

Agenda Item No. 8(b)

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

21 February 2017

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Communities

**RESPONSE TO THE GOVERNMENT'S CONSULTATION ON ROUTE
REFINEMENT PROPOSALS FOR HS2 (HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE)**

(1) **Purpose of Report** To agree the County Council's response to the Government's route refinement proposals for HS2 in Derbyshire.

(2) **Information and Analysis**

Introduction

Cabinet has previously considered reports on the Government's proposals for HS2 at its meetings on 16 July 2013 and 21 January 2014 (Minute Nos 116/13 and 13/14 refer). These described the proposed route and established the County Council's response to the plans.

The Government's original timetable envisaged a formal response to the consultation by late 2014. A number of issues, including difficulties in agreeing the location for a station in South Yorkshire, however, have resulted in considerable delay.

Ideas for serving South Yorkshire in a different way first emerged in a report from HS2 Ltd published on 7 July 2016. These were subsequently confirmed on 15 November 2016 when the Secretary of State for Transport published a safeguarded route for Phase 2b of HS2 (Crewe to Manchester in the west and West Midlands to Leeds in the east) and announced the start of public consultation on 'route refinement' proposals.

This report summarises the proposed changes to the route and makes recommendations on a response to the consultation. Briefly, the report:

- summarises the proposed changes to the route and the Government's consultation arrangements;
- outlines the main implications for Derbyshire and the nature and scope of the County Council's proposed response; and

- considers the specific proposals and their potential impact.

Consultation on Route Refinement Proposals

(a) HS2's proposals

The revised proposals include seven locations on the route (see Appendix 1) where the changes in the design were considered to be of such significance that additional public consultation was thought to be needed. Three of the seven locations have a direct impact on Derbyshire:

- A new alignment for HS2 north of M1 Junction 29. This would run closer to Bolsover than the original consultation route and continue northwards broadly following the M1/M18 corridor. The new alignment also necessitates a longer spur following the route of the former Clowne branch line linking the main route to the proposed Infrastructure Maintenance Depot at Staveley.
- A new spur linking the main HS2 line near Hilcote to the existing Erewash Valley line near Stonebroom enabling high speed 'classic compatible' trains to serve Chesterfield and Sheffield Midland.
- An elevated route through Long Eaton with the high speed line crossing the A6005 and other roads in the town on an extended viaduct.

(b) Consultation arrangements

Public consultation is currently taking place with a deadline of 9 March 2017 for the receipt of any comments. To support this, HS2 Ltd organised a series of Information Events as follows:

West Park Leisure Centre, Long Eaton - Saturday 28 January 2017
Post Mill Centre, South Normanton - Thursday 2 February 2017
Speedwell Rooms, Staveley - Friday 3 February 2017
Bainbridge Hall, Bolsover – Saturday 4 February 2017

Following representations by the County Council, additional events have been organised for affected residents in the Hilcote/Newton and Barlborough areas. These are scheduled to take place before the end of the consultation period and will enable local people to discuss their concerns with HS2 staff on an individual basis.

The County Council is also taking the lead in working with East Midlands Councils, the D2N2 (Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire) Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and other local authorities to ensure that the importance of effective mitigation is reinforced at a regional level.

The Secretary of State's announcement on 15 November 2016 also introduced a safeguarding process that requires local authorities to protect the route from prejudicial development. Consultation is also taking place on a property compensation scheme for land owners and the potential impact on the Authority's own land and property holdings is currently being investigated. Any issues that emerge from this will form part of the County Council's formal response to the consultation.

Implications for Derbyshire and the County Council's Response

The County Council has welcomed the economic benefits that will result from the proposed East Midlands hub station at Toton, the proposed Infrastructure Maintenance Depot at Staveley and the potential opportunities for the construction and rail supply industries. The most recent proposals to serve Chesterfield by high speed rail services could also provide an economic boost both locally and in wider areas of north and central Derbyshire.

The scheme, however, will have a significant impact on large areas of Derbyshire and the County Council is concerned to ensure that the adverse impacts of the scheme are effectively mitigated, especially where the route passes close to or through residential and other sensitive areas.

The modifications are subject to ongoing investigation by officers. The recent Information Events have provided greater insight into the proposals and, importantly, a better understanding of how the scheme is viewed locally. The Long Eaton event, for example, included 3D models showing the impact of different design options. This event was attended by over 2,000 people, the highest number ever recorded by HS2. If appropriate, a verbal update on the Information Events will be provided at the meeting.

In the circumstances, it is requested that the Strategic Director - Economy, Transport and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Infrastructure, should be authorised to agree the County Council's final response. The response will not seek to represent the detailed views of individuals or organisations as they are often better placed to make their own representations direct to HS2, but will instead concentrate on issues of a more 'strategic' nature - generally matters affecting a large number of people or which have far-reaching implications for the County. The response will be made available on the County Council's website in due course.

The comments on the route refinement proposals are in addition to the County Council's previous submissions and in responding to the latest consultation HS2 Ltd will be reminded of the need to take into account earlier representations, for example about the impact on public rights of way and greenways, and emerging proposals for the Trent Valley Vision.

Whilst this report is primarily concerned with areas affected by the eastern arm of HS2, in the west and north-west of Derbyshire, the western arm (Crewe – Manchester) is generally of greater interest. This does not run through Derbyshire, but it will be important to ensure that there is good connectivity with parts of Derbyshire Dales and High Peak if these areas are to benefit from the national investment in high speed rail. HS2 stations are proposed at Manchester Piccadilly and close to Manchester Airport. Existing rail services provide links with Manchester Piccadilly, but it will be important to ensure continued progress on improving road links to the airport for car and bus users.

Specific proposals

(a) M18/Eastern Route

The route refinement proposals fundamentally change the way in which South Yorkshire would be served by HS2 with consequential changes for the alignment of the route through north Derbyshire. The original 2013 consultation proposals were based on a route running through part of the Markham Vale development site before crossing to the west of the M1 and continuing in a northerly direction on the west side of Renishaw and Eckington to a proposed high speed rail station at Meadowhall. The current proposals adopt a more easterly alignment running closer to Bolsover and continuing northward immediately the west of the M1. Under these proposals there will not be a station on the main line of HS2 within Sheffield City, although it is understood that options for a 'parkway' station near the M18 are currently being investigated.

It is proposed that the existing Sheffield Midland station would be served by 'classic compatible' trains designed to run on both the high speed and conventional ('classic') rail networks. To allow this, a new spur is proposed from the main high speed line to the Erewash Valley Line (see below). It is envisaged that 400m trains to/from London would split into two 200m trains at the Hub Station at Toton with one 'half' continuing on to the Erewash Valley Line and the Midland Main Line to Chesterfield and Sheffield with the other half continuing north to Leeds. The current assumption is that two London trains per hour in each direction would use this route and it is recommended that the County Council should promote both these trains to stop at Chesterfield station. There is also the potential for trains to/from Birmingham to use this route if new links north of Sheffield were to be developed.

'Classic compatible' trains can only operate on electrified lines and electrification of the Midland Main Line is therefore a pre-requisite of this strategy. Members will be aware of the current uncertainty about the Government's electrification plans and it is recommended that the County

Council's response to the current consultation should request clarification of the position.

With the right plans in place, a high speed rail service to Chesterfield would have transformational benefits, not just for Chesterfield, but also in wider areas of north Derbyshire and north Nottinghamshire. The journey time to London could be reduced to around 71 minutes (from a current average of around 1 hour 50 minutes) with the prospect, in the longer term, of significant reductions in the journey time to places such as Birmingham, Leeds and Newcastle. Chesterfield already benefits from good inter-regional rail links and the addition of high speed rail services would reinforce its position as an important node on the national rail network.

Funding from the D2N2 LEP is being used to develop a growth strategy that identifies the planning, economic development and connectivity plans needed to foster economic growth in Chesterfield and wider areas of central and north Derbyshire and north Nottinghamshire. This work is being supported by County Council officers working closely with Chesterfield Borough Council and other Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire local authorities.

The frequency of high speed train service provided at Chesterfield will be determined mainly by the anticipated level of demand. So, there is scope to increase the level of service currently envisaged (one train per hour) if development and connectivity plans are brought to fruition that increase the number of passengers wanting to travel to and from Chesterfield. Careful consideration will need to be given to the design of the station, local access arrangements and development in the immediate vicinity of the station. If plans can be put in place to generate sufficient demand, this will provide a sound basis to press for the provision of at least two high speed trains per hour in each direction. This will in turn provide economic benefits over a wider area.

The M18/Eastern route offers advantages over the previous consultation route and goes some way to addressing some of the concerns expressed by the County Council, including the impact on development at Markham Vale, plans for the restoration of the Chesterfield Canal and concerns about the impact on residential areas of Renishaw and Eckington. The new plans, however, have other effects which need to be addressed.

Whilst the Government has indicated a clear preference for the M18/eastern route, it has not yet formally rescinded the original consultation route. In order to remove any remaining uncertainty it is recommended that the County Council's response to the consultation should include a request for the Government to formally abandon plans for the original consultation route at the earliest.

The revised proposals will have a significant impact on people who live or work close to the line of the route. In responding to the Government, it is suggested that particular attention should be drawn to:

- A change in the vertical alignment of the route near Stainsby such that the revised line is now higher than the original consultation proposals. This could have implications for the setting of Sutton Scarsdale and Hardwick Hall, and possibly for traffic using the local road network. The County Council will work with the National Trust, HS2 Ltd and other interested parties to seek agreement on a design that protects heritage interests and addresses the concerns of local residents.
- The proposed route passes immediately west of the Carr Vale and Peter Fidler nature reserves. Careful design will be needed to ensure these valuable nature conservation sites are protected.
- The revised alignment brings the high speed line closer to New Bolsover and may be detrimental to residential amenity in the area. It may also intrude into the view from Bolsover Castle.
- The new route passes through the eastern (residential) part of the proposed redevelopment of the former Coalite site. This may undermine a finely balanced financial package of development designed to meet local housing needs whilst helping to fund the restoration of contaminated land on the west side of the site.
- North of the B6418 Buttermilk Lane the revised route runs close to Shuttlewood and the small community at Bentinck Road. The route continues in a northerly direction crossing to the west side of the motorway running close to and broadly parallel to the M1 as it passes to the west of Barlborough and Junction 30. Along this length of the route there will be a number of individual properties that will be affected, as well as larger population areas that could be affected.

(b) Staveley Depot

The County Council has previously recognised the potential of the proposed Infrastructure Maintenance Depot at Staveley to create jobs and regenerate the local economy. Discussions have also taken place with the planned High Speed Rail College at Doncaster and HS2's Skills team about the potential to develop a 'hands-on' training facility at the depot. There is also potential for the Staveley site to be used as a main construction site for HS2, which would significantly increase local employment opportunities.

The revised plans indicate a footprint for the depot that will facilitate the provision of the A619 Regeneration Route that is critical to the redevelopment of this brownfield site. The M18/Eastern Route that is now proposed significantly reduces the impact on plans for the restoration of the Chesterfield Canal, although the plans still show severance of the route at Staveley and Norwood in South Yorkshire. HS2 Ltd is aware of these

problems and it is understood that these matters will be addressed as further design work is undertaken.

The new route means that the link to the proposed depot at Staveley now follows a longer and less direct route along the former Clowne branch line. This will be used by maintenance trains so, unlike the main route, it will not be used on a continuous basis, trains will be running at a slow speed and the line will not need to be electrified. There could be some disturbance at night, however, as maintenance will generally take place when the high speed line is not in use.

The proposals could also be disruptive to existing and proposed greenways in the Staveley and Poolsbrook areas. These provide an important network of safe off-road routes for local people and visitors, linking communities to each other and providing access to work and other essential services. As the proposals for HS2 are developed, it will be important to ensure that these routes are not severed by the proposed spur to the depot and that every opportunity is taken to enhance and develop the network.

(c) Hilcote - Stonebroom Spur

This spur did not form any part of the 2013 consultation proposals and the concept of providing a link to the classic rail network in this area has only emerged in recent months. Whilst the spur will be used by fewer trains than the main route and much of the route would be in a cutting, there is understandable concern in the local area about the noise and visual effects of the scheme, the disturbance during construction and the general loss of amenity in this residential area. The Information Event and the additional consultation event that has been arranged should help people to understand more about how they may be affected and the options available to them.

Some of the areas of concern in this area include:

- The impact of the scheme on the McArthur Glen Designer Outlet and adjacent land held for possible expansion. The revised plans make a minor adjustment to the route in this area and the implications of this are currently being investigated.
- A grade separated (flyover) junction immediately north of the A38 to the east of Hilcote significantly increasing the impact of the route in this area.
- The proximity of the spur to residential properties, notably in Newton and at Hilcote.
- The implications of 'classic compatible' trains joining the busy rail network in the Clay Cross area, particularly in terms of capacity and any additional engineering works that may be required.

In the light of the concerns and issues outlined above, it is recommended that the Government and HS2 Ltd should be asked to consider alternative means of meeting their strategic aim of serving Sheffield Midland by diverting trains on to the Erewash Valley and Midland Main Lines. One option, for example, may be to provide a link between the main HS2 line and the Erewash Valley Line at Toton where the two lines are adjacent to each other. This would bring with it the additional benefit of electrifying the Erewash Valley Line with potentially significant operational benefits for local rail services. To help understand these wider issues, it is recommended that HS2 Ltd be asked to consider producing a report comparing these and any other appropriate options in terms of their engineering feasibility, implications for the classic rail network, cost, effect on journey times and environmental impact, and to make the findings available to the County Council.

(d) HS2 route through Long Eaton

HS2 passes through Long Eaton and it will inevitably have a major impact on the town. There are currently two double track freight railways that run close to the town centre on a north-south axis: a 'low level' and a 'high level' route. The HS2 proposals effectively introduce a third railway into the area.

The consultation proposals published in 2013 envisaged the new route on the line of the existing 'low level' railway. The freight traffic using this route was expected to transfer to the parallel 'high level' route some 300m to the east. In order to accommodate the increased traffic it was expected that it would be necessary to widen the 'high level' route from two tracks to four. This could have meant that the existing grass embankment would need to be replaced by a new structure with vertical retaining walls. The revised proposals suggest that the impact on this corridor will now be limited to the realignment of the tracks within the existing corridor.

It is now envisaged that the 'low level' freight line will be retained and that the high speed lines will run adjacent to it immediately to the east. This will require substantial demolition in the Bonsall Street/New Tythe Street area. Whereas it had been assumed that the consultation proposal was at or close to ground level, the route refinement proposals envisage the route being taken through Long Eaton on a long viaduct at least 16m above ground level, with the overhead wires adding a further 8m-9m to the overall height. An alternative option for a lower level route was also presented for consultation purposes. This would be some 3m-8m above ground level, with a significant length on a retained embankment (i.e. with solid vertical walls).

In responding to the original consultation, the County Council expressed serious concern about the impact of HS2 in this area. The Authority was especially concerned about the potential severance at Station Street/Station

Road and Main Street as these provide the principal link between the town centre and the residential area to the east of the freight railway.

The proposal for a viaduct is based on a continuation of the structure that takes the high speed line across the River Trent floodplain and the existing railways links at Trent Junction. The elevated route would pass over the existing local roads and the main A6005 Nottingham Road. As such, it would address the severance issues although it would be a very prominent feature in the townscape fundamentally altering the whole character of the Bonsall Street area.

The alternative lower route would also have a very significant impact. The retained structure could be a major physical barrier through the town and, whilst it should be possible for Main Street to pass under the new line at ground level, the lower height of the structure in the Station Street/Station Road area would mean that a similar arrangement would not be possible at this location. For the purposes of consultation, HS2 Ltd illustrated an underpass beneath the high speed line and the existing freight line running on a diagonal alignment from Station Street to a re-designed roundabout at the Main Street/Fields Farm Road Junction. Whilst this may address some of the concerns about severance, these works would have a significant impact in Long Eaton. HS2 Ltd acknowledges that other design solutions may be possible, although it is reasonable to assume that they would also have a major impact on this area of the town.

Based on the evidence available at the time of writing it would appear that, on balance, and with careful design, the high level option may be preferable to a lower route on a retained embankment. The significance of the impact of HS2 on Long Eaton should not be under-estimated and it is recommended that, in consultation with HS2 Ltd and Erewash Borough Council, a comprehensive and creative approach should be adopted that seeks to effectively integrate the new line into the urban fabric. The views and preferences of local people will also be critical in helping to shape a satisfactory solution in this sensitive area.

Further north, in the Sandiacre/Stanton Gate area, concern was expressed at the time of the 2013 consultation about the impact of proposals for a high embankment where the route runs through the Erewash Valley. The revised proposals show a new design that replaces the embankment with a viaduct. This should go some way towards reducing the impact of the scheme in this area, although local people continue to be concerned.

More generally, there is continuing uncertainty about the proposed access to the Hub Station at Long Eaton for the A52 and concern about potential 'knock-on' implications for the local road network. In responding to the consultation it

is suggested that the County Council should press for early resolution of this issue.

Next Steps

Responses to the consultation must be submitted by 9 March 2017. These will be considered by HS2 Ltd and the Department for Transport (DfT), and the current intention is that the Government's decision on the route will be made later this year. This will be followed by a period when HS2 Ltd will engage more closely with local authorities particularly on highways, planning and environmental issues. The County Council has been invited to agree a Memorandum of Understanding covering this work with HS2. This will give the Authority some control and influence over detailed issues (e.g. routes for construction traffic) and it will be reimbursed for the costs incurred in providing information and advice requested by HS2 Ltd. In return, the Authority will need to meet strict deadlines.

It is expected that the Hybrid Bill, which will give the Government the powers to construct the route, will be deposited in 2019. Construction could start in 2023 and the line is expected to be open by 2033.

(3) **Financial Considerations** The Government will be responsible for meeting the capital costs of the scheme. Whilst the Authority will be reimbursed for undertaking any work specifically requested by HS2 Ltd, the County Council will need to meet the cost of other activities associated with HS2, such as responding to consultations, developing complementary plans and strategies, supporting local communities or dealing with enquiries. This can be expected to increase staff costs and, in the longer term, additional resources may be required to make complementary provision, for example, to support the development of new skills or to provide supporting infrastructure. At this stage it is difficult to quantify the scale of this financial impact.

(4) **Human Resources Considerations** The HS2 proposals will have a significant impact on Derbyshire and dedicated staff resources will be needed if the County Council is to realise the full potential of HS2 and minimise the impact of any negative effects. The workload is expected to increase substantially over the next two years in the build-up to the deposit of the Hybrid Bill. This will be the subject of a separate report to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Infrastructure.

(5) **Property Considerations** An assessment is being undertaken of the impact of the proposals on the County Council's land and property interests. The outcome of this work is not yet known but any issues that emerge will be included in the County Council's formal response to the consultation.

The County Council is not seeking to comment on the property interests of other bodies or private individuals as it is considered that these are best addressed locally on a case by case basis. Nevertheless, there is concern about all those who are adversely affected by the scheme. In particular, residents in the Long Eaton area will be significantly affected by the construction and operation of the high speed line. The Government's property compensation scheme is much more limited in urban areas than in rural areas, however, in view of the very significant impact of the scheme in Long Eaton, it is considered that the area warrants special consideration to ensure that residents are not unduly disadvantaged. Furthermore, it is recommended that the 'Rural Support Zone' should be extended to include the Newbery Avenue/Owen Avenue area on the south side of Long Eaton. This would mean that residents in this area would be given the same level of support as other rural residents.

(6) **Social Value Considerations** The improved connectivity provided by HS2 can be expected to contribute to increase job opportunities. This will be most apparent in areas adjacent to the proposed Hub Station at Toton, Chesterfield station and the proposed maintenance depot at Staveley, but the growth strategies currently being developed will seek to ensure the benefits are spread more widely across Derbyshire. It will also be important that adequate mitigation measures are put in place to reduce adverse effects of the scheme.

For Phase 1 (London – West Midlands) the Government has announced a £30m funding package for a Community and Environment Fund (CEF) and Business and Local economy Fund (BLEF). This will make funding available to residents and communities on the line of the route for investment in public projects, such as the refurbishment of local community centres, nature conservation and measures to support local economies and employment. No details are yet available for Phase 2b of the project (which includes the route through Derbyshire), although it is anticipated that similar arrangements will be put in place.

(7) **Environmental, Health and Transport Considerations** The project would provide more sustainable travel opportunities for some people who might otherwise use a private car. There are, however, some significant adverse environmental impacts, including demolition, visual intrusion, severance and noise. The proposals also have significant health impacts and these were outlined in more detail in the County Council's response to the 2013 consultation which included a Health Impact Assessment. Discussions with HS2 Ltd and DfT will continue to focus on removing or mitigating any adverse impacts and maximising any opportunities for enhancing existing facilities or bringing about environmental improvements.

(8) **Equality of Opportunity Considerations** The Health Impact Assessment, undertaken for the 2013 consultation, noted that the proposed route for HS2 affected a number of deprived areas. It was noted that whilst the scheme can be expected to have some beneficial effects in terms of providing more job opportunities and a boost for the local economy, there were some communities that could be adversely affected. At the time the Authority requested the Government to develop effective strategies to mitigate the adverse social and health impacts of the scheme. The latest proposals make some adjustments to the route, but do not appear to significantly alter the original finding.

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: legal, and prevention of crime and disorder considerations.

(9) **Key Decision** No.

(10) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(11) **Background Papers** Details of the consultation arrangements and plans of the proposed route are available on HS2's website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-phase-two-from-the-west-midlands-to-leeds-and-manchester>. Officer contact details - Steve Cannon, extension 38148.

(12) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION** That Cabinet authorises the Strategic Director - Economy, Transport and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Infrastructure, to approve a response to the consultation on route refinement proposals for HS2, based on the officer comments set out in this report.

Mike Ashworth
Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Communities

Appendix 1: Original & Proposed Routes

