



High Speed Rail: Route, Speed and Station Locations QSD on 11 March 2020

On 11 March 2020, Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle (Green Party) is due to ask Her Majesty's Government "what assessment they have made of the current options for (1) the route, (2) the speed, and (3) the station locations of HS2".

Summary

- The Government confirmed its intention to "proceed with the whole HS2 plan" in a statement to the House of Commons on 11 February 2020.
- The Oakervee report was published in February 2020. The report was commissioned to review whether the HS2 project should proceed, and how it might continue. The report recommended the continuation of HS2, arguing that "the original rationale for HS2 still holds". The report's recommendations included that:
 - HS2 be planned as part of the national rail network;
 - speed should not be in and of itself the primary driver of decision making; and
 - Old Oak Common station should act as the temporary London terminus until Euston station is complete.
- Environmental groups, such as the Wildlife Trusts, have raised concerns about the environmental impact of the project. It argues that HS2 will have significant impact on areas along the route, including 108 ancient woodlands, 693 classified local wildlife sites and 21 designated local nature reserves.
- The Government has stated that Environmental Statements have been published for phases 1 and 2a, and that it intends to plant 7 million trees along the first phase route.
- The House of Lords Economic Affairs committee raised issues with the proposed speed of HS2 in their report *Rethinking High Speed 2*. The Committee recommended reducing the speed of the service as a way to reduce costs.
- Commenting just before the release of the Oakervee report on 10 February 2020, the Government stated that no decision had been made to revise the speed.
- The Committee also recommended using Old Oak Common as the London terminus. In a debate on the Committee's report on 23 January 2020, Baroness Vere of Norbiton, Parliamentary under-secretary of State for Transport, stated that this idea "must be considered".

Sally Dray | 5 March 2020

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Further Information

- Statement by the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, on [‘Transport Infrastructure’](#), HC Hansard, 11 February 2020, cols 711–31.

Statement from the Prime Minister confirming that “the Cabinet has given high-speed rail the green signal”. Then, further debate by MPs covering the HS2 route and stations.

- Douglas Oakervee, [Oakervee Review](#), 11 February 2020, pp 11–18, 41–54, and 72–79.

Executive summary, HS2 design and route and HS2 stations sections from the review into the HS2 project. The HS2 design and route considers speed specifications, and the HS2 stations section examines the suitability of Euston, concluding that the “existing design for the HS2 station at Euston is not satisfactory”.

- HS2, [‘Route Map \(Described\)’](#), 7 March 2019; and Department for Transport, [High Speed Two—From Concept to Reality](#), July 2017, p 28.

Details from the HS2 website on the proposed route for HS2 and a map published by the Government in an earlier report. The HS2 described route map details the stations along the route and the proposed speeds between them, for example it states that HS2 trains will run “up to 225mph” between Old Oak Common and Birmingham.

- House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee, [Rethinking High Speed 2](#), 16 May 2019, HL Paper 359 of session 2017–19, pp 3–8; and [Government Response](#), 19 July 2019; and [Debate on ‘High Speed 2 \(Economic Affairs Committee Report\)’](#), HL Hansard, 23 January 2020, cols 1187–252.

Summary of the report’s conclusions and recommendations, the response from the Government to the report, and the subsequent debate on the report in the House of Lords in January 2020.

Parliamentary Debate, Statements and Questions

- House of Commons, [‘Oral Question on HS2’](#), HC Hansard, 24 October 2019, cols 1107–8
- A selection of written questions from both Houses: [18577](#) (26 February 2020); [21375](#) (26 February 2020); [HL1535](#) (25 February 2020); [15104](#) (24 February 2020); [1161](#) (24 February 2020); [HL1640](#) (13 February 2020); [HL827](#) (10 February 2020)

Press Articles and Comment

- Gwyn Topham, [‘HS2 Legal Challenge Launched by Chris Packham’](#), *Guardian*, 3 March 2020.
- Gill Plimmer, [‘Oakervee Review Calls for HS2 Ltd to be Stripped of Euston Project’](#), *Financial Times* (£), 7 February 2020.
- Christopher Hope, [‘HS2 Trains to Hit Top Speed on Just Half the Line’](#), *Telegraph* (£), 8 February 2020.

- [‘How HS2 Will Transform a Forlorn Part of London’](#), *Economist* (£), 8 February 2020.
- The Wildlife Trusts, [What’s the Damage? Why HS2 Will Cost Nature Too Much](#), 15 January 2020.

Further Reading

- House of Lords Library, [Economic Affairs Committee Report: Rethinking High Speed 2](#), 16 January 2020.
- National Audit Office, [High Speed Two: A Progress Update](#), 24 January 2020.