DfT publishes recommendations to deliver fairer deal for communities on HS2 property schemes

An overhaul of how land and property is purchased for High Speed 2 (HS2) will deliver a fairer deal for communities impacted by the project, Transport Minister Andrew Stephenson announced today (Tuesday 17 November 2020), as he published a range of recommendations to improve acquisition processes.

The 36 proposals are the result of the Department for Transport’s (DfT’s) HS2 land and property review and pave the way for an improved system that focuses on better communication, more flexible compensation packages and tailored support for businesses.

The review was commissioned by the HS2 Minister after the government gave the green light to build the entire HS2 project, alongside a commitment to improve management and boost transparency, accountability and value to the taxpayer.

HS2 Minister Andrew Stephenson said:

> When we gave HS2 the go-ahead, we vowed that we would strengthen our oversight and control to ensure this vital project is delivered at the right price, and that those impacted by its construction get a fairer deal.
>
> As we build back better from COVID-19, these recommendations will ensure communities are treated with respect by establishing a more transparent compensation process and creating tailored support for businesses.

Work on implementing the recommendations will begin immediately, with priority given to those that will have the greatest impact as swiftly as possible.

Conducted over the summer, the review has been shaped by a number of key stakeholders, MPs that represent constituencies along the route and HS2 Ltd. The review also includes the lessons learnt from Phase 1 of the project and considers the compensation arrangements of other infrastructure projects.

Among the recommendations published today are measures designed to speed up property valuations and disturbance payments, settle cases and disputes more quickly, and build on the improvements HS2 Ltd have introduced to engage more effectively with people.

Tony Mulhall, Associate Director, Royal Institution of Charted Surveyors, said:

> We welcome the government's proposals published today. Recommending better communication around a complicated system, such as compulsory purchase, and giving more support to those who may not be familiar with the processes is a positive step.
>
> RICS requires its professionals to always come to a fair and equitable outcome in a reasonable time frame that is to the benefit of all parties. Added government support for an improved faster and fairer system, with all sides adhering to established standards of good practice, can only be to the benefit of the communities along the routes and is something we fully support.

The new proposals will be taken into consideration as the government progresses plans for Phases 2a and 2b of the project, which will see the delivery of high-speed rail services to a new station at Manchester Piccadilly, and to Leeds via the East Midlands.

In September, HS2 Ltd announced that it had officially started construction on Phase 1 of the line, spearheading the creation of 22,000 jobs.

Last month, the company announced the creation of 412 new apprenticeship opportunities, as part of its Skills, Employment and Education Strategy to create at least 2,000 apprenticeships during the life span of the project.

Consultation launched on CMA Merger Assessment Guidelines

The updated Merger Assessment Guidelines will help ensure that the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) continues to protect consumers through its merger enforcement work as well as aiding companies and their advisers to assess whether competition concerns might be raised by the CMA before they enter into a deal or purchase.

The CMA's current merger assessment guidelines were published in 2010. Since then, markets have evolved and changed at a rapid pace, often making the act of assessing mergers more complex. The rise of digital technologies has also significantly changed the way that consumers behave and how businesses compete with one another.

The guidelines will build on recommendations made by the Furman (Unlocking digital competition: Report from the Digital Competition Expert Panel) and Lear (Ex-post Assessment of Merger Control Decisions in Digital Markets) reports in 2019 on how the CMA should approach its assessment of digital mergers; for example, an increased focus on the potential for future competition, and considering innovation and other non-price related effects when assessing whether there is likely to be a substantial lessening of competition. This will reflect the CMA's recent case experience and improve its merger enforcement within the existing legal framework.

Today's launch marks the second consultation on the CMA's merger guidance this month, following the updates to the CMA's [jurisdictional and procedural guidance (CMA2)] and the guidance on the CMA's [mergers intelligence function (CMA56)].

Andrea Coscelli, Chief Executive Officer of the Competition and Markets Authority, said:

"Our updated guidelines better reflect the way businesses, including online businesses, now compete as well as our own recent experiences of reviewing mergers in digital markets. New technologies have made markets even more dynamic and so we have had to re-think the way that we interrogate mergers in those sectors over the past ten years.

"These updated guidelines will help ensure that, through effective enforcement, consumers will continue to receive the best products and services possible without weakening competition or damaging future innovation."

Further details on the updated guidelines can be found in the [consultation document].

The CMA now welcomes views on the revised guidance documents from businesses, their legal and other advisers, and other interested parties by 8 January 2021.

Media queries should be directed to press@cma.gov.uk or 020 3738 6460

We need business to help us get girls learning – and change the world: article by Baroness Sugg

Coronavirus has changed the world. We are facing the biggest triple threat of our lifetimes, with unprecedented economic, health and education crises.

While there has been much focus on the first two, the latter cannot be overlooked. At the height of school closures due to coronavirus, 1.6 billion children were out of school globally with girls disproportionately affected.

Millions of girls across the world are now at risk of never returning to the classroom.

This educational catastrophe has economic implications too. Lost learning due to the pandemic could result in students around the world missing out on around £12,000 in reduced wages over their lifetimes. Altogether, we could lose one-tenth of global GDP.

That would be catastrophically detrimental to the next generation of families, businesses, and nations everywhere. It would threaten our ability to end poverty, support entrepreneurs, and boost economic growth.

And without action, it will get worse.

As the future employers of the next generation of women and drivers of growth in vulnerable countries, businesses have a vital role to play in confronting this challenge, tearing down obstacles that keep girls from learning and achieving their potential.

In many of the world’s poorest and most unstable countries, girls’ education is threatened by risks, which include child marriage, violence, the need to take on domestic work and lack of access to quality learning.

Remove the barriers and a powerful force is unleashed: a child whose mother can read is 50 per cent more likely to live past the age of five, twice as likely to attend school themselves and 50 per cent more likely to be immunised against common diseases. A girl with one year of additional schooling will increase her earnings by a fifth.

For businesses, giving girls quality education is not just the right thing to do – it is the smart thing to do. Educating girls creates thriving and diverse workforces. It creates the leaders of the future: scientists that will fight climate change and engineers that will develop cutting-edge technology. It prevents child marriage that keeps women out of the workplace. It boosts incomes, builds productivity and strengthens economies.

That’s why we are calling on businesses to join us in this fight. We’ve already seen the impact that can be made.

British satellite communications company Avanti has partnered with Project iMlango, an e-learning programme in Africa, backed by UK aid, to deliver broadband connectivity that ensures education content can reach 245 remote and rural schools across Kenya. Since the coronavirus outbreak, the iMlango project has given more than 68,000 girls an opportunity to keep up with their learning while schools were closed.

We have also partnered with Unilever, one of the largest companies in the UK, to launch an information campaign in 37 countries, from Syria to South Africa, to make sure people wash their hands with soap regularly to stop the spread of coronavirus.

When businesses take action, we can educate more girls, more quickly and more effectively. That’s why next year – during our G7 Presidency – the UK, Kenya and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) will co-host a Global Education Summit which will unite businesses, world leaders and charities in a shared endeavour to educate more children and build back better from coronavirus.

As part of this, the UK and GPE are launching a series of events from this week to bring together business leaders from British, African and international companies, alongside Education Ministers from developing countries, such as Kenya and Nigeria, to establish how we can work together to tackle the global learning crisis.

The UK, as a world leader on championing girls’ rights, is joining forces with major, influential brands such as HP, PWC, Ecobank and Econet, to discuss aligning companies’ sustainability initiatives with national education strategies of developing countries. This includes commitments from businesses to boost women and girls’ skills, empowerment, and financial education. Together, we’ll get more girls learning to unlock opportunity.

If we educate one child, we can change one life. If we educate millions, we can change the world.

Further information

[HS2 land and property review]

High Speed Two (HS2) is at the heart of our plans to build back better from the COVID-19 pandemic, creating 1000s of skilled jobs, boosting connectivity between our towns and cities and helping to rebalance opportunity across the country for years to come.

However, as part of that commitment to build back better, it’s crucial that we deliver HS2 in a way that is as considerate as possible of those disrupted by the project, who may face losing their homes and relocating their businesses.

In confirming HS2 would go ahead in February 2020, the Prime Minister also committed to a step-change in HS2 Ltd’s performance and to drive improvements in transparency, accountability and value to the taxpayer. This included a renewed focus on placing people – the communities and individuals who will be impacted by HS2 – at the heart of everything the government does.

So following my appointment as the Minister for HS2, I initiated a review of the HS2 land and property acquisition programme, to ensure that those most directly affected were placed at its heart.

The review examined HS2 Ltd’s operational acquisition processes and, where the evidence demonstrated it, associated wider-government policies. It focussed on 4 areas. How to:

- deliver a step-change in community engagement on the land and property

acquisition programme
- protect the interests of those impacted
- improve process efficiency and delivery by HS2 Ltd
- drive a better tone, showing conspicuous respect, courtesy and understanding

Today, I'm pleased to publish the findings of this review. Copies of the report have been laid in the Libraries of the House.

The government is grateful for the contributions made by Members of the House and their constituents, external stakeholders, the HS2 Residents' Commissioner and the HS2 Construction Commissioner. The review also considered lessons from Phase One of HS2 and examined compensation regimes employed on other UK infrastructure projects and abroad.

The review generated a number of proposals that are designed to speed up property valuations and disturbance payments, settle cases and disputes more quickly and build on the improvements HS2 Ltd have been introducing to engage more effectively with people.

The focus now will be on how the government and HS2 Ltd turn these proposals into long-lasting changes that not only improve the delivery of HS2, but also the experience and well-being of individuals, businesses and communities impacted by them.

The government wants to ensure that those living near the route receive the right support at all stages of the project. Importantly, it remains committed to ensuring that those affected are properly compensated and treated with compassion, dignity and respect.

UK-Kenya Economic Development Forum: New UK funding for prosperity

The UK and Kenya held the second Economic Development Forum where KES 131 million of new British funding was announced to increase trade and investment opportunities.

The virtual Forum – co-chaired by UK Minister for Africa, James Duddridge and Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Trade, Betty Maina – saw the UK announce new funding to boost investment into Kenya, including:

- KES 6 million to catalyse early stage investment, or 'angel investment', into Kenyan start-ups to help budding entrepreneurs navigate from business ideas through to scalable and investable businesses. Applications for the angel-investing programme opens next week

- funding of KES 125 million to attract investment and grow key sectors, such as agro-processing and pharmaceuticals, safeguarding Kenyan jobs and livelihoods

The Forum also noted significant UK support to Kenya’s post-COVID-19 economic response with KES 225 million to:

- help to keep supply chains operating and trade flowing
- support businesses to open up in a COVID-19 safe way
- help retain investment in Kenya

British High Commissioner to Kenya, Jane Marriott, said:

> Today’s Forum is helping our countries trade more, invest more and create more jobs. It builds on the initialling of the UK-Kenya trade agreement earlier this month, which will ensure trade continuity between our countries. I am delighted to see so much momentum to strengthen our economic partnership, and today’s announcement of new UK support for entrepreneurs and businesses shows our deep commitment to building our mutual prosperity.

The UK has been working with Kenya to increase its attractiveness for international investment. UK companies are already major investors and employers in Kenya, and more UK companies want to invest in Kenya. At the Forum, both governments discussed how they could cooperate to unlock significant investments from UK companies to help boost Kenya’s growth.

The UK is also providing support to the landmark Nairobi Railway City development, as agreed between Prime Minister Johnson and President Kenyatta. A consortium of UK firms is delivering world-class advice on the technical and commercial aspects of the development. The longer-term benefits of this project are likely to include: increased transport capacity that will help Nairobi sustain future growth; stimulated inward investment that will create new jobs; and opportunities to pursue green solutions for city development.

Both Ministers also noted remarkable progress on the trade deal negotiations between the UK and Kenya and which was initialled on 3 November, 2020.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson and President Uhuru Kenyatta agreed a five-year Strategic Partnership, which includes Mutual Prosperity between the UK and Kenya on 21 January 2020, following the UK-Africa Investment Summit.

Notes to editors

The UK-Kenya Trade Agreement aims to:

- provide the strongest possible platform for the United Kingdom, Kenya and, ultimately, the whole East African Community, to expand our trade relationship in future
- promote increased trade and investment by putting our trading

relationship on a more equitable, mature and business-like footing, supporting sustainable growth and poverty reduction
- act as a catalyst to deepen our mutual prosperity alongside the other areas of cooperation in the UK-Kenya Strategic Partnership that includes security and stability, sustainable development, climate change and people-to-people pillars
- provide a major boost for the businesses and investors in Kenya and the UK and deliver a much-needed stimulus for economic development to counter the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic

The Economic Development Forum is the delivery mechanism for the Mutual Prosperity commitments, and today’s Forum agreed the Implementation Plan to drive forward progress and build stronger trade and investment links between both countries. Both Governments confirmed their commitment to biannual follow-up meetings to review progress on the Strategic Partnership commitments, and continue to discuss how to boost economic growth and job creation.