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Two High Speed 2 bills in Queen's Speech

Posted 08/05/13

Supporters of High Speed 2 have been promised not one but two pieces of legislation in the Queen's Speech today (8 May).

The Queen has confirmed her government's intention to introduce an HS2 Hybrid Bill during the new session of parliament which would allow the London to West Midlands first phase of High Speed 2 to be built.

The bill would provide the government with legal powers to compulsorily acquire the land needed to construct and operate the railway. On becoming an Act, it would grant planning permission to deliver the scheme. Details of planning will still need to be developed on a site by site basis in coordination with local planning authorities.

In addition, the government intends to lay a High Speed Rail (Preparation) Bill. If enacted this would allow expenditure on the construction design, ecological surveys and other essential preparatory work for phase one. But it would also authorise expenditure on preparatory work for future phases of HS2 to Leeds, Manchester and potentially Scotland.

The government says the HSR Preparation Bill would provide a clear statement of its commitment to constructing a high speed rail network and to deliver what it calls the 'flagship HS2 project' as quickly as possible. The bill would seek parliamentary authority for providing compensation for those affected by the construction and operation of the new line. It would also require the government to report annual expenditure on the HS2 programme to parliament.

Michael Roberts, chief executive of the Association of Train Operating Companies, said: "The inclusion of the HS2 legislation in today's Queen's Speech is good news for both passengers and the economy. This commitment is the next important step in securing a modern high speed rail network linking the north and south of Britain which will unlock significant economic and environmental benefits."

HS2: hybrid bill and preparation bill included in legislative programme



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