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Camden gives transport secretary HS2 ultimatum

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Camden Council has warned the government that it will mount a legal challenge to High Speed 2 unless ministers provide reassurances - and cash - to residents and businesses that may be affected by the scheme.

The north London borough says construction of HS2 would result in a minimum of 216 homes being demolished - more that double the 107 homes set to be lost across the rest of the entire London to West Midlands phase one route. A further 264 Camden homes will be put at risk by the proposals by virtue of their proximity to the line. Additionally, the council says the area faces a decade of blight during which regeneration schemes will be delayed or scrapped because of the uncertainty created by HS2.

Last week Camden Council served a formal letter before claim - the first step towards a legal challenge - on Secretary of State for Transport, Justine Greening, claiming it had identified legal flaws in the government's decision to proceed with HS2. Officers say that unless they receive a satisfactory response the council intends to mount a legal challenge by joining the 51M group - the alliance of local authorities opposed to HS2.

However a spokesman for the council said any legal action would be dropped if the government provided reassurances about the scheme and funding for local mitigation. It has published a list of demands which, if met, would see the council reluctantly accept the HS2 construction programme. The council wants -

- guaranteed up-front funds to mitigate the loss of housing, businesses, open space, community facilities and secondary school in the local area
- funds to secure the National Temperance Hospital site for new replacement housing
- appropriate measures in place to minimise the blight, disruption, noise and disturbance at Euston and along the route including for properties above the tunnel, at vent shaft locations and along the HS1/2 route
- support for businesses, particularly those in Drummond Street, that will experience disruption as a result of the lengthy construction period
- help to manage the impacts caused by Euston station development which, the council says, is being used as a cash cow generating income to pay for works elsewhere rather than addressing potential blight and other impacts of HS2 on the Euston area
- sufficient investment to manage onward movement of passengers at Euston

The list of Camden's demands has been issued following a meeting of council officials and senior councillors with Justine Greening on Wednesday 8 February.

Euston: Camden says station is being used as cash cow to fund HS2 works outside local area



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