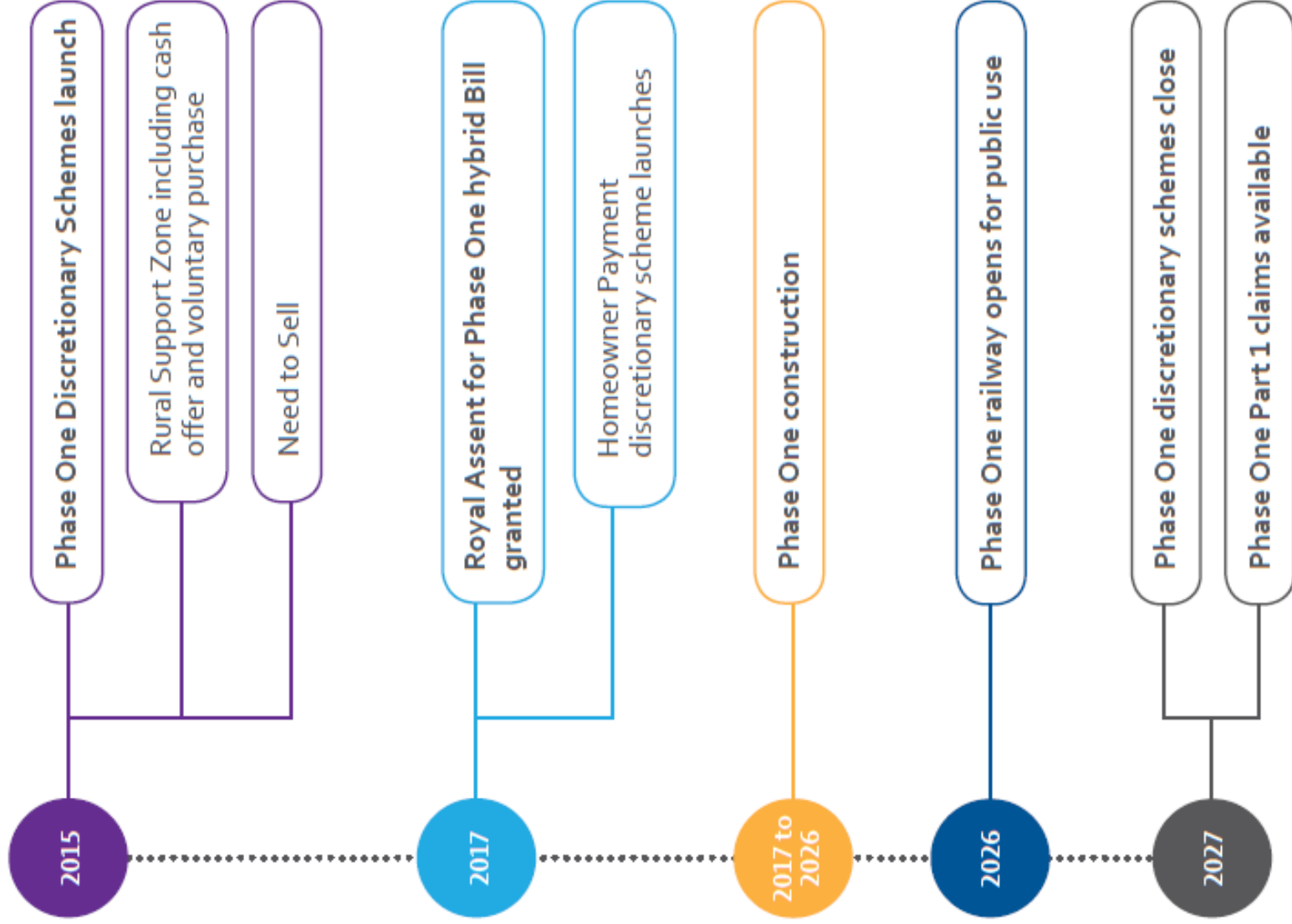
Interviewer to thank participant ensure that all participants' questions on the research are answered.

Appendix D – Show Cards

HS2 Community Cohesion, DfT

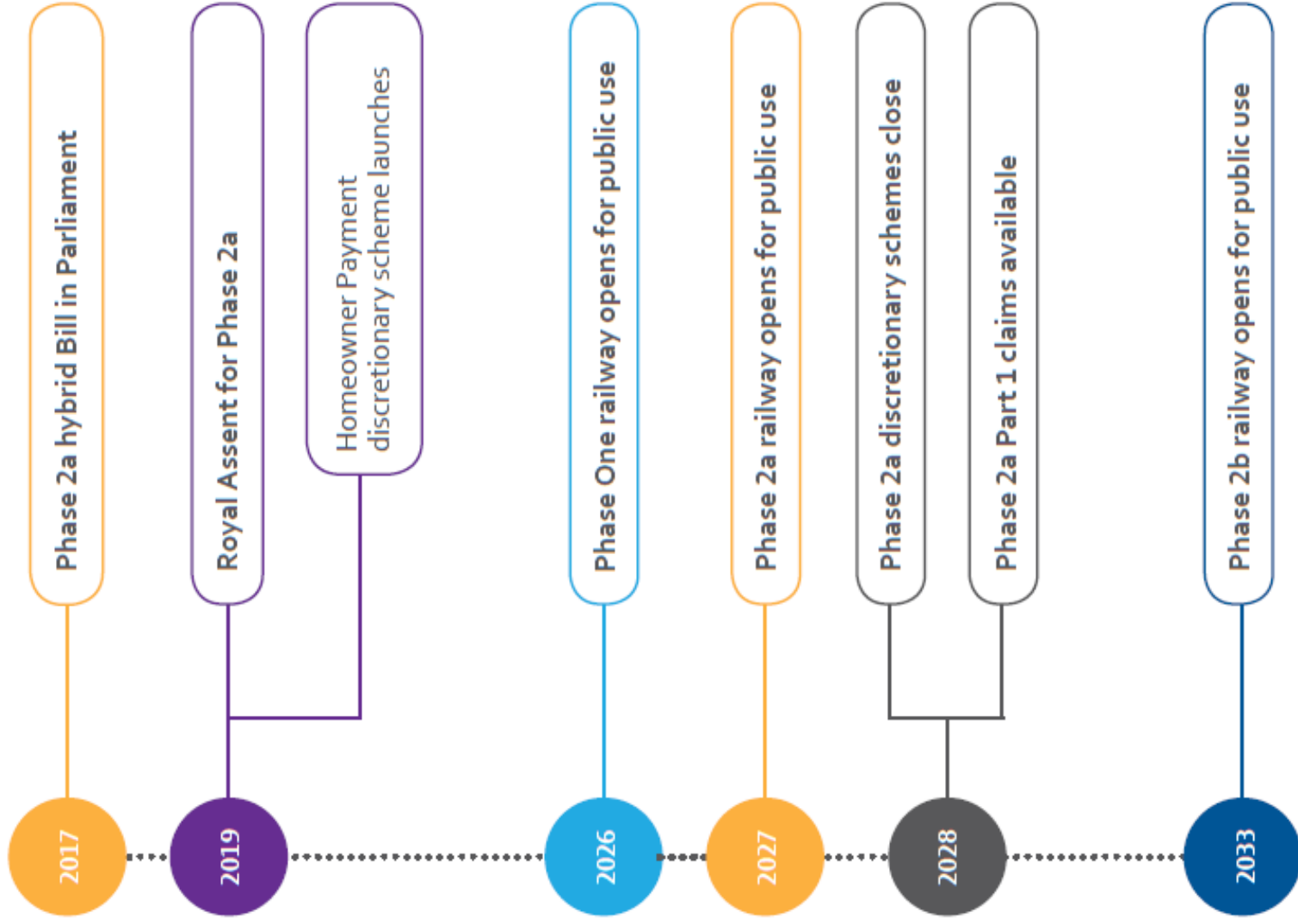
Show Card Pack

Phase One Timeline



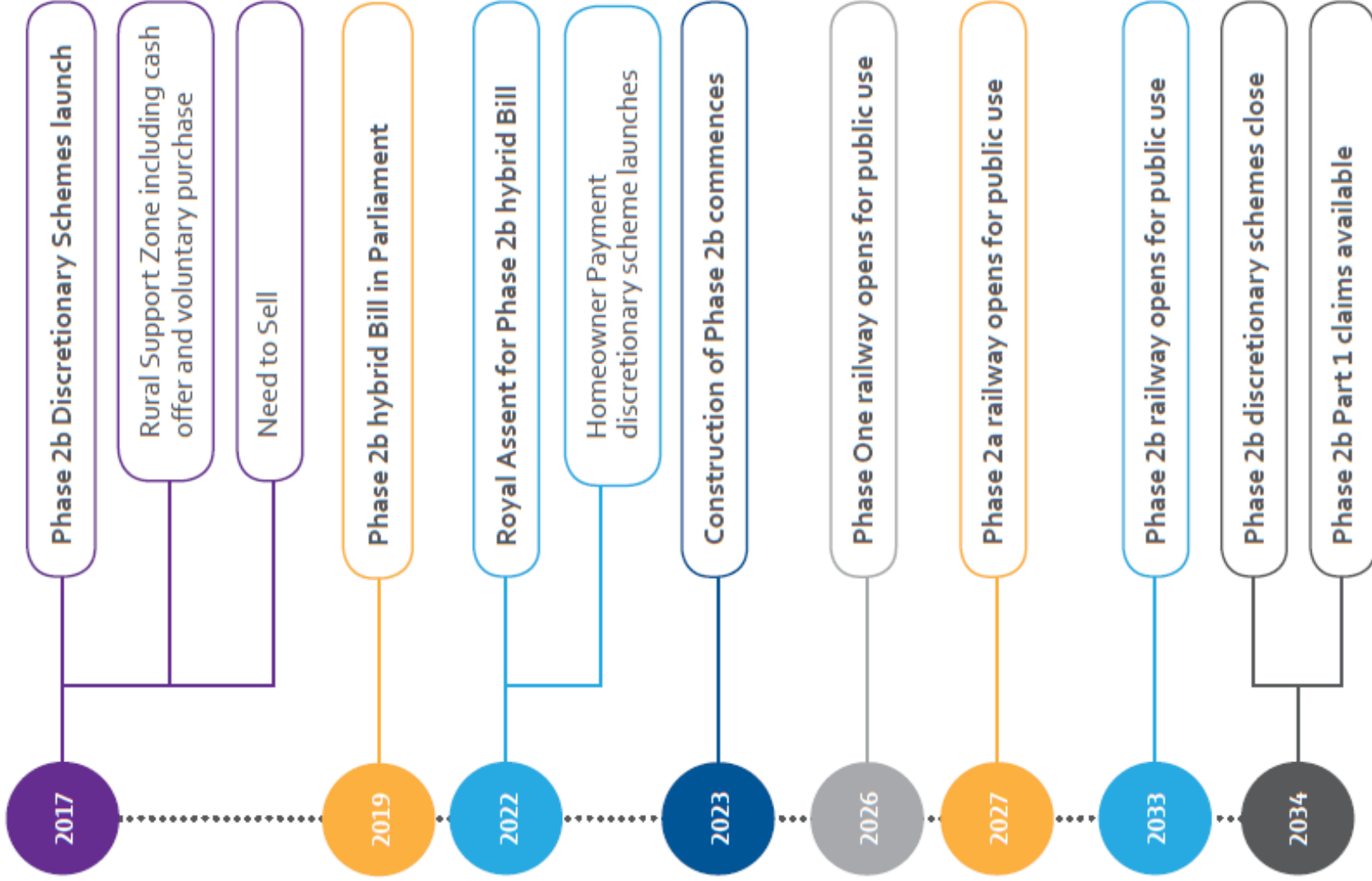
All dates subject to Parliamentary process

Phase 2a Timeline



All dates subject to Parliamentary process

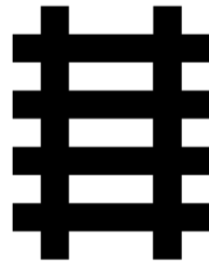
Phase 2b Timeline



All dates subject to Parliamentary process

Rural Support Zone (RSZ) Overview

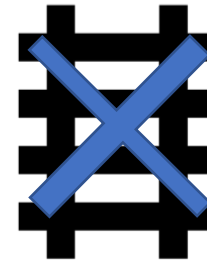
Eligibility



up to 120m



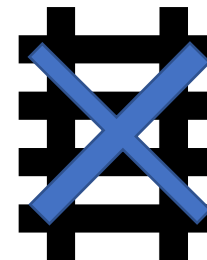
Cash Offer



10% un-blighted value

Two Options

Voluntary Purchase



HS2 purchase at un-blighted value

Need to Sell (NTS) Overview

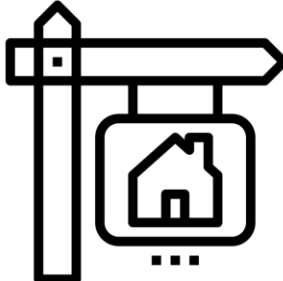
Eligibility



owner-occupier



location

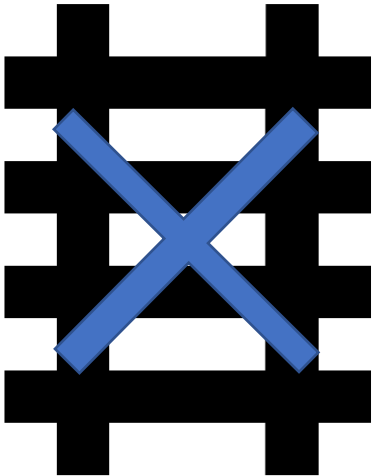


attempts to sell



other factors

Offer if successful

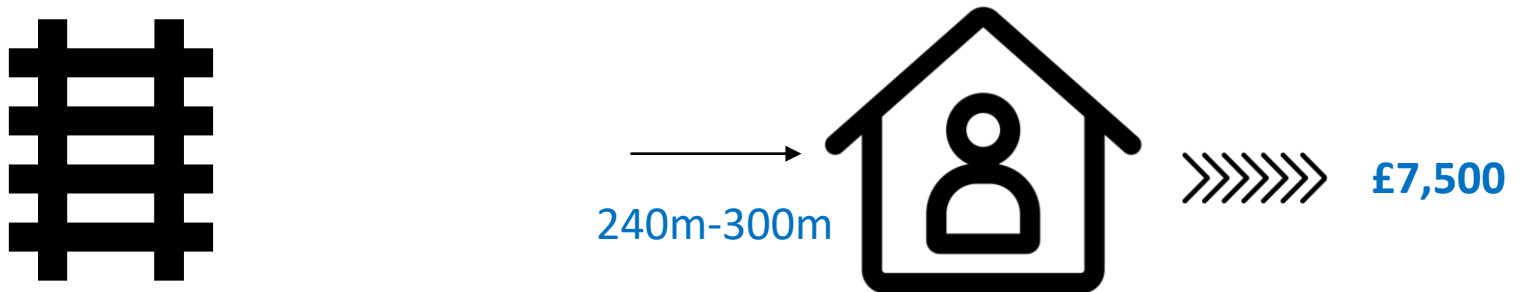
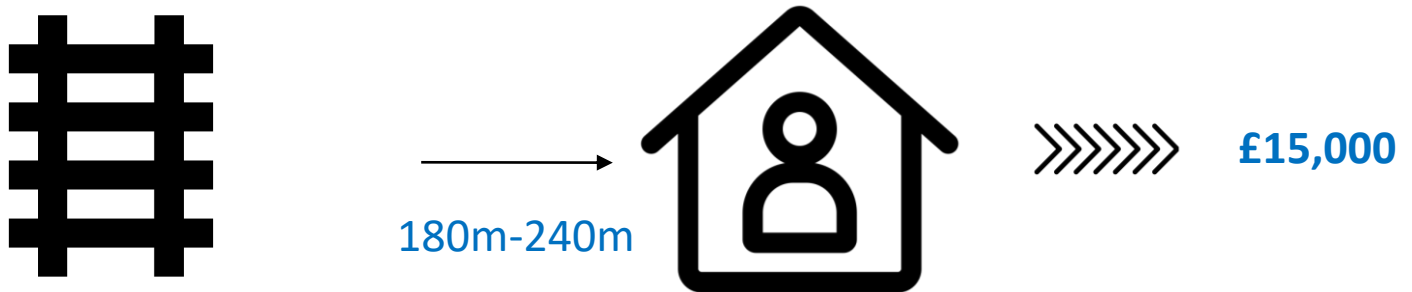


HS2 purchase at un-blighted value

Homeowner Payment Overview



Payments



SYSTRA provides advice on transport, to central, regional and local government, agencies, developers, operators and financiers.

A diverse group of results-oriented people, we are part of a strong team of professionals worldwide. Through client business planning, customer research and strategy development we create solutions that work for real people in the real world.

For more information visit www.systra.co.uk

Birmingham – Newhall Street

5th Floor, Lancaster House, Newhall St,
Birmingham, B3 1NQ
T: +44 (0)121 393 4841

Birmingham – Edmund Gardens

1 Edmund Gardens, 121 Edmund Street,
Birmingham B3 2HJ
T: +44 (0)121 393 4841

Dublin

2nd Floor, Riverview House, 21-23 City Quay
Dublin 2, Ireland
T: +353 (0) 1 566 2028

Edinburgh – Thistle Street

Prospect House, 5 Thistle Street, Edinburgh EH2 1DF
United Kingdom
T: +44 (0)131 460 1847

Glasgow – St Vincent St

Seventh Floor, 124 St Vincent Street
Glasgow G2 5HF United Kingdom
T: +44 (0)141 468 4205

Glasgow – West George St

250 West George Street, Glasgow, G2 4QY
T: +44 (0)141 468 4205

Leeds

100 Wellington Street, Leeds, LS1 1BA
T: +44 (0)113 360 4842

London

3rd Floor, 5 Old Bailey, London EC4M 7BA United Kingdom
T: +44 (0)20 3855 0079

Manchester – 16th Floor, City Tower

16th Floor, City Tower, Piccadilly Plaza
Manchester M1 4BT United Kingdom
T: +44 (0)161 504 5026

Newcastle

Floor B, South Corridor, Milburn House, Dean Street, Newcastle, NE1
1LE
United Kingdom
T: +44 (0)191 249 3816

Perth

13 Rose Terrace, Perth PH1 5HA
T: +44 (0)131 460 1847

Reading

Soane Point, 6-8 Market Place, Reading,
Berkshire, RG1 2EG
T: +44 (0)118 206 0220

Woking

Dukes Court, Duke Street
Woking, Surrey GU21 5BH United Kingdom
T: +44 (0)1483 357705

Other locations:

France:

Bordeaux, Lille, Lyon, Marseille, Paris

Northern Europe:

Astana, Copenhagen, Kiev, London, Moscow, Riga, Wroclaw

Southern Europe & Mediterranean: Algiers, Baku, Bucharest,

Madrid, Rabat, Rome, Sofia, Tunis

Middle East:

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Asia Pacific:

Bangkok, Beijing, Brisbane, Delhi, Hanoi, Hong Kong, Manila,
Seoul, Shanghai, Singapore, Shenzhen, Taipei

Africa:

Abidjan, Douala, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Libreville, Nairobi

Latin America:

Lima, Mexico, Rio de Janeiro, Santiago, São Paulo

North America:

Little Falls, Los Angeles, Montreal, New-York, Philadelphia,
Washington

The SYSTRA logo is displayed in a large, bold, red, sans-serif font. The letters are thick and closely spaced, with a slight shadow effect behind them, giving it a three-dimensional appearance. The logo is centered at the bottom of the page.