Why are we doing so much work in the Calvert and Steeple Claydon area?
Our construction work in the Calvert and Steeple Claydon area are complex. This is an area that has a number of technical and logistical challenges as the location for our infrastructure maintenance depot (IMD) as well as the interface with East West Rail (EWR). Early works are already underway. These include utility diversions, which have taken place since early 2018, creation of habitat sites, archaeology and topographical surveys.

The work in this area needs to be completed to ensure that the main works civil engineering programme can begin in early 2020. The civil engineering (for example; earthworks) in this area is critical. This is because it’s needed in order to build the internal haul/access roads. These allow us to move from north to south on the line of route. It’s therefore one of our priority areas for starting construction works.

Why are the works taking place now? Would it have been better to wait to start them? Or do it before bird nesting season?
Clearance is due to begin in March 2019 and will progress through the summer and autumn 2019. We need to start our main civil works in the area in early 2020. The ecology and vegetation need to be cleared ahead of this and due to the different ecology seasons we need to start this now.

The High Speed Rail (London - West Midlands) Act 2017 includes Environmental Minimum Requirements and a Code of Construction Practice which sets out how we undertake our construction activities. This includes analysis of existing ecology and explains how we’ll mitigate this during our construction.

Substantial ecological survey works have taken place in Calvert since 2012 as part of the Environmental Statement. Due to the validity of the results, we’re required to resurvey every two years. These surveys have provided a detailed understanding of the ecology in the area and allowed us to develop mitigation plans for translocation of the ecology and removing vegetation.

What is HS2?
High Speed Two (HS2) is the new high speed railway for Britain. It will support fast, frequent, reliable journeys to over 100 cities and towns, including eight of our largest cities. We plan to build HS2 in phases. Phase One will connect Birmingham to London from 2026. We also plan to build a route between the West Midlands and Crewe, to open in 2027.

We are committed to being a good neighbour by treating the communities we operate in with respect and compassion, and building the railway with care and consideration. This means we are working hard to mitigate the impact of building and operating a new railway.

Contact our HS2 Helpdesk team on 08081 434 434
Work will only begin once a suitably qualified ecologist has completed a site walkover and approved a ‘Permit to Clear.’ Ecologists will have a Natural England licence to carry out the work. We’ll be the governing body for this licence and Natural England regularly monitor our compliance. The Permit to Clear will determine where and when any works will start and if any areas need to be protected due to the presence of any protected species discovered. We will therefore have a staggered approach to clearing areas, depending on existing survey data and the site walkovers.

The Permit to Clear system will require the licenced ecologist to be on site and they will hand check areas due to be cleared. This will consist of hand searches in scrub, hedgerows and physical searches in trees. The ecologist will then determine if the clearance can take place depending on their findings. Vegetation that cannot be removed at this stage due to ecological constraints will be marked, and if appropriate, a buffer zone will be put in place so that work can continue in the surrounding area.

Our Enabling Works Contractor (Fusion) will have all the appropriate ecological licences and relevant method statements in place to be authorised to complete the works.

**How will you ensure that you do not affect nesting of birds? How will you ensure you do not affect both protected species and non-protected species?**

We’ll make sure that we follow all relevant government legislation for nesting birds. The High Speed Rail (London - West Midlands) Act 2017 commits us to following this existing legislation and all contractors working on the Project must comply with the rules set out in this legislation.

Our ecology surveys have identified locations of protected species, non-protected species and habitats. These surveys have also identified locations suspected of containing protected species. Protected species have specific legal requirements that we have to comply with when undertaking our work in the area. The site walk over by the ecologist and the approved Permit to Clear (which takes place prior to vegetation clearance on site), means that non-protected species are already accounted for in the planning for our work.

All work on site will be monitored by an ecologist and they have the power to halt works if any unexpected ecology is found. For example, if during the site walkover an unexpected protected species was found, then the vegetation clearance would not continue at that location until appropriate.
Contact our HS2 Helpdesk team on 08081 434 434

What consents do we have to undertake this work?
The vegetation clearance will be undertaken in accordance with the following ecological consents, all of which are available on our website.


The vegetation clearance will be undertaken in accordance with the following licences.

- HS2 Organisational European Protected Species Licence for Badger WML024. First issued February 2018.

There are many mature trees that you plan to cut down, can’t you avoid cutting them down now?
We’ll only be clearing areas that we need to for us to start our construction works. Unfortunately, it will mean that we’ll be cutting down some mature trees. All trees will be surveyed before they are removed and the timber will be valued where possible. The tree surveys will identify the optimal reuse of timber to reduce any wastage and promote sustainability.

Where will the site compounds be set up for the vegetation clearance?
Fusion will have a small satellite compound on Queen Catherine Road and the main compound on Gawcott Road once SGN have completed the utility diversion work. These satellite compounds will only be used for vegetation clearance works.

How can this work start without a finalised design of infrastructure maintenance depot?
The Infrastructure Maintenance Depot (IMD) will be built by our Rail Systems contractor, who will provide buildings, track, sidings and signals. The initial earthworks will be completed by Eiffage Kier. They will then use the IMD site for their works. This includes storage of materials, utility diversions and earthworks associated with building local embankments. This main civils work will start in early 2020 and therefore the vegetation clearance needs to take place now.

Procurement for the Rail Systems contractor is underway. Whilst this is going forward, our internal rail systems team and Eiffage Kier are progressing with the reference design. The reference design will minimise the IMD area as far as possible. To reflect this, the first stage of vegetation clearance will take place on the smaller footprint of the IMD.
How is HS2 working with East West Rail and Oxford to Cambridge Expressway?
We have an integrated team with East West Rail (EWR). Team members from both organisations (and their contractors) are working together.

Highways England are consulting with us on the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway, but this engagement is in an early stage and we can't influence the route of the proposed expressway.

Future mitigation work
We're committed to mitigating the ecological and landscape impacts caused by the railway. As stated in the HS2 and Greatmoor Sidings Transport and Works Act Order Environmental Statements, we'll provide planting and other forms of ecological mitigation around the Calvert and Steeple Claydon areas. These include habitat creation and enhancement.

We're due to start planting by Sheephouse Wood and Finmere Wood and tens of thousands of trees will be planted this year. We'll construct four new ponds to accommodate Great Crested Newts. The planting will create key habitat connectivity routes including bat flightpaths across existing ancient woodlands. The planting will also encourage wildlife to move to new areas, away from what will eventually be the construction area of HS2.

How will HS2 and its contractors keep residents up to date?
We'll run a series of engagement events in June 2019 to update residents in Calvert, Steeple Claydon and Twyford about current and planned works. This will be an opportunity for communities to speak directly with our teams. They are in addition to our regular drop-in sessions, (which provide an informal opportunity for you to ask questions in a smaller setting), and our regular meetings with the Parish Councils.

More information on our engagement events is available at hs2inbucksandox.co.uk

Or, you can contact our HS2 Helpdesk team by:
Freephone 08081 434 434
Minicom 08081 456 472
Email HS2enquiries@hs2.org.uk

We'll look to collate responses to the questions raised at the drop-in sessions so far and make them available online.
Keeping you informed

We are committed to keeping you informed about work on HS2. This includes ensuring you know what to expect and when to expect it, as well as how we can help.

Residents’ Charter and Commissioner
The Residents’ Charter is our promise to communicate as clearly as we possibly can with people who live along or near the HS2 route.
www.gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-residents-charter
We also have an independent Residents’ Commissioner whose job is to make sure we keep to the promises we make in the Charter and to keep it under constant review. Find reports at:
www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-ltd-residents-commissioner
You can contact the Commissioner at:
residentscommissioner@hs2.org.uk

Construction Commissioner
The Construction Commissioner’s role is to mediate and monitor the way in which HS2 Ltd manages and responds to construction complaints. You can contact the Construction Commissioner by emailing:
complaints@hs2-cc.org.uk

Property and compensation
You can find out all about HS2 and properties along the line of route by visiting:
www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-property
Find out if you’re eligible for compensation at:
www.gov.uk/claim-compensation-if-affected-by-hs2

Holding us to account
If you are unhappy for any reason you can make a complaint by contacting our HS2 Helpdesk team. For more details on our complaints process, please visit our website:
www.hs2.org.uk/how-to-complain

Contact Us
Contact our HS2 Helpdesk team all day, every day of the year on:
☎ Freephone 08081 434 434
☎ Minicom 08081 456 472
✉ Email HS2enquiries@hs2.org.uk

Write to:
FREEPOST
HS2 Community Engagement
Website www.hs2.org.uk
To keep up to date with what is happening in your local area, visit:
www.HS2inyourarea.co.uk

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