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Homeowners Could Get Rail Line Compensation



Homeowners whose properties will drop in value when the high-speed rail line is built should be compensated, the Transport Secretary has said.

Philip Hammond told MPs it was "right and proper" to mitigate the impact of the new route which will see faster journey times between cities including London, Birmingham, Leeds and Edinburgh.

He has asked officials in his department to prepare a range of options for compensation which will be published next year.

"Despite our best efforts... we will not be able to avoid all impacts on property values," Mr Hammond said.

"Where a project which is in the national interest imposes significant financial loss on individuals I believe it is right and proper that they should be compensated fairly for that loss."

The scheme will be for householders whose properties are not required for the construction of the railway but who still face a drop in the value of their house.

Mr Hammond also announced he will largely stick to the route set out by the previous government in March.

However, around 50% of the original locations have been slightly altered to reduce the impact on local communities, he said.

For example, in London's Primrose Hill, the tunnel and vents will be slightly further north than originally planned.

The track will be moved away from Hartwell House, a country house in Buckinghamshire, so that it is not visible from the property.

From Amersham to Wendover, a green bridge and a longer green tunnel will be created to make the line less of an eyesore and further north, the route will be moved slightly further away from Lichfield.

Mr Hammond said the changes "will reassure many of those who have been understandably apprehensive of the potential impact on their lives and their property values".

The Y-shaped train line will be developed in two stages - first from London to the Midlands and then on to Manchester and Leeds.

Journey times are expected to be slashed to less than 49 minutes between London and Birmingham and 1.05 hours from the Midlands to Leeds. By linking the new line to existing routes, it will take 3.5 hours to travel from London to Glasgow or Edinburgh.

Mr Hammond said the proposals for consultation would be published on the department's website.