



Department
for Transport

Government Response to the consultation under section 60 of the High Speed Rail (West Midlands – Crewe) Act 2021



Government Response to the consultation under section 60 of the High Speed Rail (West Midlands – Crewe) Act 2021

Presented to Parliament
by the Secretary of State for Transport
by Command of Her Majesty

June 2021



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This publication is available at www.gov.uk/official-documents.

ISBN 978-1-5286-2725-2

CCS0621821820 06/21

Printed on paper containing 75% recycled fibre content minimum

Printed in the UK by the APS Group on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office

Contents

Foreword	6
Executive summary	8
1. Introduction	12
Background	12
HS2 Phase 2a route	14
Control of environmental effects during scheme delivery	14
The purpose of the consultation	16
Approach to consultation	16
Methodology and response process used by Ipsos MORI	17
Publication	17
Response to the consultation	18
2. Road traffic	19
What you said	19
Government's response	20
Controls over construction traffic	20
Management of construction traffic	22
Measures provided to reduce the impact of Phase 2a HS2 construction traffic	25
HS2 Phase 2a construction traffic on key roads	28
Footpaths, cycleways, bridleways	30
Engagement before and during construction	31
Construction Inspectors	33
3. The natural environment	34
What you said	34
Government's response	35
Control of environmental impacts during construction	35
Local Environmental Management Plans	36

Ancient woodland and biodiversity	39
Ecology	40
Landscape design	42
Cheshire East Landscape and Environment fund	42
Management of air quality and noise during construction	42
Climate	44
Watercourses and drainage	44
4. Transport provisions	46
What you said	46
Government's response	47
Disruption to existing transport and rail services	47
Future rail services	49
Changes in future rail travel (as a result of Covid-19)	50
Bus services	51
Existing road connections	52
HS2 Stations	54
5. Transport infrastructure	55
What you said	55
Government's response	56
Improvements to Existing Railway Lines	56
Reopening of closed railway lines and stations	58
New Stations Fund	59
New stations and reopening of decommissioned stations	59
Stone IMB-R	60
Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) update	61
6. Other comments	63
What you said	63
Government's response	63
7. Next steps	65
Phase 2a Community, Environment and Business Funds	65
Phase 2a Biodiversity Investment Fund	66
Phase 2a Woodland Fund	67
Phase 2a Trent-Sow Parklands and Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Environmental Enhancements Fund	67
Cheshire East Environment and Landscape Enhancements Fund	68
Phase 2a Road Safety Fund	68

Total allocation for Phase 2a Funds	69
Annex A: Clause 60 of the High Speed Rail (West Midlands – Crewe) Bill as amended in the House of Lords	70

Foreword



The Government is committed to taking forward High Speed Two (HS2) to transform our national rail network, bring our biggest cities closer together, boost productivity and level up opportunity fairly across the country. Just as importantly, HS2 will play a pivotal role in creating a greener alternative to regional air and road travel. This is essential if we are to meet our commitment to bring greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050.

In February, we achieved Royal Assent for the High Speed Rail (West Midlands-Crewe) Bill, cementing in law our commitment to bring HS2 to the north of England. This achievement was realised through many years of hard work, environmental assessment and engagement with people and businesses affected by the scheme. This includes over 1,500 assurances which have been issued by HS2 Ltd on behalf of the Secretary for State for Transport to individuals and organisations to address concerns and make improvements to the scheme.

I recognise the uncertainty that those living along the Phase 2a Route have faced during this period and of the challenges ahead for communities that will be affected during the construction period.

We are committed to learning lessons from Phase One of HS2, by listening to the concerns of local people and communities, and of acting on their feedback. We will continue to strive to improve the Phase 2a scheme as it is developed, to avoid, reduce and mitigate environmental impacts, to enhance our natural environment and to minimise the impacts on local communities. This can only be achieved through effective engagement and by working with local people, communities and local organisations to tackle issues as they occur. I have tasked HS2 Ltd to improve their community engagement and I will continue to hold them to account for their actions. We have also committed over £17.8m for a package of Phase 2a Funds to deliver benefits for communities and the local environment along the Phase 2a route.

At this stage of design of the Phase 2a Scheme, we do not have a complete picture of all the issues that will be encountered during construction or of the opportunities that will arise to create further improvements. The Environmental Minimum Requirements for HS2 Phase 2a that accompanies the Act, and includes the Code of Construction Practice, will ensure that HS2 Ltd and its contractors are legally required to consider such mitigation as the scheme progresses.

The Phase 2a local consultation we held in February is only the beginning of a renewed effort to try to mitigate the impacts of the HS2 works on local communities as the scheme moves into detailed design. We will ensure that engagement with affected communities is at the heart of our plans for HS2 and that we listen to those affected by the scheme.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Stephenson', followed by a horizontal line.

Andrew Stephenson MP

Minister of State at the Department for Transport

Executive summary

1. In February 2021, the Government launched a consultation regarding Phase 2a of the HS2 network. The consultation was required by clause 60 of the High Speed Rail (West Midlands – Crewe) Bill as amended in the House of Lords (now section 60 of the High Speed Rail (West Midlands – Crewe) Act 2021).
2. Residents in the local authority areas of Shropshire, Staffordshire, Cheshire East, and Cheshire West and Chester, and relevant stakeholders, were consulted in February 2021 on the HS2 Phase 2a scheme between the West Midlands and Crewe. The consultation sought views on:
 - the impact of road traffic as a result of construction HS2 works
 - the impact of the work on the natural environment
 - transport provisions for passengers connecting to Phase 2a
 - whether new railway stations, improvements to existing railway stations, and the reopening of associated lines are necessary to support passenger connections to Phase 2a
3. Information about the consultation and questions were set out in the Consultation under clause 60 of the High Speed Rail (West Midlands – Crewe) Bill as amended in the House of Lords document¹.
4. The Minister of State is grateful to those organisations and members of the public who took the time to respond to the consultation and share their views and suggestions. Responses were received from some 499 individuals and stakeholders. The Government's Response to this consultation draws on the analysis of consultation responses undertaken by Ipsos MORI, and independent analysis company. A report summarising the findings of the consultation was published on 13 May and is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/hs2-west-midlands-to-crewe-environmental-and-traffic-impacts-transport-provisions-and-station-improvement-or-creation>.

¹ A copy can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/hs2-west-midlands-to-crewe-environmental-and-traffic-impacts-transport-provisions-and-station-improvement-or-creation>

5. The Government has carefully considered the responses to this consultation and all other relevant information, including in particular the recommendations made by the House of Commons and House of Lords Select Committees in their Special Reports on the Phase 2a Bill, as well as relevant points made by individuals and organisations, during the petitioning process for the Phase 2a Bill.
6. Respondents expressed concerns about the impact on local communities from increased traffic because of HS2 works, and associated concerns round road safety. Access for emergency services vehicles and access to local facilities was also a key area of comments.
7. The Government recognises the impacts of construction traffic are likely to be a particular concern for residents who live or work near the line of route. The Government is committed to ensuring disruption to communities close to the scheme is minimised through HS2 Ltd's adherence to the commitments it has provided in the Code of Construction Practice.
8. Under the planning regime established under Schedule 17 to the Act, HS2 Ltd would be required to seek approval from the relevant qualifying authority (that is the relevant planning authority for the area) for the use by Large Goods Vehicles of any routes to and from a working or storage site, a site where material will be re-used, or a waste disposal site².
9. During the passage of the Bill through Parliament HS2 Ltd have given commitments on behalf of the Secretary of State to individuals and stakeholders on measures to reduce the impact of construction traffic, in addition to the controls established as part of the Phase 2a Act.
10. The Minister of State has announced the HS2 Phase 2a Road Safety Fund. This fund of £6.5m will provide a legacy of road safety improvements for local communities between the West Midlands and Crewe.
11. Responses to this consultation on the natural environment included concerns about the scheme's impact on the general environment, ecology and biodiversity, landscape, and the impact on local communities.
12. The Government is committed to holding HS2 Ltd to account on its environmental and sustainability commitments.
13. The Act includes detailed provisions on the environmental standards and requirements that the project must meet. The Environmental Minimum Requirements set out the environmental and sustainability commitments that will be observed in the construction of the scheme. Contractors will be contractually bound to comply with these requirements and other controls.
14. The Government has launched a £5m HS2 Community and Environment Fund (CEF) and Business and Local Economy Fund (BLEF) for the HS2 Phase 2a route. These

² This does not apply to routes that only provide access to a site that generates less than 24 large goods vehicle movements per day, nor to motorways and trunk roads or any part of the route beyond a motorway or trunk road.

funds seek to add benefit, over and above committed mitigation and statutory compensation, to communities and local economies along the route

15. HS2 Ltd has committed an additional £2m to extend the Woodland Fund to the Phase 2a scheme. This funding will help local landowners create native broadleaved woodlands and/or restore plantations on ancient woodland sites.

16. A £2m Phase 2a Biodiversity Investment Fund has also been established to support work to move towards net gains in biodiversity. This fund will help projects that create or enhance wildlife habitats beyond mitigating or compensating for habitats affected by the construction of Phase 2a of HS2.

17. The Trent–Sow Parklands and Cannock Chase AONB HS2 Group has been awarded £1.5m to spend on projects that conserve and enhance this area’s special qualities.

18. A fund of up to £850,000 has been set up to support the identification of further local environmental and landscape enhancements within the administrative area of Cheshire East which are over and beyond that proposed in the Environmental Statement or proposed through detailed design and located outside Phase 2a Act limits.

19. In addition to these funds, HS2 Ltd has committed to providing an extensive range of localised environmental mitigation measures along the Phase 2a scheme as a result of concerns raised through engagement and petitions during the passage of the Bill in Parliament.

20. The total allocated for Phase 2a funds related to road and environment is now £17.85m:

- £6.5m for the Road Safety Fund (in addition to at least £7.61m committed to deliver highways improvements agreed with Staffordshire County Council)
- £5m for the CEF/BLEF
- £2m for the Biodiversity Investment Fund
- £2m for the Woodland Fund
- £1.5m for funding additional environmental enhancement measures within the remit of the Trent–Sow Parklands and Cannock Chase AONB HS2 Group
- up to £850,000 for a Cheshire East environment and landscape enhancement fund

21. This consultation has also enabled us to better understand the concerns of local communities on their local transport provision and on their rail and other transport networks.

22. Although, we are not in a position at this early stage to be precise on which train services will run on either the conventional or HS2 network, and wider transport provisions required when HS2 is operational, further work is being undertaken to identify the best

ways of connecting to HS2 and delivering the benefits for communities across the areas in the consultation.

23. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government's priority is to build back better and HS2 is at the heart of those plans. The project already supports more than 16,000 jobs. HS2 Phase 2a has the potential to relieve some of the pressure on a particularly constrained section of the West Coast Main Line, and to deliver significant additional capacity, reliability and performance improvements in addition to the benefits from faster journey times.

24. The Government, working with HS2 Ltd and local leaders, is drawing up an Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the North which is framed by the government's commitment to bring forward transformational rail improvements along the HS2 route as quickly as possible. This will include a recommended way forward on scoping, phasing and sequencing delivery of HS2 Phase 2b, Northern Powerhouse Rail, Midlands Rail Hub and other proposed rail investments.

25. The design of Phase 2a aims to reduce operational disruption to the conventional rail network during construction where reasonably practicable. Local Transport Management Plans will be produced in liaison with highway and traffic authorities and emergency services to reduce impacts from HS2 construction traffic.

26. The Government has set out the vision and opportunity to deliver better bus services for passengers across England, backed by £3 billion of new money during the current Parliament, through the National Bus Strategy published in March. Successful bids to the rural mobility fund to trial on-demand bus services totalling over £19m have also been announced in March to Local Authorities, including to authorities along the HS2 Phase 2a route. In January 2020, the Government pledged £500m for the Restoring Your Railway Fund to deliver its manifesto commitment and start reopening lines and stations, reconnecting smaller communities, regenerating local economies and improving access to jobs, homes and education. Applications have already been made to the Ideas Fund and New Stations Fund for a number of lines and stations close to the HS2 Phase 2a route.

27. Feedback from this consultation will inform HS2 Ltd's ongoing engagement with local communities, local authorities, and environmental stakeholders along the Phase 2a route, in line with its community engagement strategy.

1. Introduction

Background

1.1. High Speed Two (HS2) is the Government's proposal for a new, high speed railway connecting major cities in Britain. In January 2012, following a consultation exercise, the Government announced its intention to develop a Y-shaped high speed rail network. The network is being brought forward in phases.

1.2. The 2012 decision confirmed the Government's preferred route for a high speed line between London and the West Midlands, called Phase One. In November 2013, the Government deposited a hybrid Bill in Parliament to seek powers for the construction and operation of Phase One. The High Speed Rail (London – West Midlands) Act received Royal Assent in February 2017 and initial works for Phase One have commenced.

1.3. In two reports, HS2 Plus³ and Rebalancing Britain⁴, the then HS2 Ltd Chair, Sir David Higgins recommended accelerating the section of the Phase Two route between the West Midlands and Crewe to deliver some of the benefits that HS2 will bring benefits to the North sooner.

1.4. HS2 Phase 2a will deliver faster services between London, Crewe, Manchester, Liverpool, Preston, Warrington, Wigan and Glasgow. It will allow passengers travelling to or from a wide range of places to connect onto HS2 services. Crewe is already a major hub on the rail network with regional and long-distance connections to the wider North West, East Midlands, and North and South Wales. It will mean that the North West and Scotland will see more of the benefits of HS2 more quickly, thus bringing economic benefits sooner, helping to rebalance the economy.

³ A copy can be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/374695/HS2_Plus_-_A_report_by_David_Higgins.pdf.

⁴ A copy can be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/374709/Rebalancing_Britain_-_From_HS2_towards_a_national_transport_strategy.pdf.

1.5. In November 2015, the Government published a command paper⁵, stating its intention to bring forward the route between the West Midlands and Crewe with connections to the conventional rail network. It set out the preferred line of route for what is known as HS2 Phase 2a⁶.

1.6. In July 2017, the Government deposited a hybrid Bill in Parliament to seek the powers to construct and operate HS2 Phase 2a between the West Midlands and Crewe. The Bill, was entitled the ‘High Speed Rail (West Midlands - Crewe) Bill’ (the ‘HS2 Phase 2a Bill’) and was promoted through Parliament by the Secretary of State for Transport (the ‘Secretary of State’).

1.7. In August 2019, the Government asked Douglas Oakervee to chair an independent review of HS2. The Review assembled and tested the existing evidence in order to make properly informed recommendations on the future of Phases 1 and 2.

1.8. On 11 February 2020, the Prime Minister stated in Parliament that “the Review⁷ recently conducted by Douglas Oakervee... leaves no doubt of the clinching case for high-speed rail.” Hence, the Government continued to promote the HS2 Phase 2a Bill through Parliament.

1.9. The HS2 Phase 2a Bill received Royal Assent on 11 February 2021 and is now the High Speed Rail (West Midlands – Crewe) Act 2021 (the Act)⁸. Construction of the Phase 2a scheme is planned to start in 2021.

⁵ A copy can be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/480712/hs2-east-and-west.pdf

⁶ The HS2 Phase 2a proposals are the culmination of a number of consultations, dating back to 2013. Details of previous HS2 Phase 2a consultation can be found in HS2 Phase 2a Information Paper G1: Consultation and Engagement, see:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/960823/G1_Consultation_Engagement_v1.3.pdf

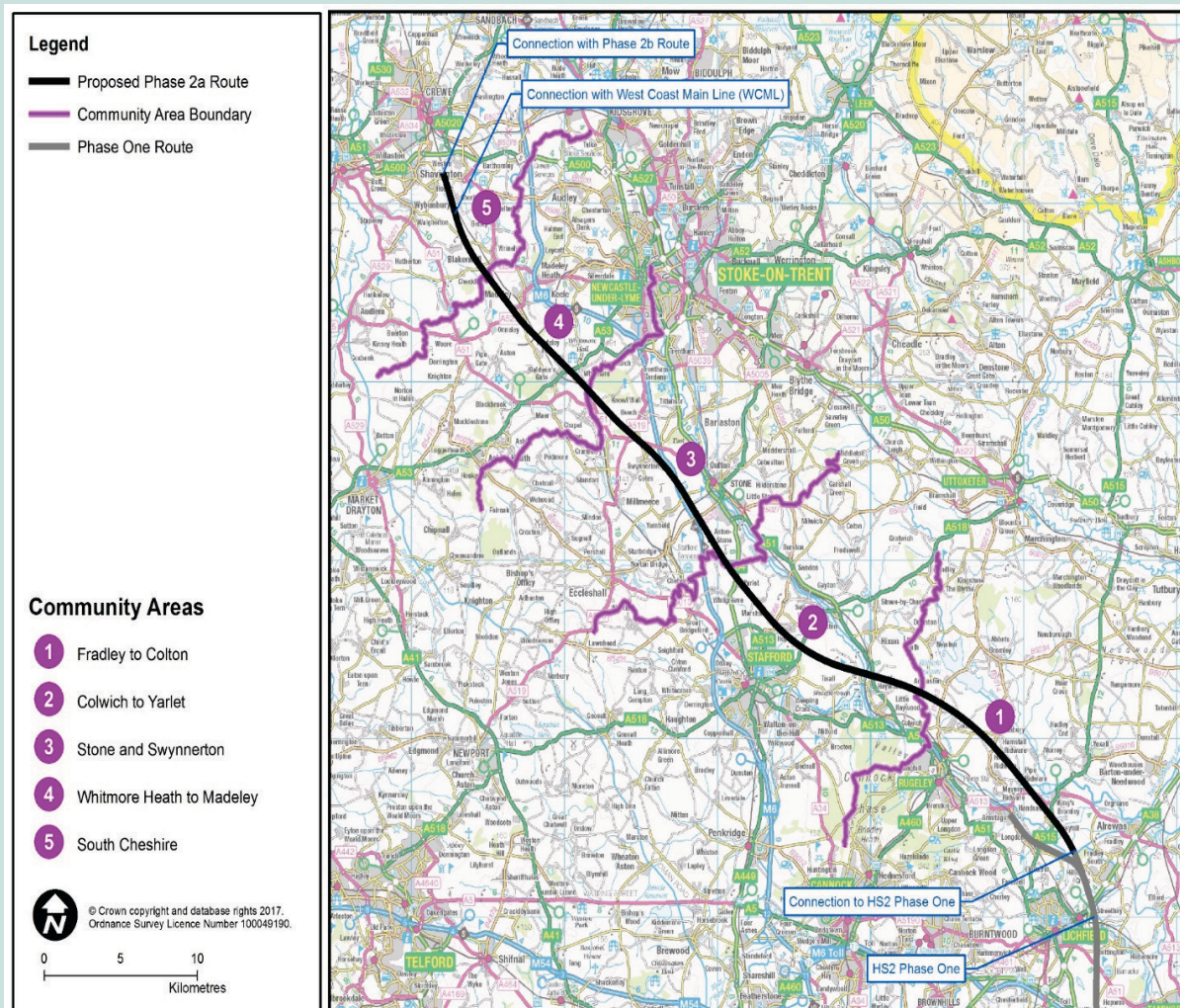
⁷ A copy can be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/870092/oakervee-review.pdf

⁸ See High Speed Rail (West Midlands-Crewe) Act 2021 <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/2046>

HS2 Phase 2a route

Figure 1: The HS2 Phase 2a route (subdivided into five Community Areas)



Detailed information about the HS2 Phase 2a route and its Community Areas (CAs) can be found in Volume 2: Community area reports and map books of the Environmental Statement⁹.

Control of environmental effects during scheme delivery

1.10. The Environmental Statement (ES) that accompanied the Bill identifies the likely significant effects that would arise from the construction and operation of the scheme and identifies a range of mitigation measures that could be used to reduce or eliminate these effects. The assessment is based on a number of assumptions about design and construction arrangements. The scheme will then be delivered within the envelope of

⁹ See HS2 Phase 2a environmental statement <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-phase-2a-environmental-statement>

powers and controls set by the Act and the Environmental Minimum Requirements (EMRs)¹⁰.

1.11. As the scheme is taken forward from a conceptual design that is consented through the Bill process, to detailed design and into the construction phase there may be some changes to assumed design and construction arrangements. However, HS2 Ltd is not free to simply change the design and construction arrangements at will or without any control. There are a number of mechanisms within the HS2 Phase 2a Act and supporting it that control changes to the scheme and therefore provide reassurance as to the extent of the actual impacts during delivery of the scheme.

1.12. There are three distinct components that taken together will effectively control the environmental impacts during both the construction and operational phases of the scheme. They are:

- provisions within the HS2 Phase 2a Act for approving detailed design and construction arrangements
- policies, commitments and undertakings entered into outside of the HS2 Phase 2a Act, including the EMRs
- existing legislation, unless expressly or by implication disapplied or modified by the HS2 Phase 2a Act

1.13. The controls contained in the HS2 Phase 2a Act and in general legislation, along with undertakings given by the Secretary of State during the passage of the Bill, including the EMRs, ensure that impacts which have been assessed in the ES will not be exceeded, unless any new impact or impacts in excess of those assessed in the ES:

- result from a change in circumstances which was not likely at the time of the ES, or
- would not be likely to be environmentally significant, or
- result from a change or extension to the scheme, where that change or extension does not itself require environmental impact assessment under either (i) article 4(1) of and paragraph 24 of Annex 1 to the EIA Directive¹¹; or (ii) article 4(2) of and paragraph 13 of Annex 2 to the EIA Directive¹², or
- would be considered as part of a separate consent process (and therefore further EIA if required)

¹⁰ The Environmental Minimum Requirements (EMRs) are the various environmental and sustainability commitments that the Secretary of State has entered into during the passage of the Bill - see HS2 Phase 2A Information Paper E1: Control of Environmental Impacts.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/960712/E1_Control_of_Environmental_Impacts_v1.1.pdf

¹¹ EIA Directive 2011 (2011/92/EU) as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU.

¹² Broadly, this would not allow those changes or extensions to the scheme which would give rise to adverse environmental effects within the EIA.

1.14. In addition to the controls and obligations referred to above, HS2 Ltd must:

- build the scheme on the lands defined in the HS2 Phase 2a Act¹³
- use reasonable endeavours to adopt mitigation measures that will further reduce any adverse environmental impacts caused by the scheme, insofar as those mitigation measures do not add unreasonable costs to the scheme or unreasonable delays to the construction programme

The purpose of the consultation

1.15. On 1 February 2021 the Government launched a consultation to seek the views of residents in the local authority areas of Shropshire, Staffordshire, Cheshire East, and Cheshire West and Chester, and other named consultees, on the HS2 Phase 2a scheme between the West Midlands and Crewe.

1.16. The consultation was required by clause 60 of the High Speed Rail (West Midlands – Crewe) Bill as amended in the House of Lords (now section 60 of the High Speed Rail (West Midlands – Crewe) Act 2021). For the full text of the clause please see Annex A.

1.17. The consultation sought views on

- the impact of road traffic as a result of construction HS2 works
- the impact of the work on the natural environment
- transport provisions for passengers connecting to Phase 2a
- whether new railway stations, improvements to existing railway stations, and the reopening of associated lines are necessary to support passenger connections to Phase 2a

Approach to consultation

1.18. The consultation was organised and managed by HS2 Ltd on behalf of the Department for Transport (DfT). An independent response analysis company, Ipsos MORI, was commissioned by HS2 Ltd to manage and analyse the responses to the consultation and produce a summary report.

1.19. The consultation documents and response form were available from the gov.uk and HS2.org.uk websites.

1.20. Due to Government restrictions in place throughout the consultation period requiring members of the public to practice social distancing, avoid non-essential contact with other people and all unnecessary travel, HS2 took the decision not to encourage people to visit

¹³ This does not preclude HS2 Ltd from building peripheral facilities on other land provided that the necessary approvals are obtained using the normal procedures.

locations to read reference documents. This decision was taken in line with Government guidance and in the interest of safety of the public.

1.21. Members of the public were able to request hard copies of the consultation document and the associated response form, and any Environmental Statement documentation via the HS2 Helpdesk free of charge.

1.22. The consultation was publicised through notifications sent to residents living within 1km of the Phase 2a route, with print and digital newspaper and social media advertising used to reach those living further afield. Emails were sent to the named consultees listed in Annex B of the consultation document¹⁴.

Methodology and response process used by Ipsos MORI

1.23. Ipsos MORI received the consultation responses via multiple response channels (web form, email and Freepost) and processed them through the following three stages:

- Receipt and handling of all responses: to a consistent digital format, with supervision and quality checking of the transcription process to ensure accuracy
- Analysis of responses: based on a system where unique summary ‘codes’ are applied to specific words or phrases in the text of the response, allowing for systematic analysis of the data
- Reporting: the translation of the analysed data into a report which presents a summary of the issues raised in the consultation

1.24. The purpose of the summary report produced by Ipsos MORI is to organise, analyse and report on the responses received and provide results in a format that is accessible for the general public, stakeholders and for decision makers in Government.

1.25. The summary report produced by Ipsos MORI does not

- make recommendations or seek to draw conclusions from responses
- attempt to respond to comments made by respondents
- seek to verify and/or pass judgement on the accuracy of comments made by respondents

Publication

1.26. Ministers are grateful to those residents and named consultees who responded to the consultation. A total of 499 responses were received and the independent analysis of

¹⁴ See

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957902/hs2-phase-2-consultation-west-midlands-to-crewe-web-version.pdf

responses from consultees by Ipsos MORI was published on 13 May 2021 and Ministers laid Written Ministerial Statements in both Houses of Parliament.

1.27. A copy of this report is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/hs2-west-midlands-to-crewe-environmental-and-traffic-impacts-transport-provisions-and-station-improvement-or-creation> and has been laid in both Houses of Parliament.

Response to the consultation

1.28. There were 499 responses to this consultation in total, 52 of which were from stakeholder organisations or representative groups¹⁵.

1.29. The following sections of this document sets out the Government's response to the feedback received to the consultation.

¹⁵ List of 52 stakeholder respondents by name provided in the Ipsos MORI 2021 Consultation Summary Report (see Appendix A) at below link:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/985323/hs2-phase-2a-consultation-summary-of-responses.pdf

2. Road traffic

2.1. Responses were invited to the following consultation question:

Question A: Please let us know your comments on the impact of road traffic as a result of the HS2 Phase 2a works.

What you said

2.2. A total of 365 respondents commented about the impact of road traffic because of the HS2 Phase 2a works. Most of these comments were around the impacts on road traffic. The main themes included:

- increased traffic on key roads and the impact this would have on local communities
- increased journey times, delays and congestion
- concern around HS2 HGVs and other construction vehicles on local roads
- concern around road safety of pedestrians and school children
- access for emergency services
- access for educational settings, such as schools
- concern around impact on noise and air pollution as a result of HS2 construction activity

2.3. Examples of roads that respondents considered to be most likely to be affected by increased traffic included the A51, A53 and A525 in north west Staffordshire and north east Shropshire, and Yarnfield Lane between Stone and Yarnfield.

2.4. A few respondents made positive comments about the impacts on road traffic as a result of the HS2 Phase 2a works. These comments focused on the longer-term benefits of HS2 offsetting short term disruption; for example, that HS2 could encourage people to make travel journeys by rail instead of by road.

Government's response

2.5. The impacts of construction traffic are understandably a particular concern for residents who live or work near the route of the new railway. Many issues raised by respondents have been raised previously with HS2 Ltd either during the passage of the Bill, or through ongoing engagement.

2.6. The following sections seek to highlight controls and mechanisms that are available to address the issues raised, and where mitigation measures have already been provided.

Controls over construction traffic

2.7. HS2 Ltd recognises that the impact of construction traffic on local roads is a particular concern for those who live or work near the Phase 2a line of route. The information provided in this section explains how construction traffic routes and road safety risks, amongst other aspects, will be considered during the detailed design of scheme, and how construction traffic, specifically Large Goods Vehicles, will be managed.

2.8. Under the planning regime established under Schedule 17 to the Phase 2a Act, HS2 Ltd would be required to seek approval from the relevant qualifying authority¹⁶ (that is the relevant planning authority for the area) for the use by Large Goods Vehicles of any routes to and from a working or storage site, a site where material will be re-used, or a waste disposal site (this does not apply to routes that only provide access to a site that generates less than 24 Large Goods Vehicle movements per day, nor to motorways and trunk roads or any part of the route beyond a motorway or trunk road).

2.9. This is explained further in the HS2 Phase 2a Information Paper B2: The Main Provisions of the Planning Regime¹⁷ and the HS2 Phase 2a Information Paper E3: Management of Traffic During Construction¹⁸.

2.10. The planning regime in Schedule 17 sets out the grounds on which the qualifying authority could refuse to approve such plans or specifications or impose conditions on them, and these include “to prevent or reduce prejudicial effects on road safety or on the free flow of traffic in the local area...and is reasonably capable of being so modified, or the development ought to, and could reasonably, be carried out elsewhere within the development’s permitted limits”.

2.11. A qualifying authority would also approve:

¹⁶ A qualifying authority is a planning authority that has given the Secretary of State undertakings with respect to the handling of planning matters, which the Secretary of State has considered satisfactory, and so has specified as a qualifying authority under paragraph 13 of Schedule 17 to the HS2 Phase 2a Act. In two tier local authority areas, it would be the district planning authority.

¹⁷ See https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/960597/B2_Main_Provisions_of_the_Planning_Regime_v1.1.pdf

¹⁸ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/960716/E3_Management_of_Traffic_During_Construction_v1.3.pdf

- a range of ancillary matters, such as the handling of re-usable spoil or topsoil, storage sites for construction materials, spoil or topsoil, construction camps, works screening, artificial lighting, dust suppression, road mud control measures
- the use of any routes to and from a working or storage site, a site where material will be re-used, or a waste disposal site served by Large Goods Vehicles where movements would exceed 24 per day

2.12. For the latter, approval is only required for the part of the route between the site and any motorway or trunk road. Again, the planning regime sets out the grounds on which the qualifying authority could refuse to approve such routes or impose conditions on them, and these include “...to preserve the local environment or local amenity...or to prevent or reduce prejudicial effects on road safety or on the free flow of traffic in the local area...and is reasonably capable of being so modified”.

2.13. Road Safety Audits are undertaken by the safety audit team at stages during the preliminary and detailed design of the scheme, and at the end of construction. They seek to identify potential road safety issues that may affect users and suggest measures to remove or reduce those risks. Should recommendations be made by the safety audit team, these are reviewed by the design organisation¹⁹ and HS2 Ltd. Any agreed actions are then implemented during the next stage of design or before opening the scheme to traffic (as applicable).

2.14. On Phase One, contractors have reviewed the routes planned to be used for construction vehicles prior to submission of Schedule 17 lorry route consents. This has led to some routes being amended to avoid certain roads which are more heavily used by pedestrians and greater frontage activities, but in doing so have needed to ensure that they do not create new significant adverse effects on their preferred routes.

2.15. On Phase 2a, the contractor will be able to review and amend lorry routes as they consider appropriate and to reduce impacts where practicable to do so and within the environmental constraints on the project. Contractors will report their HGV average weekday morning and evening peak hour flows and all-day flows to highway authorities, as is the case on Phase One. This is a part of the requirement to ensure that no new significant adverse effects arise in accordance with the commitments made to Parliament during the passage of the Phase 2a Bill.

2.16. Contractors will also consider what additional measures are required to enable accessibility to their worksites and to reduce risk to the delivery of the project. This may include measures to ensure journey time reliability. Main Civils Works contractors will be required to use the Vehicle Management System to control and smooth the flow of vehicles to their sites as appropriate to local traffic conditions, where reasonable to do so. The Vehicle Management System will include construction site capacities to avoid vehicles queuing on the highway.

2.17. Works on the highway will be planned and consulted on with the local highway authorities in a similar way as utility companies are required to do. In many cases, the

¹⁹ The design organisation varies by time, generally meaning design consultants during the preliminary design stage, and the Design & Build contractor's design houses during the scheme design, detailed design and construction stages.

consent of the highway authority is required, and contractors are required to consider the safety of road users through well planned highway works. These will be engaged on through Traffic Liaison meetings with the highway authorities and emergency services and communities will be kept informed through works notifications and, where significant works are planned, advanced warning signing on the highway. HS2 Ltd uses Street Manager for submissions to highway authorities, enabling both HS2 Ltd and the highway authority to have an overview of all planned works and assist the highway authority carry out its network management duty. These arrangements go beyond the legal requirements, and work well on Phase One.

2.18. HS2 Ltd is committed to the introduction of safer construction vehicles as well as trained drivers – including driving in rural environments. Contractors will ensure that site accesses are managed by appropriately trained traffic marshals. A part of their function is to assist vehicles entering and exiting sites and report any issues such as mud on the road.

2.19. HS2 Ltd will employ a dedicated compliance team to ensure that contractors are compliant with their obligations. Experience on Phase One suggests that this approach is providing the safest possible environment for pedestrians, including those travelling to and from school on foot or cycle. The project will also review crash data and review any trends which indicate that, along lorry routes or around construction sites, there are changes to the rate or nature of injuries and discuss these with the local highway authority.

Management of construction traffic

2.20. Respondents commented that construction traffic on local roads could affect road safety, including for pedestrians and children travelling to schools. They also commented on the potential for emergency service routes and routes connecting communities to other medical facilities could be disrupted.

2.21. HS2 Ltd is working closely with local authorities and other stakeholders to ensure that traffic impacts are understood and that traffic management plans are developed, taking the needs of the local community into account.

2.22. HS2 Ltd has provided a commitment in paragraphs 14.1.1 and 14.1.2. of the Code of Construction Practice (CoCP)²⁰ that:

“During construction works, the nominated undertaker (HS2 Ltd) will require that the impacts from construction traffic on the local community (including all local residents and businesses and their customers, visitors to the area, and users of the surrounding transport network) are minimised by its contractors where reasonably practicable.

The nominated undertaker (HS2 Ltd) will require that public access is maintained, where reasonably practicable, and appropriate measures will be implemented to ensure the local community, economy and transport networks can continue to operate effectively. Where this is not reasonably practicable, alternative measures shall be identified to maintain continual public access, especially for pedestrians and cyclists, to routes in the vicinity of

²⁰ A copy can be found at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/960219/Phase_2a_Code_of_Construction_Practice.pdf

the construction sites. The impact of road based construction traffic will be reduced by implementing and monitoring clear controls on vehicle types, hours of site operation, parking and routes for Large Goods Vehicles.”

2.23. HS2 Phase 2a Information Paper E3: Management of Traffic During Construction, describes the consultation which is proposed in relation to the Management of Traffic During Construction:

“During construction, regular local traffic liaison meetings will be arranged with highway authorities, bus operators, taxi and trade representation (as appropriate), and the police - other emergency services will be included, as appropriate. These meetings will provide an opportunity for contractors to present proposals for future works affecting the highway, including methods of construction and proposed programme, and for a review of the associated traffic management requirements. This will allow the highway authorities to carry out their network co-ordination duties.

As part of the requisite its community liaison arrangements, HS2 Ltd will require its contractors to communicate regularly with those parties affected by the works. Local residents and businesses will be informed - appropriately and in advance - of the dates and durations of any closures of roads or public right of way, and will be provided with details of diversion routes at least two weeks in advance or when final details are available. Advance warning signs of road closures will be provided for users of roads and public of rights of way.”

2.24. HS2 Phase 2a Information Paper D3: Code of Construction Practice (CoCP)²¹ explains that the CoCP will provide a consistent approach to the management of construction traffic. The CoCP requires HS2 Ltd to prepare a Route-wide Traffic Management Plan and Local Traffic Management Plans, in consultation with local highway and traffic authorities, as well as emergency services. These plans would include, as appropriate, details of:

- clear identification for construction Large Goods Vehicles under the lead contractors’ control
- means of monitoring lorry use and any routes prohibited from use
- introduction of a Global Positioning System vehicle location and tracking system for tipper lorries within the lead contractors’ control system to be used for the movement of materials and waste in bulk and/or appropriate tracking solutions for the measurement of traffic flows relating to the scheme
- dealing with Large Goods Vehicles and abnormal loads

²¹ See

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/960669/D3_Code_of_Construction_Practice_v1.1.pdf

2.25. This is explained further in HS2 Phase 2a Information Papers D3: Code of Construction Practice, E3: Management of Traffic During Construction and E4: Highways and Traffic During Construction – Legislative Provisions²².

²² See

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/960717/E4_Highways_and_traffic_during_construction_-_Legislative_provisions_v1.2.pdf

Phase One, Case study - Chalfont St Peter, Buckinghamshire

The HS2 Phase One Environmental Statement included a construction traffic route to access the Chalfont St Peter vent shaft. This route would pass through a number of residential roads and sensitive stakeholders, including past a primary school.

Through local engagement, HS2 Ltd gained a better understanding of the strength of feeling locally for an alternative route to access the site. HS2 Ltd worked closely with stakeholders to find a solution that took the construction route away from the residential area of Chalfont St Peter but still provided safe access to site.

Through these discussions, a design solution was found to create a temporary access road, which included the creation of a new signalised junction with the A413 Amersham Road. The signals will allow free movement north and south on the A413 at all times, except for when an authorised construction vehicle approaches the junction. The approaching vehicle will trigger the signals to change to allow just enough time for the vehicle to safely enter or exit the site.



Measures provided to reduce the impact of Phase 2a HS2 construction traffic

2.26. During the passage of the Bill through Parliament, HS2 Ltd gave Staffordshire County Council, as the local highways authority for 85% of the Phase 2a route, a number of assurances to mitigate the impact of HS2 construction traffic in areas along the Phase 2a route. These are:

- to not use Kings Bromley as an HS2 Large Goods Vehicle construction route
- to investigate if alternative traffic management measures can be implemented to avoid the need to widen Bishton Lane
- to not use the southern part of Manor Road as an HS2 Large Goods Vehicle construction lorry route
- to develop an alternative construction traffic route to reduce impacts on A513 Beaconside
- to upgrade Wood End Lane

2.27. In addition to these, assurances were also given to Staffordshire County Council on a number of additional permanent and temporary road improvement works to address existing problems with the local road network. These improvement works, which would help to deliver a longer-term legacy of highway safety and capacity improvements include:

- a roundabout at the junction of the A513 Rugeley Road and A515 Lichfield Road
- introduction of traffic signals at the existing non-signalised intersection of the A513 and Marston Lane
- works to widen the Hydrant Way approach to the A513 / A518 / Hydrant Way roundabout
- signalisation of the existing priority junction of A34 The Fillybrooks with Yarnfield Lane
- traffic signals at the existing non-signalised intersection of the A513 and Sandon Road (east)
- the A51 Stone Bypass / A34 Stafford Road (Brooms Road Roundabout)
- the A51 London Road and A53 Newcastle Road junction
- the A500 / A519 junction (Hanchurch interchange), the junction of the A519 / A5182 and the section of the A519 Newcastle Road between these two junctions

2.28. This amounts to a significant package of additional permanent improvements to the local road network; the cost of the last three improvements alone is c£6.5m and the upgrade to Wood End Lane referred to in the previous paragraph would bring the total to £7.61m.

2.29. Furthermore, the Phase 2a Act includes significant proposals for improvements to the existing road network along the route to mitigate the impacts of construction traffic²³.

2.30. HS2 Ltd also gave assurances to local organisations and individuals to mitigate the impact of HS2 construction traffic as a result of the concerns raised in their petitions against the Bill. These include:

- to develop an alternative to closing Common Lane (in Kings Bromley) through a revised route between Crawley Lane and the A515 so as to maintain agricultural and local vehicle access to properties on this road²⁴
- to restrict HS2 Large Goods Vehicle construction traffic using School Lane in Hill Ridware
- to restrict HS2 Large Goods Vehicle construction traffic from using B5014 Uttoxeter Road through Hill Ridware and the section of Pipe Lane between Pipe Ridware and the junction of Pipe Lane and the proposed haul road at Common Lane
- not to restrict pedestrian and vehicular access to Ingestre Pavilion and Tixhall Gatehouse
- to not prevent vehicular access to Ingestre from Hoo Mill crossroads via Ingestre Park Road
- to restrict HS2 Large Goods Vehicle construction traffic from passing through Madeley Conservation Area
- to upgrade an internal haul road for use by HS2 construction traffic, to substantially reduce HS2 Large Good Vehicles construction traffic along Den Lane / Wrinehill Road and Checkley Lane
- to segregate pedestrians from road traffic in the underbridge and overbridge sections of Newlands Lane Colton Footpath diversion
- to include a new access in the vicinity of the Yarlett School's current entrance in the second Additional Provision to the Bill. This would provide a new opening of the central reservation to provide a safe means of entering the premises from both the north and south bound carriageway of the A34
- not restrict access by emergency service vehicles to Nethertown via Pipe Lane during HS2 construction
- to include a roundabout where the diverted Tittensor Road meets the A51

²³ See the list at Annex B

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/894588/house-of-commons-select-committee-response-to-the-first-special-report.pdf

²⁴ HS2 Ltd has committed to covering the reasonable costs of Staffordshire County Council, up to £250,000 should it prove necessary for them to seek compulsory acquisition powers.

- assurances to specified land/property owners to maintain vehicular access to their properties during construction

2.31. Moreover, during the passage of the Bill through Parliament, HS2 Ltd also gave commitments to engage with relevant highway authorities and local organisations on the provision of a crossing on the A51 Stone Bypass at its junction with the A34 Stafford Road to the south of Stone, and for a suitable crossing point for the A500 Queensway at its junction with A519 Newcastle Road (Hanchurch Interchange) to the south west of Stoke.

HS2 Phase 2a construction traffic on key roads

2.32. Respondents mentioned concern around the effect of HS2 construction traffic on specific roads.

The Parish of Woore in North East Shropshire

2.33. Many respondents commented on the potential negative impact of HS2 construction traffic through the Parish of Woore and the need to minimise this impact.

2.34. The A51 and A525 corridors, which run through the Parish of Woore, are proposed to form part of the construction traffic route network associated with the Madeley tunnel, the River Lea viaduct and Madeley cutting satellite compounds.

2.35. HS2 Ltd made changes to the scheme during the passage of the Bill that substantially reduces the expected volume of construction traffic routed through Woore, with a reduction in the peak traffic flows of over 50% on the A51 corridor located to the south of the junction with the A525 Newcastle Road.

2.36. In addition, as recommended by the House of Commons Select Committee, HS2 Ltd proposed a package of traffic calming measures for Woore in January 2019²⁵, for consideration by Woore Parish Council and Shropshire Council.

2.37. The measures recommended by HS2 Ltd included:

- a series of traffic calming measures including road markings; and improved gateways at the northern and southern entrances to the village
- vehicle activated signs for northbound and southbound vehicles
- modifications to the kerb lines at the junction of the A51/A525 junction

²⁵ See Traffic Calming and Road Safety Provision Options – Woore Village report, January 2019
<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/2520/documents/25032/default/>

- installation of a new zebra crossing in Woore village, upgrading of an existing controlled crossing, and enhanced pedestrian crossing points on the A51
- improvements to pavement provision adjacent to the Falcon Inn in The Square, London Road, Woore
- funding for a School Crossing Patrol Officer during term times for the period that the A51 and A525 would be used as construction traffic routes

2.38. In February 2021 a further assurance was given to the Parish Council to provide a range of supplementary traffic calming and road safety measures. These would be in addition to Design Package 2 set out in the March 2020 assurance. Discussions are ongoing between HS2 Ltd, Woore Parish Council and Shropshire Council to finalise these supplementary measures.

2.39. HS2 Ltd has underlined its commitment to alleviating road safety concerns in Woore through the changes to the scheme made during the passage of the Bill, and through the package of traffic calming measures the total cost of which is approximately £540,000.

Yarnfield Lane, between Yarnfield and Stone in Staffordshire

2.40. Some respondents believed that Yarnfield Lane is not suitable to withstand large goods vehicles, while at the same time ensuring that pedestrians would be safe.

2.41. During the passage of the Bill through Parliament, HS2 Ltd took steps to reduce the impact of construction traffic on Yarnfield Lane. HS2 Ltd gave an assurance to Staffordshire County Council that reasonable endeavours would be used “to maximise the use of the M6 Slip Roads by HS2 Large Goods Vehicle construction traffic, so far as reasonably practicable, for access to and egress from the Stone railhead main compound so as to reduce so far as reasonably practicable the use of Yarnfield Lane by HS2 Large Goods Vehicle construction traffic accessing the Stone railhead main compound”²⁶.

2.42. Changes to the scheme were also made, including permanent highway improvements involving signalisation of the junction of the A34 The Fillybrooks with Yarnfield Lane. This was sought by Staffordshire County Council, as the relevant local highway authority, to address concerns about highway safety.

2.43. Following a recommendation from the House of Commons Select Committee in their Second Special Report (July 2018), Yarnfield Lane overbridge will be widened to ensure the safety of all road users, subject to the approval of the detailed design by the local highway authority. During its detailed design, HS2 Ltd will work with the highway authority to determine appropriate lane widths for road users to cross the Yarnfield Lane overbridge²⁷. The HS2 Phase 2a Act includes the powers required to adjust the width of the bridge to accommodate the required lane widths.

²⁶ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-phase-2a-register-of-undertakings-and-assurances>

²⁷ House of Commons (2018). High Speed Rail (West Midlands - Crewe) Bill Select Committee, Second Special Report of Session 2017-19. Available online at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmhs2/1452/1452.pdf>

2.44. Furthermore, changes to the Yarnfield Lane M6 overbridge and construction sequencing were made to allow the existing Yarnfield Lane M6 overbridge to be retained for construction traffic. Once the new bridge is open to traffic this would enable the segregation of public traffic on the new Yarnfield Lane M6 overbridge from HS2 construction traffic on the existing M6 overbridge.

2.45. The segregation of HS2 construction traffic from other road users such as drivers, cyclists and pedestrians, will provide a safer environment for all road users.

A53 Newcastle Road, near Whitmore in Staffordshire

2.46. Some respondents commented about increased traffic on the A53 during the HS2 construction works.

2.47. The original scheme included a temporary construction traffic route between the HS2 route at Whitmore Heath and the A51 Stone Road/Nantwich Road to the south-west, via the A53 Newcastle Road.

2.48. A change was introduced to improve junction capacity through signalisation of the two adjacent junctions of the A51 Stone Road/Nantwich Road and the A53 Newcastle Road. The traffic signals would enable safe turning manoeuvres into and out of the A51 Stone Road. This would reduce queuing and delays through the staggered crossroads junction of the A51 Stone Road/Nantwich Road and the A53 Newcastle Road.

2.49. In July 2018²⁸ HS2 Ltd confirmed that there would be an extension of the southern section of the Whitmore Heath tunnel. This resulted in changes to the vertical alignment of the HS2 route between the Hatton South cutting and River Lea viaduct to enable the southern entrance (portal) of the Whitmore Heath tunnel to be relocated south-east of the A53 Newcastle Road. This change removes the need to temporarily realign the A53 Newcastle Road or to construct the A53 overbridge, so reducing disruption to road users and nearby communities. The change also reduces the loss of ancient woodland from Whitmore Wood.

Footpaths, cycleways, bridleways

Staffordshire and Worcester Canal towpath improvements

2.50. HS2 Ltd have engaged with Ingestre with Tixall Parish Council and Colwich Parish Council, working with the Canal and River Trust, to help facilitate an alternative route for cyclists wishing to avoid construction traffic on the Great Haywood Road. This includes agreeing to work with the Parish Councils to make a bid to the available funds: the HS2 Community and Environment Fund (CEF), Business and Local Economy fund (BLEF), the HS2 Road Safety Fund and the Trent Sow Parklands and Cannock Chase AONB environmental enhancement Fund.

²⁸ House of Commons (2018). High Speed Rail (West Midlands - Crewe) Bill Select Committee, Second Special Report of Session 2017-19. Available online at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmhs2/1452/1452.pdf>

2.51. During the passage of the Bill through Parliament, HS2 Ltd gave a commitment to Ingestre with Tixall Parish Council to provide a contribution of up to £106,000 towards Towpath improvements.

2.52. In response to the House of Commons Select Committee's request in their Third Special Report (June 2019), HS2 Ltd has given an assurance to provide additional funding for signage to help pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders navigate changes to the road and public rights of way network and away from construction traffic. As part of the detailed design process, HS2 Ltd will work with highway authorities, local access forums, user groups (for example The Ramblers) and communities to identify the best way of maintaining public rights of way during construction, including the appropriate provision of such signage.

2.53. Moreover, HS2 Ltd have also given an assurance to Colwich Parish Council requiring vegetation obstructing the footpath alongside the A51 between Great Hayward and Hixon to be cleared, and to repair the existing asphalt paving on the pathway that is currently paved with asphalt during the Trent South Embankment Main compound establishment period.

Engagement before and during construction

2.54. HS2 Ltd's aspiration is to be a good neighbour every single day, by respecting the people and communities it impacts and being sensitive to their needs. This means being actively involved with the community to build trusted, long term relationships.

2.55. In late 2016 HS2 Ltd established a new, dedicated Community Engagement department led by a new Director of Community Engagement. Along the route, Community Engagement managers provide a knowledgeable and professional point of contact for people affected, or potentially affected, by the construction of HS2.

2.56. HS2 Ltd has established a new Helpdesk Team who are available all day, every day of the year to answer enquiries and complaints from members of the public. There is a Freephone Minicom service for those with hearing difficulties.

2.57. A commitment has been made in the CoCP for HS2 Ltd and its contractors to engage further with local communities on construction matters. Paragraph 5.1.1 of the CoCP requires the nominated undertaker (HS2 Ltd) and its contractors to produce and implement a stakeholder engagement framework and provide appropriately experienced community relations personnel.

2.58. The Community Engagement Framework details how local people will be informed in advance of work taking place in their area, including, for example, providing details of any closures to roads or rights of way and details of the working hours applicable.

2.59. As the CoCP sets out, HS2 Ltd and its contractors must take reasonable steps to engage with the community, particularly those who may be affected by construction impacts including local residents, businesses, land owners and community resources,

taking into account any specific needs of protected groups (as defined in the Equality Act 2010²⁹).

2.60. Regular meetings will be held in community area locations between HS2 Ltd, the lead contractor, the local authority and representatives of the local community or other stakeholders to discuss construction issues and the forthcoming programme of works. Experienced support for local businesses, landowners and voluntary and community organisations that may be affected by the works will be provided by the nominated undertaker (HS2 Ltd).

2.61. HS2 Ltd and its contractors will consider local employment, apprenticeships and educational initiatives when recruiting staff. See HS2 Phase 2a Information Paper H2: Skills and Employment for further information³⁰.

2.62. Additionally, in line with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, HS2 Ltd will expect its contractors to provide a service that benefits and improves the local areas they work in - going beyond their immediate construction role.

2.63. This equates to the contractors having a strong commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by investing their time, skills, people and equipment in the local community. In addition, there is the potential for contractors to support local projects and activities, provided there's no conflict with HS2 Ltd's route-wide community funds.

2.64. Each contractor will be required to identify, plan and manage this local CSR activity through a Local Community Investment Programme (LCIPs).

2.65. The LCIPs should prioritise opportunities that have the greatest impact on the local community. The activities should also be proportionate to the extent of the scheme's impact on a particular community.

2.66. The HS2 Residents' Charter sets out how HS2 Ltd will be fair, clear, competent and reasonable in all dealings and the independent Residents' Commissioner will make sure this pledge is adhered to.

2.67. An independent Construction Commissioner has been appointed by the Secretary of State, as required by the CoCP. The Commissioner will investigate grievances where it is alleged that HS2 Ltd has not satisfactorily addressed a matter raised by a complainant and would mediate in unresolved disputes. See HS2 Phase 2A Information Paper D4: Construction Commissioner³¹.

2.68. HS2 Ltd has set up long-term information points in 14 local venues along the Phase 2a route. Through these information points HS2 Ltd will bring information to communities

²⁹ See <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

³⁰ See https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/960830/H2_Skills_and_Employment_v1.3.pdf

³¹ See https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/960670/D4_Construction_Commissioner_v1.2.pdf

along the HS2 Phase 2a route so they can get the latest news in places they already visit regularly, including seven libraries, five council offices and two conference centres.

2.69. HS2 Phase 2a Information Paper G1: Consultation and Engagement³² sets out the extensive stakeholder and public consultation and engagement in advance of the submission of the Bill and during its passage through Parliament.

Construction Inspectors

2.70. The Department for Transport (DfT) has established a small team of Construction Inspectors to support the assurance of the delivery of works along the route. These roles report to the DfT and will assist the DfT to assess if HS2 works are being delivered to time and budget.

2.71. A key lesson learned from Crossrail was that there should be an independent means of assessing progress on the ground through site visits.

2.72. The Construction Inspectors are uniquely placed to provide the DfT with a means of assuring how well HS2 Ltd's community engagement and complaint handling activities are working in each area.

³² See

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/960823/G1_Consultation_Engagement_v1.3.pdf

3. The natural environment

3.1. Responses were invited to the following consultation question:

Question B: Please let us know your comments on the impact of the HS2 Phase 2a works on the natural environment, including but not limited to the impact on ancient woodland.

What you said

3.2. There were 331 respondents who provided comments on the impact they thought the HS2 Phase 2a works would have on the natural environment. For the most part, respondents thought that the impact would be negative.

3.3. Comments to this question can be grouped into the following themes

- impact on the environment, ecology and biodiversity
- impact on the landscape
- impacts from noise and air pollution
- impacts on local communities

3.4. Feedback around the impact to the environment, ecology and biodiversity included comments on perceived effects on wildlife and biodiversity, and woodlands and hedgerows.

3.5. Respondents also commented about the impacts on watercourses and drainage and perceived effects on flood risk.

3.6. Some respondents made comments about the perceived impact of HS2 on climate change.

3.7. A number of respondents gave the view that proposed mitigation measures were sufficient to protect the environment and biodiversity.

Government's response

3.8. There has already been considerable engagement and consultation on the HS2 Phase 2a scheme. Many issues raised by respondents in their comments on the natural environment have been raised in previous consultations, considered by HS2 Phase 2a Select Committees and responded to by HS2 Ltd. The following sections set out the environmental controls that will be adhered to during the construction of the scheme.

Control of environmental impacts during construction

3.9. A common theme throughout many of the responses was the need to consider the impacts from the construction of the scheme on various aspect of the natural environment. The information provided below explains the environmental controls that will be adhered to during the construction of the scheme.

3.10. The design of the scheme to date provides the level of detail necessary for the purposes of the Phase 2a Act and the requirements of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2017. Once the detailed design of the scheme is complete HS2 Ltd would need to apply for approval of the detailed design for various elements of the scheme from local planning authorities along the route under the planning regime established under Schedule 17 of the Act.

3.11. This would ensure that although deemed planning permission for the scheme is granted by Parliament, local planning authorities would be able to approve the detailed design thereby ensuring that the design of permanent structures fits into the local environment. This is explained in HS2 Phase 2a Information Paper D1: Design³³ and HS2 Phase 2a Information Paper B2: The Main Provisions of the Planning Regime.

3.12. Ongoing engagement with planning authorities is critical to the design development process. It would ensure the detailed design of the scheme has regard to planning authority aspirations, and fits within the local environment. The HS2 Phase 2a Planning Forum would consider common designs for certain structures. Discussions between the nominated undertaker (HS2 Ltd) and the relevant planning authority would determine the appropriateness of the common designs to the local environment.

3.13. In two tier local authority areas, it would be the district planning authority (where this is a qualifying authority) that would approve the design and appearance of works under paragraph 2 or 3 of Schedule 17, such as earthworks and buildings, but it is open to the district planning authority to consult the upper tier authority.

³³ See

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/960666/D1_Design_v1.1.pdf

3.14. As HS2 Phase 2a Information Paper E1: Control of Environmental Impacts³⁴ sets out, “there are three distinct components that, taken together, will effectively control the environmental impacts of the construction and operation of the scheme. They are:

- arrangements within the Act for approving detailed design and construction arrangements
- policies, commitments and undertakings entered into outside of the Act
- existing legislation, unless expressly or implicitly disapplied or modified by the Act”

3.15. These controls, “contained in the Act and in general legislation along with undertakings given by the Secretary of State, will ensure that impacts which have been assessed in the ES will not be exceeded”.

HS2 Phase 2a Information Paper D3: Code of Construction Practice, further sets out that the environmental and sustainability commitments that the Government entered into through the Bill process:

“These commitments are known as the Environmental Minimum Requirements (EMRs) and consist of a suite of framework documents which will:

- define the ways in which the nominated undertaker will engage with people affected by the scheme
- explain how measures designed to protect communities and the environment will be put in place alongside detailed design and construction”

3.16. Additionally, the CoCP sets out how noise, air quality, visual and construction traffic effects will be controlled to reduce the effects on community facilities, residential properties and open space during the construction phase of the scheme.

Local Environmental Management Plans

3.17. Some respondents commented on a lack of mitigation measures to address potential impact on natural environment as a result of the scheme.

3.18. Local Environmental Management Plans (LEMPs) will build on the general environmental requirements in the CoCP and will set out how the project will adapt and deliver the required environmental and community protection measures within each relevant local authority area. Draft LEMPs, which will be produced during detail design, will be based on the general environmental requirements detailed in the CoCP and set out how HS2 Ltd and its contractors will adapt and deliver the required environmental and community protection measures within each distinct relevant local authority area.

³⁴ See

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/960712/E1_Control_of_Environmental_Impacts_v1.1.pdf

3.19. The LEMPs build on the general environmental and site requirements in section 4 of the CoCP and will include specific by measures by environmental topic as set out in section 6 onwards. This could include management plans for sensitive ecological areas, or restricted working hours at certain sites. The LEMPs would also specify local implementation of the requirements on lighting, security and fencing, and the provision of temporary living accommodation for contractors. They would also set out what should happen to worksites after construction has been completed.

3.20. Section 4.2 of the CoCP explains that HS2 Ltd and/or its contractors would engage with local communities, local authorities and other stakeholders in order to develop the LEMPs. Following Royal Assent HS2 Ltd will be responsible for finalising the LEMPs prior to commencement of construction in the light of detailed designs and construction planning and in consultation with local authorities and other relevant stakeholders. Details of the engagement process would be discussed with local authorities at the appropriate time. Further details on LEMPs are set out in HS2 Phase 2a Information Paper D3: Code of Construction Practice.

Phase One case study – Canley Brook, Warwickshire

The Phase One scheme included a realignment of the Canley Brook near Kenilworth to allow the route to pass over it on a viaduct. As a result of design changes, developed by HS2's main works contractor as part of detailed design, the railway will now travel in a slightly shallower and longer cutting in this area enabling a viaduct to be built over Canley Brook. This change will reduce the realignment of the river from 700 metres to just an 80-metre diversion and will preserve the home of protected wildlife such as otters and bats.

This change will minimise impacts on woodland, create wetland habitats and reduce construction work, which means a lower carbon footprint for the project.



Ancient woodland and biodiversity

3.21. Respondents commented on how ancient woodland and biodiversity could be affected by the construction of the scheme.

3.22. Ancient woodlands are irreplaceable and the HS2 Phase 2a scheme has been designed to avoid their loss, where reasonably practicable.

3.23. The Phase 2a Ancient Woodland Strategy³⁵ provides an area based comparison between the losses of ancient woodland habitat that will occur as a consequence of the scheme and the associated package of compensation measures to be provided in response to those losses (as reported in the ES).

3.24. Of the 11 ancient woodland sites directly impacted by the construction of the scheme, during the passage of the Bill the area of loss has been reduced to 9.8ha, compared to 10.5ha in the original scheme. In order to partly compensate for the loss of 9.8ha of ancient woodland, 78ha of ancient woodland compensation is proposed, along with the translocation of up to 9.6ha of ancient woodland soils; and the restoration of a further 13.4ha of existing ancient woodland.

3.25. In addition, HS2 Ltd has committed an additional £2m to extend the Woodland Fund to the Phase 2a scheme. This funding will help local landowners create native broadleaved woodlands and/or restore plantations on ancient woodland sites. It is estimated this could deliver approximately 170ha of new woodland planting to further compensate the loss of ancient woodland.

3.26. Measures will be adopted to protect ancient and veteran trees affected as a result of temporary and permanent works through implementation of the CoCP. These measures will be considered during detailed design on a site by site basis. Where the loss of an ancient and veteran tree is unavoidable, consideration will be given to the appropriate measures to partially compensate for its loss.

3.27. HS2 Ltd has also given an assurance to the Woodland Trust that, while carrying out the authorised works, it will ensure that of those trees identified as veteran trees in the veteran tree report shared with the Woodland Trust, no more than nine veteran trees are to be removed or damaged as a result of temporary construction works, save in unforeseen circumstances.

3.28. HS2 Ltd will also scope a long-term project to monitor the environmental impact of moving ancient woodland, to inform any future proposals for the translocation of ancient woodland.

3.29. HS2 Ltd is also funding research on ancient woodland soils using DNA metabarcoding techniques through its innovation programme with their partners NatureMetrics.

³⁵ See

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/872799/CS_Phase2aAncientWoodlandStrategy_RD.pdf

3.30. The research will look at the development of statistical techniques and analysis and how to design a long-term experiment to answer questions such as ‘what happens to biodiversity overall in translocated soils e.g. species richness?’ ‘what is the effect of seasonality on results?’, and ‘what is the effect of habitat management on results?’. The research will also focus on digitizing the biodiversity information in one place such a web-based mapping platform, enabling comparison of different sample points or time points at the touch of a button.

3.31. Over 200 samples have already been collected from ancient woodlands on the Phase One route from both donor and receptor sites and analysis of the data will take place during 2021.

3.32. With regards to native plant material secured for use in mitigation tree planting for Phase 2a, HS2 Ltd has given Natural England an assurance that:

- it will use reasonable endeavours to source at least two thirds of the required seed stock from Great Britain
- it will consult with Natural England and the Forestry Commission to ensure the remaining third is procured from an appropriate region of provenance with a view to securing, where practicable, as much seed stock from local provenances within Great Britain to minimise the requirement for non-British sources whilst ensuring the best opportunity for resilience to climate change
- all seed stocks and suppliers will comply with the latest biosecurity certification standards

3.33. This will ensure a proactive approach to climate change resilience, whilst adopting a balanced provenance portfolio for mitigation planting.

3.34. HS2 Ltd recognises the importance of tree provenance and the need to minimise the risk of tree disease by following best practice in biosecurity and plant quarantine.

3.35. In accordance with HS2 Ltd’s Ecology Technical Standards, a bespoke Biosecurity Management Plan will be produced where there is a risk of introducing plant diseases as a result of planting, seeding and remedial works being undertaken.

3.36. The salvage and translocation of ancient woodland soils has been included as a compensatory measure for the loss of ancient woodland that will, where conditions are suitable, act to provide the best opportunity to retain some of the diversity associated with the ancient woodland

Ecology

3.37. Respondents commented on the impact of the scheme on biodiversity, wildlife and habitats along the Phase 2a route.

3.38. HS2 Ltd has set out indicative management, monitoring and maintenance periods for the establishment phase of created habitats in the Phase 2a Information Paper: E2

Ecology³⁶. This makes clear that HS2 Ltd does not expect all habitat creation to be complete within short timeframes. Generic establishment monitoring, management and maintenance range for woodland creation is up to 50 years. In consultation with Natural England, HS2 Ltd intends to identify measurable goals (or success criteria) for all habitat areas to be created.

3.39. Monitoring during the establishment of new habitats would track progress towards these goals. If monitoring shows that these goals have not been achieved within the indicative monitoring and maintenance periods stated, the duration may need to be extended, for example in response to unusual weather conditions such as prolonged drought. Similarly, if it can be confirmed that the required goal has been met earlier than expected, the standard monitoring period may be shortened. The frequency of monitoring would generally decrease with time where establishment towards the agreed objectives is progressing in line with expectations. An independent Ecology Review Group has been established for Phase 2a, consisting of relevant environmental stakeholders, to monitor progress and make recommendations where appropriate.

3.40. HS2 Ltd work closely with the regulators to ensure any required protected species licences are obtained in accordance with best practice. Protected species that may be affected by the scheme include (but are not limited to) several bat species, great crested newt, otter, water vole and badger.

3.41. As outlined in HS2 Phase 2A Information Paper E2: Ecology, HS2 Ltd will ensure compliance with the relevant statutory provisions in respect of areas of nature conservation interest and of protected species, including, protected bat species. Relevant provisions include the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017; Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; and Protection of Badgers Act 1992. In all locations where significant effects on protected species are identified, details would be discussed with Natural England and licences would be obtained in compliance with legal requirements.

3.42. Formal applications for derogation and mitigation licences for protected species will be made following Royal Assent and are likely to be accompanied by updated baseline surveys. Licence applications would need to demonstrate, amongst other things, that the proposed mitigation measures are sufficient for the purpose of maintaining the favourable conservation status of populations of species affected. An appropriate monitoring programme would form part of the licence agreement.

3.43. In addition to the proposed mitigation measures within the Act, HS2 Ltd has sought to avoid or further reduce significant environmental effects through assurances to:

- Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to consult on additional mitigation to mitigate residual effects on Lion Lodge Covert Salt Marsh and Lount Farm Local Wildlife Site
- Cheshire Wildlife Trust to engage on the proposed mitigation to mitigate the effects on Water Vole in the Swill Brook

³⁶ See

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/960714/E2_Ecology_v1.2.pdf

- West Midland Bird Club to install bird diverters on the pylon wires across the valley sections between the Newlands Lane Auto-Transformer Feeder Station and the National Grid Parkgate Substation

Landscape design

3.44. Respondents commented on the potential impact of the scheme on the landscape in areas along the HS2 Phase 2a route.

3.45. The HS2 Phase 2a route has been developed to minimise its impact on landscape and visual amenity, and where possible to make a positive contribution to it. This includes the decision to keep the railway as low as reasonably practicable in the landscape and the use of tunnels and tree planting to help integrate the railway into the surrounding landscape character and screen new structures, trains and overhead line equipment.

3.46. HS2 Ltd's Design Policy sets out an approach to obtaining input from a wider range of stakeholders in the design of built and landscaped elements of the scheme³⁷. The policy seeks to ensure that amongst other considerations the scheme is designed to be sympathetic to local context and provides opportunities for engagement with local people on the design of main viaducts and maintenance buildings in sensitive areas.

3.47. Further revisions to the scheme during the passage of the Bill have resulted in additional measures to reduce residual landscape and visual impacts:

- the height of the Kings Bromley viaduct has been lowered by up to 3.1 metres
- the height of the River Trent viaducts has been lowered by up to 2.6 metres
- landscape mitigation planting has been provided on the eastern slope of the Bourne embankment

Cheshire East Landscape and Environment fund

3.48. A fund has been set up to support the identification of further local environmental and landscape enhancements within the administrative area of Cheshire East which are over and beyond that proposed in the Environmental Statement or proposed through detailed design and located outside Phase 2a Act limits. HS2 Ltd is working with Cheshire East Council to develop proposals and once accepted, the Fund will be released to the Council.

Management of air quality and noise during construction

3.49. Respondents commented on the impact of noise and air pollution resulting from HS2 construction activity and the effect of such on the natural environment.

³⁷ See

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/960666/D1_Design_v1.1.pdf

3.50. One of HS2 Ltd's guiding principles is to be a good neighbour and respect the communities they are working with and the environment in which they live.

3.51. Section 13 of the CoCP explains that when undertaking construction activities HS2 Ltd will require its contractors manage noise during the construction works in the following order in accordance with Best Practicable Means:

- noise and vibration control at source (e.g. selection of quiet and low vibration equipment, control of working hours, etc.)
- screening (e.g. local screening of equipment or perimeter hoarding)
- then, where, despite the implementation of Best Practicable Means, the noise exposure exceeds the defined criteria the contractor may offer noise insulation or, ultimately, temporary rehousing

3.52. This is explained further in HS2 Phase 2a Information Paper E13: Control of Construction Noise and Vibration³⁸.

3.53. Section 7 of the CoCP explains that HS2 Ltd requires its contractors to manage dust, air pollution, odour and exhaust emissions during the construction works in accordance with Best Practicable Means (BPM), as defined by the Control of Pollution Act 1974 (CoPA) and Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA). This would include the following as appropriate:

- reference to the general site management and good housekeeping procedures (relevant to limiting dust and air pollution)
- controls and measures to control or mitigate the effect of potential nuisance caused by the construction works
- reducing emission by setting construction vehicle and Non-Road Mobile Machinery emission standards
- dust and air pollution monitoring measures to be employed during construction of the project
- measures relevant to control risks associated with asbestos dust

3.54. In the event that one control measure failed to achieve an outcome consistent with a general assurance provided in the CoCP HS2 Ltd would be required to put in place additional measures so that the assurance is complied with.

³⁸ See

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/960729/E13_Control_of_Construction_Noise_and_Vibration_v1.2.pdf

3.55. Section 7 of HS2 Phase 2a Information Paper D3: Code of Construction Practice, explains how the requirements of the CoCP would be passed onto contractors and enforced.

3.56. During the passage of the Bill, HS2 Ltd gave an assurance to the Inland Water Ways Association to consider what additional noise mitigation might be appropriate in the Fradley Wood area during detailed design.

3.57. In its response to the House of Commons Select Committee's Third Special report HS2 Ltd stated its intention to continue to work with directly affected landowners and others affected by the operation of borrow pits on the scheme and be mindful of the Select Committee's desire for noise and visual screening to protect local communities from noise and dust.

Climate

3.58. Respondents commented about the perceived impact of HS2 on climate change.

3.59. To address carbon emissions, HS2 Ltd's Environmental Policy states an aim to "minimise the carbon footprint of HS2 and deliver low carbon, long distance journeys that are supported by low carbon energy". HS2 Ltd has applied the following carbon minimisation hierarchy:

- calculate the carbon footprint of HS2 Phase 2a and use this as a tool to assess the potential to reduce carbon across the design, construction and operational phase
- consider low carbon options in developing the detailed design of HS2 Phase 2a
- reduce embedded carbon in construction materials and carbon emissions from construction works, where practicable
- reduce energy requirements of HS2 Phase 2a and maximise the energy efficiency of operations, if reasonably practicable
- use and/or generate low carbon energy, if reasonably practicable
- sequester carbon, if reasonably practicable

Watercourses and drainage

3.60. Respondents commented about the impacts on watercourses and drainage and perceived effects on flood risk.

3.61. Balancing pond locations and associated drainage features have been selected based on several criteria, the key criteria being: sustainability; minimisation of land take; and, maintaining flow regimes within natural catchments. For sustainability reasons, ground levels have been considered to ensure the scheme can be drained by gravity where possible avoiding the need for energy intensive pumped systems.

3.62. The drainage layout has been selected to ensure that where options for soaking water into the ground is limited, surface water catchments are maintained where possible, ensuring that drainage from the scheme returns regulated water to the watercourses that it would otherwise have drained to: this helps to ensure no increase in flood risk, and maintain a more natural hydrological regime for aquatic habitats.

3.63. A further requirement of the drainage design is that drainage systems provided for the managing runoff from the scheme must not receive water from other drainage systems. This is to ensure separation for purposes of pollution control and maintenance responsibilities for the nominated undertaker. Drainage systems for the scheme have therefore been purposely separated from existing drainage systems.

3.64. HS2 Phase 2a Information Paper E21: Balancing Ponds and Replacement Flood Storage Areas³⁹ describes how replacement flood storage areas are provided to mitigate the impact of the scheme on existing floodplains and to ensure that the scheme does not cause an increased flooding risk to vulnerable receptors (for example, residential property) as a result of its construction or operation.

3.65. Engagement has been undertaken throughout the design and assessment of the scheme with technical and specialist organizations, including Natural England and DEFRA. This engagement has focused on ensuring that technical and specialist stakeholders inform the design and assessment of the impacts of the scheme and has helped identify specific mitigation.

3.66. HS2 Ltd has also engaged with landowners who are directly affected by the scheme in order to discuss the proposals within the Bill, and the developing design. This engagement will continue into the detailed design, as set out within the Farmers and Growers Guide.

³⁹ See

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/960743/E21_Balancing_Ponds_and_Replacement_Flood_Storage_Areas_v1.1.pdf

4. Transport provisions

4.1. Responses were invited to the following consultation question:

Question C: Please let us know your comments on whether there are sufficient transport provisions for the purposes of passengers connecting to HS2 Phase 2a, and to address changes to general passenger movements caused by the HS2 Phase 2a works.

What you said

4.2. A total of 246 respondents commented on whether or not there are sufficient transport provisions for the purposes of passengers connecting to HS2 Phase 2a, and to address changes to general passenger movements caused by the HS2 Phase 2a works.

4.3. The main themes of comments included

- disruption to existing transport services/rail services
- insufficient public transport links to HS2 services
- existing transport links/rail services are sufficient
- lack of local HS2 stations
- insufficient public transport in local area

4.4. Respondents provided suggestions about local public transport provisions and/or to address changes to general passenger movements caused by the HS2 Phase 2a works. The main themes of these suggestions were:

- for general improvements to connections to and from HS2 services
- encourage use of public transport - reducing private car travel
- improvements to transport links to and from Crewe Station
- improvements to local bus networks

- improved transport links between HS2 Phase 2a services and Stoke-on-Trent

4.5. Some respondents commented on the perceived change in travel behaviours as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Government's response

4.6. HS2 is a long-term project for a new, High Speed Railway connecting major cities in the UK. Using innovative technology and modern track alignment will allow HS2 to reduce journey times and improve connectivity in support of the Government's commitment to level-up the country. HS2 will allow businesses to invest beyond London whilst still retaining ready access to it. The scheme will contribute towards sustainable growth in towns, cities and regions across the country, spreading prosperity and opportunity more evenly. It will act as a catalyst for job creation, the development of new homes and ultimately, the regeneration of major cities and towns along the HS2 route.

4.7. The Phase 2a scheme has been designed to minimise impacts on existing transport networks and services. Considerable work has already been undertaken achieving Royal Assent for both the High Speed Rail (London – West Midlands) and High Speed Rail (West Midlands – Crewe) Bills and construction on HS2 has started.

4.8. However, with Phase One planned to open between 2029 and 2033 and with Phase 2a to follow thereafter, there is a considerable period of time during which the Government will plan and implement future transport provisions to prepare ways of maximising the benefits of HS2. We are not in a position at this early stage to be precise on which train services will run on either the conventional or HS2 network, and wider transport provisions required when HS2 is operational.

4.9. Further work is being undertaken to identify the best ways of connecting to HS2 and delivering the benefits for communities across the areas in the consultation. Hence, the Government is also putting the frameworks in place for future transport provisions, so at this early stage, we will point to our current policies and how this may develop.

Disruption to existing transport and rail services

4.10. Respondents commented on the potential for HS2 to disrupt existing transport and rail services. The Government response to Question A of the consultation earlier in this document discusses the measures that we have put in place to manage transport impacts arising through HS2 construction. This includes the preparation of a Route-wide Traffic Management Plan and Local Traffic Management Plans, in consultation with local highway and traffic authorities, as well as emergency services.

4.11. The design of Phase 2a aims to reduce operational disruption to the conventional rail network during construction where reasonably practicable. Where it is safe to do so, works will be undertaken while conventional train services are still running. Where this would not be safe, works will have to be undertaken when trains are not running, in possessions.

4.12. In so far as reasonably practicable, many of these works will be undertaken in the normal nighttime maintenance possessions to reduce disruption to passenger and freight

services. However, for certain major works that cannot be accommodated within these maintenance periods, weekend closures of a day's duration or longer will be required. These are referred to as weekend possessions. Where the works are particularly complex and require more time than a normal or bank holiday weekend, durations longer than a weekend will be required and are referred to as blockades.

4.13. Possessions are a standard technique widely used for the maintenance and renewal of the conventional railway. The possessions for the Proposed Scheme will be consistent with those adopted for current Network Rail working practices. HS2 Ltd will work with Network Rail to, where reasonably practicable, co-ordinate possessions with existing planned maintenance and renewals to reduce overall disruption to the travelling public and to ensure that the disruption impact of the works is not significant.

4.14. HS2 Ltd plan to use land between Yarnfield and Stone next to the M6 as a 'railhead' for Phase 2a. A railhead is a temporary construction facility connected to the existing railway and the new railway. The temporary railhead will enable materials and equipment for the construction of HS2 Phase 2a to be transported by rail where reasonably practicable and thereby reduce HGV road movements.

4.15. A connection to the conventional railway and the HS2 Phase 2a route is essential as certain rail systems materials, such as individual sections of rail are between 108m and 216m in length and cannot reasonably be delivered to site by road. Other rail system materials such as aggregates, overhead line equipment and cables could be delivered by road, but given the quantum of such materials it is preferable to deliver these by rail where possible to reduce the volume of construction vehicles using the public road network.

4.16. The railhead will use 'islanded' land between the Phase 2a line and the M6 motorway and connect to the Norton Bridge to Stone railway and the M6. A HS2 Phase 2a route-wide traffic management plan will be produced in liaison with highway and traffic authorities and the emergency services. As appropriate, the plan will include:

- the means of managing lorry flows
- the requirement for vehicle and driver safety
- requirements for preparing workforce travel plans
- the strategy for design and consultation for traffic management (including the signing strategy for emergency service access and lorry wayfinding)
- the requirements for protecting highways

4.17. Local Transport Management plans will be produced in liaison with highway and traffic authorities and the emergency services. As appropriate, these will include

- contractors' construction flow assumptions
- the local routes to be used by large goods vehicles (approved where applicable), including lorry holding areas required for construction of the scheme

- significant works affecting roads and public rights of way, including temporary and permanent closures and diversions

4.18. As part of the Phase 2a scheme, works are scheduled to Crewe Station. Government has confirmed its vision for a 'Crewe Hub', with up to 5-7 HS2 trains stopping per hour. Changes to the scheme now incorporated into the High Speed Rail (West Midlands-Crewe) Act include measures that will reduce future service disruption at Crewe, such as:

- Lengthening platform 5 so 400m HS2 trains can call, to enable a HS2 London-Macclesfield service (via Stoke and Stafford)
- A more efficient design for the proposed platform on the Manchester independent lines (currently used for freight)
- Amending the design of the southern connection so that HS2 joins (and takes over) the fast central two lines on the existing network

4.19. Fully realising the Crewe Hub vision will also require:

- An enhanced track and platform layout. In May 2019 the DfT instructed Network Rail to continue with detailed design work on their proposed layout, which provide more connectivity to reduce disruption and performance issues, as rail services have to cross many existing lines; A new transfer deck in Crewe Station for passenger to access platforms more easily (subject to confirmation of funding)
- A junction north of Crewe as part of Phase 2b, allowing HS2 trains that serve Crewe to re-join the HS2 mainline

4.20. Also, as part of Phase 2b, two tunnels will be bored under Crewe, so that some HS2 services will be able to bypass Crewe station, so minimising disruption during construction and reducing the impact on other rail services.

4.21. HS2 Ltd and Network Rail are working together to develop a plan which aligns enhancements for HS2 services with the replacement of existing life expired assets. Although it is too early to be specific about the precise impact of engineering and other works, every effort will be made to keep disruption during these works to a minimum.

Future rail services

4.22. Respondents raised concerns that HS2 may have negative consequences for existing rail services and that there is insufficient transport provision to connect to HS2 Phase 2a. Respondents called for improvements to connectivity to and from HS2 services, transport links to and from Crewe Station and transport links between HS2 services and Stoke.

4.23. Significant work has already been undertaken to determine the type of service patterns for future HS2 train services. As part of the Business Case for HS2, the benefits have to be assessed against a best initial assessment of the likely train HS2 services, as

the benefits range from direct transport user benefits from travel time savings, reductions in crowding and improvements in reliability, to wider economic impacts.

4.24. To do this, indicative Train Service Specifications have been generated to show the indicative service patterns to and from cities served by HS2 stations and cities served by high speed services then continuing on the conventional rail network. The most recent indicative Train Service Specifications are shown in the Phase One Full Business Case⁴⁰.

4.25. HS2 Phase 2a has the potential to relieve some of the pressure on a particularly constrained section of the West Coast Main Line (WCML), and to deliver significant additional capacity, reliability and performance improvements in addition to the benefits from faster journey times. Six trains per hour can be transferred onto Phase 2a lines, freeing up capacity on the WCML from Lichfield to Crewe. Phase 2a has the potential to support the efficient movement of people and freight, which is essential for economic growth. Enhanced capacity and good connectivity strengthen the links between businesses, workers and customers and will remove geographical barriers to markets.

4.26. The Department for Transport (DfT) has engaged rail industry experts to develop the indicative Train Service Specifications further, through the West Coast Partnership, currently First Trenitalia. As well as operating existing Avanti West Coast services, their duties involve acting as the 'Shadow Operator' for HS2 services, providing advice to the DfT on options that best serve markets on the route, based on their knowledge and analysis of passenger demand.

4.27. In light of the recent announcement of the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail, the remit and companies undertaking of the Shadow Operator role and its interface with Great British Railways may change in the future. However, it is much too early to speculate on the implications of this.

4.28. No decisions have yet been taken on the train services that will operate on the West Coast Main Line after the beginning of HS2 services. These decisions will be taken nearer the time, drawing on advice from the Shadow Operator and Great British Railways, and will be subject to public consultation.

Changes in future rail travel (as a result of Covid-19)

4.29. Respondents commented on the changes in travel patterns and behaviours as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. This has been demonstrated over the last year as rail travel across the UK remains considerably lower than it was before the pandemic. A total of 388 million rail passenger journeys were made in Great Britain in 2020-21⁴¹. This equates to 22.3% of the 1,739 million journeys made in 2019-20.

4.30. The Government has been clear in following the Covid-19 pandemic, it's priority is to build back better, through our plan for growth to support growth through significant

⁴⁰ See

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/939905/full-business-case-hs2-phase-one.pdf

⁴¹ <https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/media/1946/passenger-rail-usage-2020-21-q4.pdf>

investment in infrastructure, skills and innovation, and to pursue growth that levels up every part of the UK.

4.31. HS2 is at the heart of our plans to build back better. The project already supports more than 16,000 jobs and the decision to proceed with HS2 has given thousands of workers across the country certainty at a time when they need it most.

4.32. HS2 is new rail infrastructure that will serve the UK for the 21st Century, in the same way that the Victorian railway expansion provided the railways for the 19th and 20th Centuries. Therefore, as a long-term project, a long view of future travel patterns and behaviours needs to be undertaken, rather than trying to estimate its impact as the UK is just starting to recover after the height of the pandemic.

4.33. The Department for Transport is working with colleagues across government to understand the impact on transport demand and the pandemic's wider effect on the economy.

4.34. It should be noted that the Full Business Case for Phase One⁴² published in April 2020 looked at both high and low demand scenarios, underpinned by population and economic growth forecasts at that time. What that analysis showed is that, even in a scenario where demand is relatively low, there is still a case for pressing ahead with HS2.

Bus services

4.35. Respondents commented on insufficient public transport in the local area and made suggestions regarding improvements to the local bus network. Respondents raised issues of congestion and poor journey reliability leading to a lack of confidence in local bus networks or referenced cuts to services which have resulted in no public transport being available in some rural villages. Respondents called for improved, direct bus services to connect to HS2, preventing the need for personal car trips and to take advantage of the improved journey speeds provided by HS2.

4.36. Buses are an affordable, accessible transport choice, with the ability to reduce congestion and improve air quality and bring economic benefits to the places they serve. Buses are at the centre of the public transport network, with more than 4 billion bus journeys made in England in 2019/20.

4.37. For more people to use the bus, services need to take people where they want to go, be reliable, arrive on time, and offer good value for money. The government is committed to achieving this. Local authorities are responsible for managing the local road network and must ensure that bus priority measures are actively considered as part of this process. The government is acting to ensure that local authorities understand the importance it places on bus priority.

4.38. In September 2019, the government set out how it would launch a revolution in bus services, delivering a better deal for bus users and committing to publishing a National Bus

⁴² See

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/939905/full-business-case-hs2-phase-one.pdf

Strategy. In February 2020, the Prime Minister announced that bus services across the country would be transformed with simpler fares, thousands of new buses, improved routes and higher frequencies.

4.39. The National Bus Strategy published in March 2021⁴³ set out the vision and opportunity to deliver better bus services for passengers across England, through ambitious and far-reaching reform of how services are planned and delivered, with £3 billion available to transform services. The Strategy sets out that we expect all Local Transport Authorities to produce local Bus Service Improvement Plans by October 2021, to set out how, through statutory partnership arrangements with local bus operators or franchising arrangements, they will deliver ambitious local visions for bus driven by what passengers and would-be passengers want in their area.

4.40. The Department for Transport has also awarded English local authorities funding for 17 successful proposals under the rural mobility fund to trial on-demand bus services in their areas. Successful bids to the rural mobility fund totalling over £19 million were announced in March 2021 and included:

- £1.26m for Cheshire East Council
- £1.075m for Cheshire West and Chester Council
- £1.038m for Staffordshire County Council

Existing road connections

4.41. Respondents commented on general improvements to connectivity to and from HS2 services and improvements to transport links to and from Crewe Station. Respondents mentioned people may have to travel too far to access HS2 and that the existing road network in the Phase 2a area is already stretched.

4.42. Highways England plans, designs, operates and maintains England's motorways and major A roads. In Staffordshire and Cheshire, this includes the M6, plus the A34 and A500 in Stoke and the A50 from Stoke to Uttoxeter.

4.43. Since 2015 Highways England has invested billions in new routes and extra capacity including a 'spine' of smart motorways up and down the country. There has been considerable investment to increase the capacity of the M6 in Staffordshire and Cheshire in recent years:

- the section between junctions 10a and 13 in Staffordshire was opened as a 4-lane smart motorway in late 2015
- the section between junctions 16 and 19 in Cheshire was opened as a 4-lane smart motorway in early 2019

⁴³ See

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/980227/DfT-Bus-Back-Better-national-bus-strategy-for-England.pdf

- work to improve the section between junctions 13 and 15 as a 4-lane smart motorway in Staffordshire was started in early 2019 and is planned to open in 2021-22
- work to improve junction 19 in Cheshire has started and is planned to be opened in late 2021
- an upgrade to junction 15 for Stoke is included in their future pipeline of proposed schemes to inform the prioritisation of the schemes for further investment

4.44. In addition, the A500 Etruria widening scheme in Newcastle-under-Lyme was opened in late 2020. This scheme will help facilitate the Stoke Growth Deal with the Etruria Valley Development with improvements at the Wolstanton junction.

4.45. During 2020-21, Highways England will collaborate with sub national transport bodies, such as Transport for the North and the Midlands Connect, supporting them to develop or refresh their transport strategies, to support the development of their investment plans and feed their evidence into Highways England's Route strategies.

4.46. For all the other roads, these are the responsibility of the local highway authorities, that being Cheshire East Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council, Shropshire Council, Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

4.47. Well maintained highways not only improve local productivity but also the environment by reducing delays, and also makes cycling, horse riding and walking more attractive. The government has provided guidance and funding to highway authorities to ensure that our local roads and other highway assets are fit for the future.

4.48. The government has committed substantial funding to highways maintenance in recent years, including the introduction of a Pothole Action Fund, which also enables local authorities to undertake longer term road resurfacing works to prevent potholes from appearing in the first place.

4.49. In addition to highways maintenance funding, the government has also made £150 million of Local Pinch Point Fund available to local authorities in 2021/22 and 2022/23, to support projects across England that ease congestion on local routes and for small improvement projects such as for road modelling and design.

4.50. Further funding will be available from the National Roads Fund from 2020/21 for the Major Road Network and Large Local Major Schemes. The Major Road Network will see new investment in road enhancement schemes on the most important local authority roads.

4.51. The majority of local transport improvement schemes are funded through the £6.7 billion Local Growth Fund over the 6 years from 2015 to 2021. Funding is awarded to Local Enterprise Partnerships to invest in infrastructure to promote local growth. Over 600 transport schemes are being funded, including roads, tram extensions, bus priority, and improvements for cyclists and pedestrians. Examples of the larger transport schemes that have or are being built with this funding include the Congleton Link Road in Cheshire.

4.52. Transforming Cities is a £2.5 billion transport fund to support connectivity in some of England's largest cities, with funding running from 2018 to 2023. Around half has been allocated to Metro Mayoral Combined Authorities with the remaining sum allocated across 12 cities, of which Stoke-on-Trent received £34.5m.

HS2 Stations

4.53. Respondents commented that there was a lack of HS2 stations locally, that having only two dedicated HS2 stations between Manchester and London would limit passenger access and that the cost of travel and parking to HS2 stations may put off people travelling by HS2.

4.54. One of the principles in designing high speed railway networks is to focus on services from city to city to ensure that trains can utilise their high speed, rather than slowing down, stopping and getting up to speed again. This enables quicker journey times to be maintained and as a consequence, the number of intermediate stations is reduced in comparison with conventional rail networks.

4.55. For Phase One, there are only two intermediate stations between Birmingham Curzon Street and London Euston, these being Birmingham Interchange and Old Oak Common in west London. For Phase 2 between Birmingham Curzon Street and Manchester Piccadilly, again there will be two intermediate stations at Crewe and Manchester Airport.

4.56. Staffordshire and Cheshire will also have four stations on the conventional rail network that are planned to be served by HS2 services, due to the connection to the West Coast Main Line near Lichfield. This enables the stations of Stafford, Stoke, Macclesfield and Wilmslow, as per the latest indicative Train Service Specification in the Phase One Full Business Case⁴⁴.

⁴⁴ See

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/939905/full-business-case-hs2-phase-one.pdf

5. Transport infrastructure

5.1. Responses were invited to the following consultation question:

(If you do not think there are sufficient transport provisions for the purposes of passengers connecting to HS2 Phase 2a, and to address changes to general passenger movements caused by the HS2 Phase 2a works, please respond to question D).

Question D: Please let us know your comments on whether the construction of new railway stations and improvements to railway stations, including any associated reopening of lines, are necessary in relation to your response to question C.

What you said

5.2. A total of 183 respondents made comments about whether the construction of new railway stations and improvements to railway stations, including any associated reopening of lines, were necessary in relation to their response to Question C,

5.3. Suggestions about railway lines, including reopening lines were provided by 118 respondents. The main themes of these suggestions were

- general comments about improvement of existing railway lines
- relocation of the railhead and Infrastructure Maintenance Base – Rail (IMB-R) at Stone to Aldersey's Rough
- reopening of closed lines in general
- improvements to existing railway lines

5.4. Lines suggested for reopening included all, or part of, the Stoke on Trent to Market Drayton line, the Leek line, the Middlewich Line, Hartshill Tunnel, the Lichfield to Burton Line and the Walsall to Lichfield Line.

5.5. A number of respondents commented with suggestions to electrify existing railway lines and for improvements to existing railway lines to increase speed of conventional railway services.

5.6. Some 120 respondents made suggestions about new railway stations and improvements to existing railway stations. The main themes of these suggestions were:

- how railway stations should be improved
- more local railway stations
- reopening of stations generally

5.7. The locations where respondents commented stations should be reopened included at or near Keele University, Madeley, Silverdale, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Tarporley, and Norton Bridge.

5.8. Stations mentioned as in need of improvement included Crewe, Lichfield, Stoke-on-Trent, Stone, Stafford, and Rugeley.

5.9. Respondents' comments on the location of new railway stations included Crewe, Stoke-on-Trent, Stafford and Stone.

Government's response

Improvements to Existing Railway Lines

5.10. Respondents made comments and suggestions on general improvements to existing and specific railway lines. People suggested that this would improve connectivity across the region for both the conventional network and linking to HS2, would reduce traffic congestion and bring other environmental benefits.

5.11. Network Rail is the current body responsible for developing and maintaining railway infrastructure and works to 5-year timespans for financial and planning purposes. These 5-year timespans are called Control Periods and are used to decide priorities for investment. Network Rail is currently delivering the objectives of Control Period 6 (CP6) which runs from 2019-2024. Control Period 7 (CP7) would run from 2024-2029 and Control Period 8 (CP8) from 2029-2034.

5.12. Network Rail's work long term planning process (LTPP) looks at the long-term capability of the network up to 30 years into the future and promotes efficient use of network capability and capacity. It means that the industry can develop potential infrastructure interventions and explore important strategic issues. As part of this process, Network Rail undertakes research and publishes draft LTPP consultation documents online so that Local Authorities and other stakeholders can comment on priorities. The responses received in the consultation process help to form the final document. Subject to any representations being upheld by the Office of Rail and Road, each study is then finalised and published.

5.13. The types of studies which inform Network Rail's LTPP include

- Market studies which identify the strategic goals for each market sector of the rail industry over the next 30 years. They forecast the level of demand and the

opportunities that higher levels may bring, and calculate what would be needed in order to meet these strategic goals

- Local studies, which bring together the suggested outputs for all the market sectors for a particular part of the network. They evaluate the trade-offs between these suggested outputs for the different sectors and between the outputs and costs (including the cost of changes to capability). The local studies then form a view of the likely long-term allocation of capacity between sectors in order to inform decisions on the appropriate capability of the network. Services that operate across one or more local study boundaries are considered by a cross-boundary analysis working group to provide input to individual local studies
- Network-wide studies, which identify strategic choices and appraise solutions to network-wide issues, including the benefits and challenges of technological change across the network
- Network and Route Specifications (10-year and 30-year views) to devolve network capability requirements to Strategic Route Sections for the whole country

5.14. Plans to upgrade or improve existing rail lines would normally need to be promoted through these existing processes and follow the necessary governance before they were adopted. The schedule of work for CP6 has already been agreed although there would normally be scope for suggestions on upgrades or improvements to the conventional network to be adopted in CP7 and CP8.

5.15. However, in light of the recent announcement of the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail, the system for agreeing improvements to the conventional network will change. Great British Railways will be the new organisation bringing the whole rail system together and performing a role for services similar to the one Transport for London has for the capital.

5.16. Great British Railways will take over roles, responsibilities and people from organisations across the sector. Network Rail, the current infrastructure owner, will be absorbed into Great British Railways. The new organisation will work closely with partners across the sector, including freight operators and suppliers, to help deliver a customer-focused rail system.

5.17. Great British Railways will draw up timetables and set most fares. It will not operate most trains directly but will contract private companies to operate them on its behalf under Passenger Service Contracts. Great British Railways will specify service levels and on most of the network will set fares and take the revenue risk.

5.18. A long-term strategy with key strategic priorities for the whole rail network for the next 30 years will be produced for Ministers by Great British Railways. The 30-year strategy will be a key mechanism that Ministers will use to ensure that the railways respond to public priorities such as levelling up, the environment, housing and regeneration. The Secretary of State has begun this work by commissioning a 'Whole Industry Strategic Plan' that will become the first 30-year strategy. By starting now, the first strategy can be ready in 2022, with partners across the sector and beyond consulted as it develops.

Reopening of closed railway lines and stations

5.19. Respondents made comments and suggestions on opening closed railways lines and stations. Reasons given for reopening railway lines included that this would have environmental as well as economic benefits, that it would facilitate increased usage of the conventional railway and improve connectivity and access to HS2. Respondents called for the reopening of a range of suggested rail line and stations.

5.20. The Beeching cuts, which were initially proposed by British Rail chief Dr Richard Beeching in 1963, ended passenger services on around a third of the rail network, closing more than 2,300 stations and up to 5,000 miles of track across the UK.

5.21. In January 2020, the Government pledged £500 million for the Restoring Your Railway Fund to deliver its manifesto commitment and start reopening lines and stations, reconnecting smaller communities, regenerating local economies and improving access to jobs, homes and education.

5.22. The Restoring your Railway Fund includes an Ideas Fund, which provides development funding for early-stage ideas to explore options to restore lost rail services connections to communities. The Ideas Fund has so far provided support for the development of 26 rail schemes, and a third funding round closed to new bids on 5 March 2021. We expect to announce the outcomes of this third and final round in the summer.

5.23. Respondents comments to Question D of the consultation identified rail lines close to the route of the proposed Phase 2a line that should be reopened. There have already been applications to the Ideas Fund for a number of these lines, including the following:

- The Newcastle-under-Lyme Line (Round 3 Bid)
- The Stoke to Leek Line (Round 1 and 3 Bids)
- The Middlewich Line (Round 3 Bid)
- Reinstatement of passenger services on the Lichfield-Alrewas-Burton-on-Trent rail line and Lichfield-Burton-on-Trent-Derby line (Round 1 and 3 Bids)
- Reinstatement of rail sidings at the former Ironbridge Power Station (Round 1 and 3 Bids)

5.24. Some respondents made suggestions to reopen all or part of the Stoke to Market Drayton Railway. The Stoke to Market Drayton Railway was closed to passenger traffic in 1964 and remains out of use. Parts of this line are sometimes referred to as the Silverdale line of the Stoke to Market Drayton Railway and the Madeley Chord. As the railway has been out of use many years, much of its component parts are heavily dilapidated, and to bring the railway back into use would require extensive civil engineering works in order to replace multiple structures, embankments, cuttings, drainage and track.

New Stations Fund

5.25. The New Stations Fund (NSF) was launched in 2014 and has so far delivered eight new stations with an additional two stations to be completed by the end of this year.

5.26. The aim of NSF is to open new and restored stations across England and Wales that reconnect communities, contributing to local economic regeneration and improving access to jobs, homes and education and support greener travel choices.

5.27. The NSF funds up to 75% of the cost of a new station to improve access to the rail network and to generate new rail journeys without material revenue abstraction from other train services or from public transport alternatives. The proposed New Station must fit with the needs of the existing network and not substantially increase existing passenger journey times.

5.28. In November 2020 and as part of a follow up announcement on 25 May, £32m was announced for the third New Stations Fund to be used to part-fund the delivery of eight new stations and develop two other stations, which are to be completed by March 2024.

New stations and reopening of decommissioned stations

5.29. Respondents comments to Question D also identified new stations or decommissioned stations which should be reopened.

5.30. There have already been applications to the Restoring Your Railway Ideas Fund for a number of these stations, including

- Reopening of Meir Station between Stoke on Trent and North Staffordshire (Successful Round 1 Bid)
- Newcastle-under-Lyme Station (Round 3 Bid)
- Reinstate the Beeston Castle and Tarporley Station (Successful Round 2 Bid)
- Reinstatement of Alrewas Station (Round 3 Bid to reinstate passenger services on Lichfield-Alrewas-Burton-on-Trent rail line)
- The Middlewich Line (Round 3 Bid)
- Etruria Station (Round 1 and 3 Bids)

5.31. The third round of the Ideas Fund closed to new bids on 5 March 2021 and we expect to announce outcomes in Summer 2021.

5.32. Outside of the Ideas Fund process, the Government's position on opening new stations is that we will consider proposals on a case-by-case basis, according to the economic benefits put forward by local partners. This Government believes that local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships are best placed to decide on, and take forward, transport schemes that will most benefit their local area.

5.33. Proposals seeking government funding need first to secure the support of a local promoter, normally the local transport authority, to undertake studies of the potential additional passenger demand, train service options, economic benefits, capital and any operating cost changes before the addition of such services could be considered. These schemes will need to be taken forward through the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline, our approach to railway infrastructure enhancements, where they will be assessed against the Secretary of State's strategic priorities and investment principles. This includes demonstrating a robust business case and a focus on the outcome they provide for both rail users and taxpayers.

Stone IMB-R

5.34. Respondents made suggestions to move the Stone IMB-R to Aldersley Rough. This is an issue of significant local concern in recent years, with many strong views expressed. The Department for Transport and HS2 Ltd has undertaken substantial investigations regarding both sites, especially in preparation for petition hearings in front of both the Commons and Lords Select Committees, as part of the Bill process.

5.35. HS2 Phase 2a Information Paper F3: Infrastructure Maintenance and Rail Systems Construction Facilities⁴⁵ and the Stone Infrastructure Maintenance Base update in December 2017⁴⁶ set out HS2 Ltd's position on the proposed temporary rail systems construction facility (the 'railhead') and Infrastructure Maintenance Base-Rail (IMB-R) near Stone included as part of the Phase 2a scheme.

5.36. HS2 Ltd has assessed a proposed alternative site for the Phase 2a railhead and IMB-R at Aldersey's Rough. The assessment concluded that the alternative location would be challenging due to increased engineering complexity and environmental impacts.

5.37. Due to the high cost, increased construction complexity and operational implications of the Aldersey's Rough proposal, the location near Stone remains the more suitable location for the HS2 Phase 2a railhead and IMB-R.

5.38. Locating the railhead and IMB-R near Stone would provide a number of benefits:

- It is located in the middle section along the route of the scheme and is able to support construction activities heading north and south simultaneously. This would offer significant programme and construction benefits
- The site near Stone is next to the M6 and has good access to the current rail network which would reduce the need for lorry movements on local roads
- It is located on what would otherwise be islanded land between the M6 and the HS2 line

⁴⁵ See https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/960815/F3_Infrastructure_Maintenance_and_Rail_Systems_Construction_Facilities_v1.2.pdf

⁴⁶ See https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/673766/stone_railhead_update_december_2017.pdf

- Locating the base at this location removes the need for maintenance loops (comprised of a series of sidings) previously planned at Pipe Ridware. This has allowed the line to be lowered by up to 8m in the Kings Bromley area, near Lichfield

5.39. The case for relocating the railhead and IMB-R proposed at Stone was the subject of petitions against the HS2 Phase 2a Bill by Stone Town and Chebsey Parish Councils in the House of Commons and Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish, Stone Town and Chebsey Parish Councils in the House of Lords. The Stone Railhead Crisis Group represented these Councils during the Select Committee hearings of their petitions.

5.40. The case for the siting of the railhead and IMB-R at Stone was heard by the House of Commons Select Committee in April 2018. Having considered the evidence, the Commons Select Committee decided that the proposal to site the railhead and IMB-R at Stone should not be changed.

5.41. It is understandable that people in the local area would be concerned about the possible impact of the IMB-R. However, the site will be designed to reduce potential adverse impacts and disruption as far as reasonably practicable.

5.42. The site would initially be used as one of the main construction compounds for Phase 2a. During construction, activities at the site would be controlled by the implementation of the CoCP.

5.43. After the railway is built, the site would become a maintenance base for the railway. During operation, the majority of maintenance work on the railway infrastructure would be carried out away from the base along the route during the night. During the day the site would primarily be used for planning and preparing for maintenance activities and the loading of maintenance trains.

Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) update

5.44. The government is fully committed to providing better rail connectivity between London, the Midlands and the North, ensuring all parts of the country benefit from opportunities for economic development and prosperity. As well as committing to delivering HS2, the government remains strongly committed to Northern Powerhouse Rail, improving connectivity between northern cities as well as between London, the Midlands and the North.

5.45. The Oakervee Review concluded that for Phase 2b of HS2 (the route from Birmingham to Manchester and Leeds) a Y-shaped network was the right strategic answer for the country. However, the Review also concluded that Phase 2b needs to be considered as part of an Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands which also includes Northern Powerhouse Rail, Midlands Rail Hub, and other major Network Rail schemes to ensure these are scoped, designed, delivered, and can be operated as an integrated network. The Oakervee Review also identified the opportunity to challenge design and costs on Phase 2b, including standards, running speed, and responsibility for delivery.

5.46. The government agrees that, on current plans, Phase 2b of HS2 will deliver connectivity for the East Midlands and the North of England considerably later than the

rest of HS2, and that there are questions about whether its design maximises the benefits from connectivity. The government wants to ensure that Phase 2b of HS2 and other planned rail investments in the Midlands and the North are scoped and delivered in an integrated way, including with the wider rail network, whilst driving down unnecessary costs and over-specification.

5.47. The government, working with HS2 Ltd and local leaders, is therefore drawing up an Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the North which is framed by the government's commitment to bring forward transformational rail improvements along the HS2 route as quickly as possible. This work will be informed by the assessment from the National Infrastructure Commission looking at the rail needs of the Midlands and the North published in December 2020⁴⁷, and the available evidence on Northern Powerhouse Rail, Midlands Rail Hub, HS2 Phase 2b and other proposed Network Rail projects.

5.48. The plan will consider how best to integrate HS2 Phase 2b and wider transport plans in the North and Midlands, delivering benefits from investments more quickly. This will include a recommended way forward on scoping, phasing and sequencing delivery of HS2 Phase 2b, Northern Powerhouse Rail, Midlands Rail Hub and other proposed rail investments. This will take into account: government commitments; the current state of development for different projects; the transformational and capacity benefits of these schemes; fiscal and supply chain capability constraints; network integration; consenting routes (including legislation); and, in line with the Oakervee Review conclusion, the appropriate mix of high speed line and upgrades of conventional network, and the sequencing of these, on any elements of the investments under consideration.

⁴⁷ <https://nic.org.uk/app/uploads/RNA-Final-Report-15122020.pdf>

6. Other comments

What you said

6.1. There were 36 respondents who commented on how HS2 could impact on people's mental health and well-being.

6.2. Some respondents made comments about the consultation process and noted that the consultation documentation specified that the Government did not expect to make any significant changes to the Phase 2a scheme or to its planned construction programme as a result of this consultation.

Government's response

6.3. The Government recognises the challenges ahead for communities that will be affected during the construction period of HS2 Phase 2a. We are committed to learning lessons from Phase One of HS2, by listening to the concerns of local people and communities and of acting on their feedback.

6.4. We will continue to strive to improve the Phase 2a scheme as it is developed, to avoid, mitigate and reduce environmental impacts, to enhance our natural environment and to provide real community benefits. This can only be achieved through effective engagement and by working with local people, communities and organisations to tackle issues as they occur.

6.5. At this stage of development of the Phase 2a Scheme, we do not have a complete picture of all the issues that will be encountered during construction or of the opportunities that will arise to create further improvements. The Environmental Minimum Requirements for HS2 Phase 2a that accompany the Act, and include the Code of Construction Practice, will ensure that HS2 Ltd and its contractors are legally required to consider such mitigation as the scheme progresses.

6.6. HS2 Ltd is committed to being a good neighbour by treating affected communities with respect and consideration. The Residents' Charter sets out ten community commitments, including that HS2 Ltd will respect the wellbeing of affected communities, minimise disruption to their lives with local mitigation plans and activities, and ensure that the standards set out in the CoCP are met.

6.7. Following a recommendation by the House of Commons Select Committee, an epidemiological quantitative assessment of the impact of the construction and operation of HS2 Phase 2a, including on mental health and wellbeing, is being scoped and commissioned. This will also consider international best practice in the field. The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Public Health Research Board is commissioning an academic institution to undertake the long-term study.

6.8. HS2 Ltd is committed to engaging appropriately with vulnerable stakeholders. It has launched a support service that is able to provide expert advice to those members of the workforce who are engaging with communities, as well as helping manage, support and signpost those individuals who are deemed to be vulnerable.

6.9. Responses to this consultation will help us better understand the concerns of local communities on their local transport provision. It will help inform government policy on HS2 Phase 2a and the environment, and on future proposals for services on HS2 Phase 2a and the conventional rail (i.e. the Network Rail network) and other transport networks. The responses received will also inform HS2 Ltd's ongoing engagement with local communities, local authorities, and environmental stakeholders along the Phase 2a route, in line with their community engagement strategy.

7. Next steps

7.1. Ministers have committed to update Parliament in 6 monthly reports on HS2, the latest of which was on 23 March 2021. This includes a review of HS2 in overview, plus a programme update, schedule, community and environmental impact. Any substantive issues relating to Phase 2a will be included in future reports.

7.2. As with Phase One, the Government has committed to establishing a number of funds to add benefit, over and above committed mitigation and statutory compensation, to communities and local economies along the Phase 2a route, particularly those that are demonstrably disrupted during its construction.

Phase 2a Community, Environment and Business Funds

7.3. The Government has created and launched the HS2 Phase 2a £5 million HS2 Community and Business Funds to add benefit over and above committed mitigation and statutory compensation to communities and local economies along the HS2 route demonstrably disrupted by the construction of HS2.

7.4. The Business and Local Economy Fund will focus on projects or programmes across business sectors and its aim is to have a positive effect on local economies. We are looking to fund interventions of between £10,000 and £250,000 that support local economies. Primarily, this funding programme is targeted at organisations which have formal objectives that support the development of local business and tourism. Examples of projects include:

- Improving the local public realm or local cycling and pedestrian access
- Events that increase footfall or promote business activity
- Employment schemes
- Marketing, communication and media campaigns
- Projects to increase tourist visits to an area

7.5. The Community and Environment Fund (CEF) will have two types of grants. The first named CEF Local focuses on quality of life and environment in individual communities

and provides funding up to £75,000. The second grant named CEF Strategic focuses on large projects across several communities, addresses strategic concerns and provides funding between £75,001 and £250,000. Examples of projects include:

- Health, well-being and community support activities
- Landscape and nature conservation schemes
- Enhanced or new community facilities
- Refurbishment of historic buildings and monuments
- Improving public open space
- Sports facilities

7.6. Groundwork UK are the independent administrators for both funds.

7.7. Funding provided through the Phase One Community, Environment and Business Funds has seen 161 projects being awarded funding of over £9.8m so far.

Phase 2a Biodiversity Investment Fund

7.8. To improve biodiversity along HS2 Phase 2a, HS2 Ltd has also launched a £2m Biodiversity Investment Fund (BIF) to help projects that create or enhance wildlife habitats beyond mitigating or compensating for habitats affected by building HS2. The Fund will provide funding for capital or revenue projects that primarily focus on creating and/or restoring ecological habitats.

7.9. Applications must be able to demonstrate appropriate long-term maintenance of the newly created or restored habitat. Funding will be available to support the creation of initial Ecological Assessment and Management Plans (EAMPs), capital works and certain maintenance works. While this is not a requirement, the Fund will also encourage applicants to submit projects that can demonstrate a favourable cost benefit, such as by adding cash match funding or providing their own or volunteers' resources to support the project's outcomes.

7.10. Each project will be assessed on its individual merits. For example, if there is a justified reason why a new habitat area needs to be created much further away from the Phase 2a line, this project can still be considered for funding.

7.11. Fully constituted, not for profit organisations can apply for funding. Applications should describe who will undertake the initial EAMPs and the person must be suitably qualified. For example, through membership of an appropriate institute or previous experience of producing ecological reports. All works should be tendered or include three quotes. Ownership or management control of the land for the duration of the project will also be a requirement. Full details of what is required when applying to the BIF will be publicised before the BIF application portal opens.

7.12. BIF funded projects will enhance biodiversity along the line of the HS2 Phase 2a route by restoring existing habitat and creating new habitat. Applicants to the Fund will be asked to include, in their EAMP an outline metric calculation, in accordance with the Defra biodiversity metric guidelines. The BIF will also include a broad range of secondary benefits to enable a diverse range of projects and benefits, including health and wellbeing, education and training.

7.13. HS2's Green Corridor will run alongside the railway, creating a network of bigger, better-connected, climate-resilient habitats and new green spaces for people to enjoy. Projects funded by the BIF will contribute to and become an important part of the Green Corridor. Groundwork UK are the independent administrators for the Phase 2a Biodiversity Investment Fund

Phase 2a Woodland Fund

7.14. Another key element of the Green Corridor, the £2 million HS2 Woodland Fund, supports the creation of native woodland and the restoration of ancient woodland sites within a 25-mile zone surrounding the Phase One railway.

7.15. We will make sure the BIF and the Woodland Fund deliver programmes of environmental improvements to complement each other. The Forestry Commission are the independent administrators of the HS2 Woodland Fund.

Phase 2a Trent-Sow Parklands and Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Environmental Enhancements Fund

7.16. During the passage of the High Speed Rail (West Midlands-Crewe) Bill in 2018, the Trent-Sow Parklands and Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) HS2 Group was established. This review group was set up following the approval of a proposal put to the HS2 Phase 2a Commons Select Committee by the National Trust, on behalf of the Group's members.

7.17. The group's members, including HS2 Ltd, recognise the particular significance of this area: its rich historic and natural environment, landscape beauty and value to local communities and those from further afield. The review group was formed to assist HS2 Ltd in achieving a high quality of design for key design elements and mitigation measures.

7.18. The group has developed a set of general and detailed design principles that can be applied to HS2 Ltd's works in the area with the aim of achieving exemplary landscape and viaduct design. HS2 Ltd will pass these to the contractor designing the railway and viaduct as part of their instruction.

7.19. As the actual designs of the HS2 Great Haywood Viaduct, Ingestre Green Overbridge, landscape earthworks and planting in the area emerge, the Group will have the opportunity to respond to them, advising on how to achieve the best and most locally appropriate design for the area.

7.20. The Group has been awarded access to a £1.5 million fund to environmental projects that conserve and enhance this area's special qualities.

7.21. Following consultation with local residents, parish councils and local groups, the Group is drawing up a programme of environmental enhancement projects in the local area focused on the themes of: Landscape; Historic Environment; Biodiversity; Access, Enjoyment and Connectivity; and Community.

Cheshire East Environment and Landscape Enhancements Fund

7.22. An environment and landscape enhancements fund of £850,000 has been established to deliver environmental enhancements within the Cheshire East council area.

7.23. The fund was set up in recognition of the visual impacts of the Phase 2a scheme and the Meres and Mosses Nature Improvement Area and will support the identification and delivery of further local landscape and environmental enhancements.

Phase 2a Road Safety Fund

7.24. The Government has agreed to establish a £6.5m Road Safety Fund to help improve traffic, pedestrian, cycle and equestrian safety along the route, and to ensure that the Scheme delivers a lasting safety legacy for Phase 2a. This is in addition to at least £7.61m committed to deliver highways improvements agreed with Staffordshire County Council, as stated in Section 2.

7.25. The Fund will be accessed by local councils who are highway authorities for projects such as traffic calming measures, improving pedestrian crossings or increasing cycling provision. This replicates the Road Safety Fund established for Phase One.

7.26. The Fund is proportioned on the basis of distance travelled by Large Goods Vehicles in each local highway authority area, to be more accurate proportioning of funding compared to the number of journeys as used for Phase One. This is because distance is more reflective of impact in any area, as journeys will vary in length.

7.27. The breakdown of Fund to the local highway authorities will be:

- Cheshire East Council: £724,000
- Shropshire Council: £114,500
- Staffordshire County Council: £5,661,500

7.28. It is estimated that when compared to the significant distances travelled by Large Goods Vehicles through other highways' areas, only a very small proportion will pass through the Stoke-on-Trent City Council area, so no funding has been allocated. Unfortunately, this is similar to Phase One, where four affected highways authorities were given no allocation from the Phase One Road Safety Fund.

7.29. However, road safety measures are already being incorporated into the current designs for the roads which will be used by Large Goods Vehicles in the Stoke-on-Trent City Council area. As stipulated in Section 2, HS2 Ltd has already committed to providing a suitable crossing point for the A519 Newcastle Road, the cost of which will far exceed that if proportionate sum had been allocated.

Total allocation for Phase 2a Funds

7.30. The total allocated for Phase 2a funds is now £17.85m

- £5m for the CEF/BLEF
- £6.5m for the Road Safety Fund
- £2m for the Biodiversity Investment Fund
- £2m for the Woodland Fund
- £1.5m for the Trent–Sow Parklands and Cannock Chase AONB Environmental Enhancement Fund
- £850,000 for a Cheshire East Environment and Landscape Enhancements Fund

7.31. The total allocation for Phase 2a is proportionate to the same or similar funds provided for Phase One, given that Phase 2a is approximately one-quarter of the length of Phase One.

Annex A: Clause 60 of the High Speed Rail (West Midlands – Crewe) Bill as amended in the House of Lords

Clause 60 of the High Speed Rail (West Midlands – Crewe) Bill as amended in the House of Lords says:

“Consultation with residents and stakeholders in relation to Phase 2a of High Speed 2 and associated works

(1) Before 1 May 2021, the Secretary of State must publish the report of a consultation with—

(a) residents of the County of Shropshire, the County of Staffordshire, the County of Cheshire and any other areas deemed relevant by a Minister of the Crown, who may be impacted by the scheduled works, Phase 2a of High Speed 2, and associated works; and

(b) any stakeholders deemed relevant by a Minister of the Crown.

(2) The consultation must ask the views of residents and stakeholders listed in subsection (1) in regard to—

(a) the impact of road traffic as a result of the works;

(b) the impact of the works on the natural environment, including but not limited to the impact on ancient woodland;

(c) whether there are sufficient transport provisions for the purposes of passengers connecting to Phase 2a of High Speed 2, and to address changes to general passenger movements caused by the works; and

(d) if not, whether the construction of new railway stations and improvements to railway stations, including any associated reopening of lines, is necessary in relation to paragraph (c).

(3) The report must be laid before both Houses of Parliament and a Minister of the Crown must make a statement to both Houses detailing any steps which will be taken to implement the findings of the report.”

CCS0621821820
978-1-5286-2725-2