

HS2

High Speed Rail (Crewe - Manchester) Bill

Safeguarding Directions

With guidance notes for local planning authorities

July 2025



Department for Transport

High Speed Two (HS2) Limited has been tasked by the Department for Transport (DfT) with managing the delivery of a new national high speed rail line between London and the West Midlands. It is a non-departmental public body wholly owned by the DfT.

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Safeguarding Directions for development affecting the route and associated works for the High Speed Rail (Crewe - Manchester) Bill

The Secretary of State for Transport gives the following Directions (“Directions”) to the local planning authorities named in the Schedule in exercise of the powers conferred by articles 18(4), 31(1) and 34(8) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015¹ (“the Order”).

Commencement

1. These Directions come into force on 17 July 2025 (“the commencement date”).

Application

2. These Directions apply in respect of any application for planning permission which: -
 - a) has not been finally determined by the commencement date;
 - b) relates to development within the zone specified in paragraph 3; and
 - c) is not an exempt application by virtue of paragraph 4.

Relevant zone

3. The zone referred to in paragraph 2(b) is the zone shown bounded by lines marked “Limits of Land subject to Safeguarding Direction” on the plans (dated June 2022) annexed to these Directions being the zone relating to the construction and operation of the railway proposed by the High Speed Rail (Crewe - Manchester) Bill, as introduced on 24 January 2022.

Exempt applications

4. An application is exempt for the purposes of paragraph 2(c) if it is an application for planning permission which relates to development that: -
 - a) lies within the zone shown on the plans referred to in paragraph 3 and is shown shaded as blue on those plans;
 - b) consists only of an alteration to a building which is a hereditament that falls within the scope of section 149(3) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990² (both before

¹ S.I. 2015/595 made under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (c. 8), see in particular section 74.

² 1990 c. 8.

- and after the development); and
- c) does not involve, or is not likely to involve, any construction, engineering or other operations below existing ground level.

Duties on Local Planning Authorities

- 5. Before a local planning authority may determine any planning permission in respect of any application for planning permission to which these Directions apply it must consult High Speed Two (HS2) Limited (Company No. 06791686) who act as the Secretary of State's agent in this matter.
- 6. Where a local planning authority is required by paragraph 5 to consult High Speed Two (HS2) Limited, they must not grant planning permission otherwise than to give effect to the recommendation of High Speed Two (HS2) Limited: -
 - a) unless they have delivered to the Secretary of State for Transport the material specified in paragraph 7; and
 - b) until the expiry of a period of 21 days from the date on which that material was delivered to the Secretary of State for Transport.
- 7. The material referred to in paragraph 6 is: -
 - a) a copy of the application for planning permission together with a copy of any plans or documents submitted with it;
 - b) a copy of the response of High Speed Two (HS2) Limited to the consultation by the local planning authority in pursuance of paragraph 5;
 - c) such information regarding the application as the Secretary of State for Transport may require by direction under article 34(8) of the Order; and
 - d) a statement on the provisions of the development plan and other issues involved, including whether the grant of permission would be contrary to the views of another Government Department.
- 8. These Directions cancel and replace the Directions³ for development affecting the route and associated works for the HS2 Phase 2b (Crewe to Manchester) and (West Midlands to Leeds), with connections onto the existing network issued to local planning authorities on 23 May 2023.

Signed by authority of the Secretary of State



Rob Middleton

A senior civil servant in the Department for Transport

³ S.I. 2015/595, article 45.

Schedule

Carlisle City Council

Cheshire East Council

Cheshire West and Chester Council

Cumbria County Council

Lancashire County Council

Manchester City Council

Preston City Council

Salford City Council

South Ribble

Trafford Borough Council

Warrington Borough Council

Wigan Council

Guidance notes for Local Planning Authorities to accompany Safeguarding Directions issued for the High Speed Rail (Crewe - Manchester) Bill

Background

1. These Safeguarding Directions were issued and came into force on 17 July 2025 under articles 18(4), 31(1) and 34(8) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015⁴ ("the Order"). They cancel and replace the previous Safeguarding Directions for HS2 Phase 2b: The Western Leg (Crewe to Manchester) and Eastern Leg (West Midlands to Leeds), with connections onto the existing network which were issued to local planning authorities on 23 May 2023 ("May 2023 Directions"). Although the May 2023 Directions have been replaced, the zone safeguarded for Crewe to Manchester is identical to that safeguarded in these Directions.
2. These Directions specifically relate to the construction of the railway proposed through the High Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester) Bill.
3. To protect the route from conflicting development, the Secretary of State for Transport has safeguarded this section of the route using Safeguarding Directions, which are an established tool of the planning system designed for this purpose. Safeguarding aims to ensure that new developments along the route do not impact on the ability to build or operate the railway or lead to excessive additional costs.
4. These Directions have been issued to Local Planning Authorities ("LPAs"), by the Secretary of State for Transport. LPAs need to consult High Speed Two (HS2) Limited ("HS2 Ltd") with regard to any planning applications falling within paragraph 2 of the Safeguarding Directions before determining an application for planning permission.
5. Safeguarding is kept under review and updated as the project evolves and as the level of engineering detail facilitates a greater understanding of the actual land required. This is to ensure that land which is not required for construction or operation of the railway is not unnecessarily blighted for extended periods.
6. The Safeguarding Directions will be kept under review, which is in line with the approach taken on major infrastructure projects.

Processing of Applications

7. Applications for planning permission on which HS2 Ltd must be consulted, in accordance with paragraph 5 of the Safeguarding Directions, should be sent to either:

The Safeguarding Planning Manager

⁴ S.I. 2015/595.

High Speed Two (HS2) Limited
Two Snowhill
Snow Hill Queensway
Birmingham, B4 6GA

Or by email to: town.planning@hs2.org.uk

8. Such applications must not be determined before the expiry of the period for consultation set out in article 18(5)(b) of the Order.
9. Any applications sent to HS2 Ltd under paragraph 5 of the Safeguarding Directions will be considered by HS2 Ltd on a case-by-case basis on the grounds of whether the proposed development will impact on the ability to build or operate the Railway proposed through the High Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester) Bill or lead to excessive additional costs.
10. Where the application does not include all the information required to allow HS2 Ltd to determine whether the development will impact on the ability to build or operate the Railway proposed through the High Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester) Bill or lead to excessive additional costs, HS2 Ltd will notify the LPA without delay setting out what additional information is needed and why.
11. In order to assist developers to design proposals that do not conflict or obstruct the route of the Railway proposed through the High Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester) Bill and to avoid the possibility of a recommendation of refusal being made to the LPA by HS2 Ltd under these Directions, HS2 Ltd has produced information about the design criteria to be used by developers bringing forward new developments in the safeguarded area of the route. That information can be requested from:

The Safeguarding Planning Manager
High Speed Two (HS2) Limited
Two Snowhill
Snow Hill Queensway
Birmingham, B4 6GA

Or by email to: town.planning@hs2.org.uk

12. Where HS2 Ltd has not responded within the period set out in article 18(5)(b) of the Order, the LPA may proceed to determine that application. Where HS2 Ltd has responded, the LPA will not be bound by that recommendation. However, if the LPA does not accept the recommendation, it will be required to notify the Secretary of State for Transport in accordance with paragraph 6 of the Directions.
13. Where permission is refused by the LPA due to a conflict with the railway proposed through the High Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester) Bill, the decision notice should refer to that conflict as the reasons for refusal(s). Copies of all decisions on planning applications on which HS2 Ltd have been consulted should be sent to the Safeguarding Planning Manager at the above postal or email address. HS2 Ltd has developed procedures for handling consultations relating to the Safeguarding Directions and may

recommend that conditions are imposed in specified circumstances and where appropriate to protect the railway proposed through the High Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester) Bill.

14. Applications which LPAs are minded to approve against the recommendation of HS2 Ltd should be sent by LPAs, in accordance with paragraph 6 of the Safeguarding Directions with the material specified in paragraph 7 of the Directions, to:

Major Rail Projects Group
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

And by email to: highspeedrail@dft.gov.uk

And copied by email to: town.planning@hs2.org.uk

15. The DfT will inform the LPA of the date of receipt of the application and the material required under paragraph 7 of the Safeguarding Directions and will either notify the LPA that there are no objections to permission being granted, or issue directions restricting the granting of permission specifically for that application.
16. Where the DfT has not responded within 21 days of receipt of the papers referred to above, the LPA may proceed to determine the application.

Blight and Purchase Notices

17. The provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 on blight and purchase notices will apply to property affected by safeguarding. The appropriate authority to receive purchase notices is the LPA. Blight notices should be served on the Secretary of State for Transport and sent to:

The Land and Property Team
High Speed Two (HS2) Limited
Two Snowhill
Snow Hill Queensway
Birmingham, B4 6GA

Alternatively, blight notices with attached evidence can be emailed to:
blightnotice@hs2.org.uk

Further details of the provisions and how to complete a blight or purchase notice can be obtained from the Land and Property Team at the above address or can be found on our website www.gov.uk/hs2

Planning and local land charges registers

18. In accordance with article 40(4)(b) of the Order, particulars of the Safeguarding Directions must be entered in Part 2 of the Register of Applications, in respect of any application for planning permission to which they apply. The DfT and HS2 Ltd consider that the safeguarding provisions should be revealed in response to Optional Enquiries sent with requisitions for searches of the local land charges register in relation to properties within the zone described in paragraph 3 of the Safeguarding Directions.

Pending planning applications

19. LPAs are reminded that the Safeguarding Directions issued on 17 July 2025 apply to any planning application that has not been finally determined by that date (and which includes cases where a resolution to grant a permission has been made by the LPA but the permission has not been formally issued) other than an application in relation to development of the exempted category specified in paragraph 4 of the Directions.
20. Accordingly, LPAs must review all pending applications to determine whether the development proposed is a development to which these Safeguarding Directions apply.

Local Plans

21. In preparing any Development Plan Document (an area's Local Plan), the area safeguarded by the Directions should be taken into account. Where a Safeguarding Direction is taken into account in a Local Plan, it should be represented on the Policies Map (in accordance with regulation 9 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012⁵ (as amended)).
22. Adding information about the extent of the safeguarded area on the Policies Map is helpful for those considering development in the area. However, it is important to note that the requirements of the Safeguarding Directions apply in the circumstances described above regardless of whether the safeguarded area is identified on the Policies Map.
23. It should be made clear in the Local Plans that the Safeguarding Directions are made by the Secretary of State for Transport. They are not proposals of the LPA and the railway proposed through the High Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester) Bill in question will not be determined through the development plan process but rather will be considered in Parliament under the hybrid Bill procedures.
24. Further information on hybrid Bill procedures can be obtained from <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/constructing-the-hs2-railway> and from the HS2 Helpdesk on Freephone 08081 434 434 or HS2enquiries@hs2.org.uk
25. Where the Local Plan has been submitted for independent examination, the LPA should record any representations received which relate to the Safeguarding Directions and bring these to the attention of the inspector appointed to hold the examination of the Local Plan. The inspector's role is to consider the policies of the LPA set out in the Local Plan. If the inspector is satisfied that an objection is solely to matters covered by the

⁵ S.I. 2012/767.

Safeguarding Directions, rather than to proposals of the LPA, the inspector is unlikely to consider the objection to be relevant to the consideration of the Local Plan document.

26. When adopting supplementary planning documents, the LPAs should note any representations received which relate to the Safeguarding Directions in the statement of consultation.

Timing

27. These Safeguarding Directions come into force on 17 July 2025 and apply in respect of the applications for planning permission described in paragraph 2 of the Directions.

17 July 2025

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