

High Speed Two (HS2) Limited
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Email: hs2enquiries@hs2.org.uk

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

8th October 2013

Reference: FOI13-759

Dear Dr Disney,

I am writing regarding your request for information dated 11th September 2013. Your request has been considered under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) 2004.

In your email, you requested the following information:

Can you please confirm how HS2 intends dealing with rights of way which cross the proposed route? We are aware of what happened with HS1 having spoken to Kent CC Countryside Services but some of our members are claiming that all ROW's crossing the route will be automatically extinguished and no bridges / underpasses provided.

With regard to your question above, please be advised that HS2 Ltd recognises that public rights of way (PRoW) are important in leisure, recreation, sustainable travel, health and well-being, tourism and to the local rural economy. HS2 Ltd has already made a commitment that it would seek to avoid the permanent stopping-up the PRoW network and to ensure continued public access across the railway. This commitment has been welcomed by The Ramblers association.

Based on the development of the Phase One route for HS2 we anticipate that it is very much the exception that any PRoW would be entirely lost. However, we do recognise that where the HS2 route crosses many (often linked) rights of way within a short distance, there may be good reason to combine some crossing points. In such instances, we would aim to retain these links but there might be some increase in distance to reach such a combined crossing point. Where such combination of routes is possible without substantial diversions, this approach would minimise the significant cost of additional bridges or underpasses and would seek to reduce potential visual impacts that such features can provide. During the construction phase of a new railway, some PRoWs may need to be temporarily closed or diverted but we would aim to phase these temporary closures and diversions where possible to allow access to be continued. Following construction affected PRoW would be reinstated, as appropriate, as soon as it is practicable to do so.

If the Phase Two project is taken forward, HS2 Ltd would be required to undertake a detailed study of PRoW as part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This would require both field surveys and assessments of those PRoW that could be impacted, and dialogue with the local highway authority. The intention would then be to use such data to work with the relevant responsible bodies, including liaison with relevant authorities, landowners and bodies such as The Ramblers and the British Horse Society, as well as local people who enjoy those rights of way to establish how individual PRoWs could be best managed during the construction phase and operational phase.

If you are unhappy with the way we have handled your request or with the decisions made in relation to your request, you may complain in writing to HS2 Ltd at the above address. Please also see attached details of HS2 Ltd's complaints procedure and your right to complain to the Information Commissioner.

Please remember to quote reference number **FOI13-759** in any future communication relating to this request.

Yours sincerely,

Samantha Cimpaye
Freedom of Information Officer
HS2 Ltd

Your right to complain to HS2 Ltd and the Information Commissioner

You have the right to complain to HS2 Ltd within two calendar months of the date of this letter about the way in which your request for information was handled and/or about the decision not to disclose all or part of the information requested.

Your complaint will be acknowledged and you will be advised of a target date by which to expect a response. Initially your complaint will be re-considered by the official who dealt with your request for information. If, after careful consideration, that official decides that his/her decision was correct, your complaint will automatically be referred to a senior independent official who will conduct a further review. You will be advised of the outcome of your complaint and if a decision is taken to disclose information originally withheld this will be done as soon as possible.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5A

