



## Hs2 review, general overview as at 21.03.2017

Written by Brian Sinclair for Evenley's Annual Parish Meeting

Well, after £1.4 billion already spent, the following headlines appeared . . . . .

*HS2 took a major step forward today (23 February 2017) as Britain's new railway successfully completed over 3 years of Parliamentary scrutiny to receive Royal Assent.*

*Construction will now begin on schedule in the spring. Today also sees the launch of schemes totalling £70 million for communities along the route between Birmingham and London.*

The question is how will it affect us as a community and the country in general?

This is a brief overview as your Highways representative without getting into specifics of the overall construction of the line.

Forgetting all the politics and economic arguments, it is going ahead and we must ensure the disruption to all the communities along its route is kept to a minimum.

Our local Steering group, chaired frequently by Andrea Leadsome, our local MP and now Environment Secretary, has raised practical concerns amongst the traffic levels generally and the routes to be used for construction traffic. We have also discussed with Hs2 limited who have attended meetings, along with Highways England (HE), such things as gantry design and the finer points of compulsory purchase.

The Hs2 engagement teams have been set up to deal with local issues and that is why our steering group should continue to play a major part in this dialogue.

The **Community fund** is available for Parish Council's to apply for monies if they feel they have a legitimate reason why they will suffer hardship from this disruption.

Highways England are working closely with Hs2 to ensure traffic forecasts are accurate (an extra 800 Vehicle movements per day anticipated on the A43 alone).

HE are also aware of a backlog of work with such things as the Evenley roundabout and concerns with the forthcoming Tesco roundabout improvements as well as extra traffic with a Silverstone Hospitality up-grade to add to the works now under way at the Croughton Airbase.

The Radstone Fields development at the top of Brackley and the imminent building of the new Sainsbury and associated facilities will no doubt add more to the A43 as well as local traffic.

In general terms as I see it, the next stage is for area representatives such as myself to set up meetings with the Hs2 construction partners to see exactly how the work will commence, timetables, contingency plans for bad weather, route diversions etc. I anticipate joining with Croughton, Farthinghoe and Brackley on this.

The Haul routes for construction traffic are available on the website and though very clear, there will be questions raised.

The next meeting of the steering group is on 7<sup>th</sup> April and I am hoping to attend.

It should be an interesting meeting, the first since Royal assent.

It is important to remember that as a Parish council we remain up to date with these events through the steering group so that we can hopefully have some influence in protecting our environment while this work goes on for the next ten years.

For more information:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/high-speed-two-limited>