

## HIGH LEGH PARISH COUNCIL HS2 PHASE 2 CONSULTATION RESPONSE

*i. Do you agree or disagree with the Government's proposed route between the West Midlands and Manchester as described in Chapter 7 [of the consultation document]? This includes the proposed route alignment, the location of tunnels, ventilation shafts, cuttings, viaducts and depots as well as how the high speed line will connect to the West Coast Main Line.*

We do not agree with the Government's proposal to build a High Speed rail line between London and Manchester for the following reasons:-

As the HS2 route passes directly through the area represented by the cluster group it will inevitably impact on residents, businesses, farms and the local environment.

Various meetings have taken place throughout 2013 at which decisions have been taken not to support HS2 as proposed.

We require a much more direct route London to Manchester in keeping with the spirit of the original brief from government "direct city centre to city centre".

It is essential that any new or amended route makes increased use of tunnelling, cuttings and false cuttings, for example, and reduce the severance of communities and farms by providing bridges and under bridges along the route. If such changes can be secured we would suffer reduced blight, maintain the maximum amount of productive farmland and reduce the loss of property and harm to residents.

Meetings have already taken place with HS2, and will continue to do so to ensure our concerns are understood.

Six key issues have emerged through this process identifying where the Parish Council Group should focus its efforts to change the existing line and reduce the impact of the route:

- Impacts on farms.
- The long viaduct proposed from Lostock Gralam to Pickmere.
- The M6 crossing.
- The delta junction in the M6/M56/A556 Delta junction and the Golborne to link Wigan.
- The crossing of the Mid-Cheshire Rail Line south of Ashley.
- Introduction of Hub Station at Crewe and connection to WCML

### **Compensation**

Compensation to local businesses, residents and farms requires greater clarity as currently there is confusion over who would be eligible for compensation, what the extent of the compensation would be and when it becomes available. The Parish Council Group believes the area covered by any compensation scheme must be extended to cover a wider corridor either side of the Phase Two proposals.

The Parish Council Group also believes that the highest standard of compensation must be offered to blighted homes through a compensation Scheme now and the eventual statutory provisions, including the introduction of a Property Bond Scheme.

This must be supported by engineering solutions that maximise the mitigation against the impacts of HS2 on residents, businesses, farms and the local environment.

### **Impact on Farms**

The quality of our area both as a place to live and farm demands the highest standards of design, environmental protection and mitigation and compensation and this needs to be given greater recognition in the HS2 work going forward. To ensure that the severance impact on farmland is minimised and that as much land as possible remains viable localised crossing points would be required for livestock and farming equipment.

To ensure that the impact on farms is considered in detail, representatives of the local National Farmers Union and other local representative bodies, should be engaged in the next stage of any design process.

### **Long Viaduct**

Over the last few months the Parish Council Group has worked extremely hard with the Borough Council to assess ways to protect the north of the Borough. The emerging view is that the section close the Cheshire West and Chester border between Lostock Gralam and Pickmere will have a significant impact on Smoker Brook. HS2 must re engineer this section of line resulting in a lower vertical alignment, and therefore reduce the impact here and potentially enable a less intrusive solution for the crossing of the A556. This should be complemented by further additional mitigation measures.

In a more general sense the proposed line must be some 5m lower overall through this stretch of Cheshire.

### **M6 and Mid-Cheshire Rail Line Crossings**

Where the HS2 plan to cross both the M6 at Tabley and the Mid-Cheshire Line south of Ashley both of these must be under rather than over the existing motorway and railway line. By lowering the alignment in these two locations it would have a significant benefit of increasing the lengths of cutting through this entire area, providing much better mitigation for the local communities and farms in this area.

### **Delta Junction and Wigan Link**

The Delta Junction in the north of our area at Warburton is both unnecessary in terms of a WCML connection and by virtue of it considerable negative impact on the environment and communities.

The WCML connections should be via an integrated HUB station at Crewe and an improved capacity section of the existing WCML Crewe to Warrington, Liverpool and Wigan. This route provides for a reduce capital cost.

The height at which the route is proposed to cross over the Manchester Ship Canal on the Golborne Link means the line has to rise up quickly after it has passed under the M56. With the inclusion of the triangular delta junction to provide a spur into Manchester, this means the links on and off the HS2 north south route have a significant impact on the surrounding areas as well as affecting numerous farms. We do not support the case made for a connection to the WCML at Golborne or the need to have a cleaning service centre off the main line of HS2.

To mitigate the impact on the local community and business the delta junction should be removed altogether or the line should be lowered from north of the M6 crossing with the inclusion of cuttings and false cuttings and numerous farm crossings. This would be more easily achievable if the line passes under the M6. Cut and cover options should be considered wherever possible to completely hide the line, in particular around the Rostherne Mere section of the scheme near to the A556.

The Parish Council Group has significant issues with the Delta Junction and crossing over the Manchester Ship Canal and its associated infrastructure. These issues must be addressed in any further considerations in continuing with HS2 phase two matters.

### **Environmental Impact**

Borough Boundary at Lostock Gralam to M6:

The route is on embankment to cross a railway line, A556, Peover Eye and Smoker Brook and associated woodlands. Impact on landscape character and local visual impact is likely to be very significant. Further north the route is on

embankment to cross over the M6, it could be very visible in this agricultural landscape and have significant impact on landscape character.

Hoo Green and Wigan Spur:

The junction cross over at Hoo Green could have significant impact on landscape character and local visual impact. Further north where the line leaves the Borough it crosses over the A56 and Bridgewater Canal. There is the potential for significant impact on landscape character and local visual impact.

M6 to A556 Manchester Spur:

The route here runs through a corridor that includes pylons and the proposed new route for the A556 – there is the potential for significant cumulative impact. Much is in cutting which will help with mitigation. Additionally this area is proposed to have the Delta junction which the landscape simply cannot support.

A556 to Thorns Green:

The route is close to the M56 (north of route) and cuts through two locally designated landscapes – Rostherne/Tatton ASCV and Bollin Valley ASCV. For some of this route the line is in cutting, but adjacent to Ashley it is on embankment. There will be significant impact on landscape character and significant visual impact.

Substantial mitigation must be achieved by placing more of the route in cuttings and substantially reducing the length on embankment and viaduct. A corridor approach to the reinforcement/extension of landscape features such as hedgerows trees and copses could also be very valuable.

Lostock Gralam area:

either side of M6 crossing; north of M56 on Wigan Spur; Corridor from A556 to Thorns Green (particularly adjacent to Ashley).

HS2 Route Noise and Air Quality Comments

These comments relate to the environmental protection considerations of the proposed HS2 route through Cheshire East Borough Council. These are primarily concerned with noise impacts from the train movements and noise and air quality impacts relating to road traffic near stations.

Noise impacts

In general adverse noise impacts are expected at most sensitive receptors are near the route. Many of these are in rural areas with the worst affected receptors being those near sections of the route that are not in cutting. It is recommended that where it is not feasible to consider a cutting that other noise mitigation measures are put in place to reduce the impacts to acceptable levels.

The following table considers the route from Lostock Gralam to Ashley and Warburton from a noise impacts perspective and recommends where alterations could address these impacts. The absence of the consideration of an area should not preclude that we consider that further mitigation would be required at sensitive receptors when we are consulted on detailed and objective noise assessments.

Smoker Brook/Peover Eye Viaducts Plumley, Pickmere and rural properties

Viaducts and embankments increase likelihood of noise propagation to sensitive receptors

Mitigation required

Arley Brook Viaduct Pickmere and rural properties

Viaduct increases likelihood of noise propagation to sensitive receptors

Mitigation required Area near M6 crossing

Mere and rural properties HS2 route over M6 and embankments. Cumulative impacts from M6 and proposed A556 realignment

Re-route under M6, use of cutting.

South of M56 High Legh, Bucklow Hill, rural properties

HS2 line at grade and in embankment increases noise impacts, plus cumulative impacts from M56 and proposed A556 realignment Cutting/Mitigation required

East section towards Manchester South of Ashley

Ashley, rural properties Section adjacent to Ashley in embankment as passes over existing rail line

Cutting/re-route under railway

Wigan spur south junction Rural properties HS2 line in embankment at A56/Bridgewater Canal increasing noise impacts.

### **Additional Mitigation required relating to Air Quality**

Mitigation and design needs to consider the impact on air quality and emissions. A holistic consideration of all rail requirements will have the potential to improve road traffic related emissions. Similarly a Manchester Airport HS2 station proposal would need to consider mitigation of air quality impacts and emissions in the area. Other considerations relating to the proposed route are vibration from construction and operation activities.

*ii. Do you agree or disagree with the Government's proposals for:*

*a. A Manchester station at Manchester Piccadilly as described in Chapter 7 (sections 7.8.1 – 7.8.7) [of the consultation document]?*

*b. An additional station near Manchester Airport as described in Chapter 7 (sections 7.6.1 – 7.6.6) [of the consultation document]?*

The Parish Council Group do not agree with the proposed stations at Manchester Airport because of the existing rail and tram connections from central Manchester, however we believe an additional station should be provided at Crewe which will enable a cost effective connection to the WCML serving Warrington, Liverpool and surrounding area.

*iii. Do you think that there should be any additional stations on the western leg between the West Midlands and Manchester?*

The Parish Council Group think there should be an additional HS2 HUB station at Crewe. This would address our concerns allowing for a more cost effective connection to the WCML serving Warrington, Liverpool and Wigan. This connecting and Hub Station removes entirely the need for the Golborne link and Delta junction.

A full HS2 Hub Interchange Station delivered by HS2 at Crewe, offering access to dedicated and classic compatible HS2 services, would capture the vast majority of rail needs for Cheshire and surrounding areas. Additional rail capacity for stopping and through services at Crewe Station, maximising the economic benefits the Station creates both locally and regionally.

*vii. Please let us know your comments on the Appraisal of Sustainability (as reported in the Sustainability Statement) of the Government's proposed Phase Two route, including the alternatives to the proposed route as described in Chapter 9 [of the consultation document].*

1. The use of Central Manchester existing rail yard brownfield sites, for cleaning trains would be essential to enhance sustainability and remove the need for the destruction of open farm land as is proposed with the Golborne connection
2. As proposed the damage to local landscape is considerable, removing thousands of acres of very productive farm land which is essential to the nation's ability to reduce carbon emissions through unnecessary food imports.
3. Irreparable damage to rural communities and blighting of entire villages is certain if the HS2 project were to continue as proposed.

*viii. Please let us know your comments on how the capacity that would be freed up on the existing rail network by the introduction of the proposed Phase Two route could be used as described in Chapter 10 [of the consultation document]?*

Although the opening of HS2 Phases One and Two in 2033 will add new capacity from London to the Midlands and Manchester and consequently release some capacity on existing lines through Macclesfield and Wilmslow, without any upgrade of the WCML north of Crewe to Warrington and Liverpool little will change in these areas. A direct line London to Manchester does not in itself reduce congestion on these routes. A hub station at Crewe with upgraded WCML to its north would free up capacity on WCML serving Warrington, Liverpool and Scotland.

*ix. Please let us know your comments on the introduction of other utilities along the proposed Phase Two line of route as described in Chapter 11 [of the consultation document]?*

The Parish Council Group would not be supportive of the introduction of additional utilities or infrastructure projects along the route as proposed. Within a mile of proposed route we already have the M6, M56, national electric grid, national gas distribution and a proposed new link road A556 between M6 and M56.