Find out here about Hybrid Bills and how one for HS2 (London to West Midlands) would work, including:

- what is a Hybrid Bill;
- why the Government has proposed a Hybrid Bill for HS2 (London to West Midlands); and
- how you can have a say in the Hybrid Bill process.

**What is a Hybrid Bill**

A Bill is a set of proposals for introducing new, or changing existing, laws. Before it becomes law, Parliament needs to debate and approve it.

You may not have heard of a Hybrid Bill because they are quite rare. They mix the characteristics of Public and Private Bills. The changes to the law proposed by a Hybrid Bill would affect the general public but would also have a significant impact for specific individuals or groups.

In 2009 Parliament discussed and passed 27 Public Bills, which then became Acts, for example the Banking Act. By contrast, there have only been 11 Hybrid Bills in the last 25 years, five of which were needed to build new transport infrastructure such as rail lines or bridges.

Hybrid Bills can be long and very detailed, so Parliament usually takes longer to consider them than it would with normal Bills. There are also extra stages in the process which allow people with an interest to petition Parliament.

That’s why, for example, the Channel Tunnel Rail Link Hybrid Bill did not become law until December 1996, more than two years after it was introduced in Parliament.

**Why the Government proposed a Hybrid Bill for HS2**

The Hybrid Bill would not only give the Government parliamentary permission to build the line, but any specific powers needed to operate it. Based on earlier Hybrid Bills, such as the one for the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, a Hybrid Bill could deal with, among other things:

- powers to buy all the necessary land and properties – with compensation – to build the line;
- any changes needed to the existing general laws covering railways;
- ways to protect historical buildings near the proposed new line; and
- ways to protect gas, water and electricity facilities which might be affected by the line.
If the Government decides to go ahead with building a new high speed line, it would expect to introduce the Hybrid Bill in Parliament in October 2013. This means it could become law by 2015.

A second Hybrid Bill would be brought forward for the second phase of any high speed network.

**How you can have a say in the Hybrid Bill process**

When the Government introduces a Hybrid Bill to Parliament (either via the House of Commons or the House of Lords), there is a full debate on it. This is known as a second reading. Parliament will then set up a select committee, which is made up of a smaller number of MPs/Peers, who will analyse and discuss the Hybrid Bill in more detail.

If you oppose the Bill you can submit a petition against it. If the select committee believe that you have a sufficient interest in the Bill you can present your case to the committee and call witnesses to support you.

Once the committee has heard all the petitions, it will decide whether to make changes before sending it back for further consideration in the Commons and the Lords.

If Parliament agrees a Hybrid Bill to allow HS2 (London to West Midlands) to go ahead, the Bill will receive Royal Assent. It will then become an Act of Parliament - allowing the new network to be built and services to be operated.

**Hybrid Bills for new transport infrastructure which have become law in the last 25 years**

- Channel Tunnel Act 1987
- Dartford –Thurrock Crossing Act 1988
- Severn Bridges Act 1992
- Channel Tunnel Rail Link Act 1996
- Crossrail Act 2008

If you would like more detail on this topic
Please visit our website – http://highspeedrail.dft.gov.uk/ – where you will see the “High Speed Rail: Investing in Britain’s Future – Consultation” and all the documentation published alongside it, as well as detailed maps of the proposed route between London and the West Midlands and images and visualisations.