

Your options for an HS2 pay-off

JON MOWBRAY, real estate dispute resolution partner at **IBB Solicitors** in Chesham, looks at what rights homeowners living near the HS2 line have when claiming compensation

THE latest in a series of public consultations by HS2 seeks views on two specific proposals for compensating some of those affected by the construction of the high-speed rail link that will cut through the Chilterns.

Firstly, for those owner-occupiers of properties within what is known as the Rural Support Zone (generally between 60 and 120 metres of the line), it is proposed they will be able to make a claim for a lump sum of 10 per cent of the value of their property, with a maximum payment of £100,000 and a minimum of £30,000.

This would be an alternative to their option of selling their property to the government for its unblighted value under the Voluntary Purchase scheme that has already been consulted on. This prior consultation provoked some respondents to argue that

property owners within this area should not be restricted to having to sell their property to obtain some redress from the government.

The proposal is that eligible property owners will be able to decide between these options at any point until one year after the opening of the railway, thereby giving them a significant period to make their decision.

Expectations are that both the voluntary purchase and the alternative cash offer would be launched at the end of 2014.

The second proposal is for the introduction of a homeowner payment scheme. This would involve eligible owner-occupiers of properties in rural areas that lie between 120 and 300 metres of the line being entitled to cash payments.

The payments will taper from £22,500 to £7,500 depending on proximity, with the suggestion that payments could be made



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as soon as possible after the relevant High Speed Rail Bill has been passed and could again be claimed up to one year after the opening of the railway.

The consultation closes on September 30, 2014, and while it is envisaged that generally these additional compensation schemes will be welcomed, no doubt there will be some strong views expressed as to the level of compensation proposed.