



CABINET – 15 JANUARY 2014

HIGH SPEED RAIL (HS2) PHASE 2: WEST MIDLANDS TO LEEDS **HS2 CONSULTATION: PROPOSED RESPONSE ON IMPLICATIONS** **FOR LEICESTERSHIRE**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

PART A

Purpose of Report

1. To outline the current position on High Speed Rail (HS2) in Leicestershire and to recommend a response to the Government's HS2 Phase 2 route consultation.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the County Council's response to the Government's HS2 Phase 2 consultation be as set out in this report, noting in particular paragraphs 22-25 below, and the detailed responses in appendices E-G.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. The Government has published proposals for a high speed railway (HS2) linking London, the East and West Midlands, and the north of England. The proposals for Phase 2, which passes through Leicestershire, are currently the subject of public consultation.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

4. The HS2 Phase 2 consultation closing date is 31 January 2014.
5. A draft of this report was considered by the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 28 November 2013. The Committee's comments are detailed in paragraph 21 below.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

6. At its meeting on 20 February 2013, the County Council expressed a view that a station at Derby would be preferable to that proposed for Toton, as it would have better connectivity and offer greater regeneration benefits. This would necessitate the re-routing of the line of HS2 away from Leicestershire along the A38 corridor. Although this remains a valid point of view, the Secretary of State has previously rejected this option in favour of the route now proposed.

7. At its meeting on 15 October 2013, Cabinet resolved that a two-tier response to the current HS2 route consultation be developed; a high-level response that reflects the County Council's views on the principle of HS2 passing through the County and a station at Toton, allied to a detailed response on specific impacts of the published route (sections HSL06 and HSL09) in Leicestershire should the government not agree to re-routing the line away from the County.

Resource Implications

8. In order to respond to the consultation staff costs are being incurred. In addition, a consultant has been appointed to assist the County Council in developing the response to HS2 Ltd.
9. The County Council will make the case for HS2 Ltd. to compensate the County Council on a full cost recovery basis for the staff time involved in this project. This will be requested in the consultation response. If this request is unsuccessful, then it will have to be covered from the existing Departmental revenue budget.
10. The Director of Corporate Resources has been consulted on the contents of this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

11. A copy of this report will be circulated to all members of the County Council via the Members' News in Brief service.

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PART B

Background

12. High speed rail arrived in the United Kingdom with the opening of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link in 2003. This line - expanded in 2007, with services running from London St. Pancras station - is also known as High Speed 1 (HS1).
13. High Speed 2 (HS2) is the planned route between London Euston and the Midlands, North West England, and West Yorkshire. The line is to be built in two phases, Phase 1 between London and Birmingham, and Phase 2 from Birmingham to Manchester, and from Birmingham to Sheffield and Leeds. A topological plan showing the Phase 2 route proposal showing stations is attached to this report as **Appendix A**.
14. The Government's proposed route for HS2 through Leicestershire was published in January 2013. A plan showing the proposed HS2 route through Leicestershire is attached to this report as **Appendix B**. The Government's published route can be viewed on the HS2 website at www.hs2.org.uk (search for 'HSL06' or 'HSL09'). A detailed description of the proposed HS2 route through Leicestershire is in **Appendix C**.
15. Details of the HS2 consultation process in Leicestershire are in **Appendix D**.

Government stated HS2 objectives

16. The Government's stated objectives of HS2 are;
 - a) Demand for long distance rail travel has grown by over 100% since 1997/98 and is still increasing. The government anticipates that overall rail passenger demand will increase by 70% between 2013 and 2036. The West Coast Mainline (London – West Midlands – North West England – Glasgow) will soon be full whilst the East Coast Mainline (London – West Yorkshire – North East England – Edinburgh) and Midland Mainline (London – East Midlands – Sheffield) face similar challenges. The government considers that these long term challenges cannot be resolved by further upgrading of the existing network (which in any case would be hugely disruptive to existing services) but instead requires new rail infrastructure to provide the required capacity.
 - b) For the UK to continue to prosper and succeed in the global race, the country requires investment in a reliable transport system. Structural changes in the nation's economy in the latter half of the last century have tended to polarise investment in the south east of England whilst the north , and to a lesser extent the midlands, have declined. By providing increased capacity and speed, HS2 improves connectivity for people and goods between the regions and European markets.

County Council response to HS2 Phase 2

17. The range of possible responses to HS2 go from unalloyed welcome to outright rejection of the whole concept. It is, however, unlikely that either extreme would have much influence and more nuanced responses are more likely to represent better the interests of Leicestershire people and businesses.
18. Potentially, the announced decision to route the line through Leicestershire will stand and there will be local environmental and economic impacts. It is important that the government is made aware of these, should it choose to confirm its choice of route and station. HS2 Ltd. officials have indicated that anything not included in a consultation response may not subsequently be discussed with respondents or stakeholders.
19. Therefore the County Council has decided to respond to the HS2 (Phase 2) consultation with a two-tier response:
 - a) a response that reflects the County Council's views on the principle of HS2 passing through the County and a station at Toton
 - b) a detailed response on specific impacts in Leicestershire should the Government not agree to re-routing the line away from the County.

Principle of HS2 through Leicestershire

20. At its meeting on 20 February 2013, the County Council resolved to express its concerns about the direct impact of the initial preferred line of route on the proposed strategic rail freight interchange at East Midlands Airport. However, this concern has been overcome by a redesign and extension of the tunnel underneath the Airport.
21. At its meeting in November 2013, the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a draft response to the HS2 consultation, approving the following comments for the Cabinet's consideration.
 - a) The proposed response, which stated that the County Council was opposed to the HS2 route through Leicestershire as it provided little benefit to the communities running along the proposed route, was welcomed. Members were of the view that this reflected the opinions of the majority of people in North West Leicestershire;
 - b) The lack of connections between Leicester, stations in Leicestershire, and the HS2 line would mean that people of Leicestershire would not benefit from a high speed line.
 - c) There was a concern that the level of investment in HS2 would result in a reduced level of investment in other rail infrastructure, such as the Midland Mainline.
22. Therefore it is proposed that the County Council's view on the principle of HS2 passing through Leicestershire and a station at Toton be that:
 - a) *a station at Derby would be preferable to that proposed for Toton, as it would have better connectivity and offer greater regeneration benefits, albeit not in Leicestershire. This would necessitate the re-routing of the line of HS2 away from Leicestershire.*

- b) *The design speed of HS2 is unnecessarily high. The alignment, land take and eventual noise impact would be reduced considerably, along with the cost, if a more appropriate design standard were to be adopted.*

Proposed detailed response on the published HS2 proposal through Leicestershire

23. The County Council is concerned about the blight over a long period of time on homes, business and other potential developments along the published line of route
24. The County Council is also concerned about the difficulties presented in designing an effective long-term solution to traffic problems at Junction 13 of the A42 (Flagstaff), a key requirement for the delivery of growth in North-West Leicestershire.
25. The last three appendices to this report consider the detailed implications of the proposed HS2 route through Leicestershire. **Appendix E** outlines the impact of HS2 in Leicestershire and **Appendix F** highlights impacts in relation to specific locations along the HS2 route. Finally, **Appendix G** contains a draft response to the specific questions raised by the HS2 consultation process.

Next steps

26. Subject to Cabinet approval, this report will be submitted to HS2 Ltd. as the County Council response to the High Speed 2 (Phase 2) consultation before the consultation deadline of 31 January 2014.
27. The exact timetable for HS2 (phase 2) is currently unclear. However, in broad terms the timetable is as follows;
- 31 January 2014: Consultation on preferred route closes
 - 2015: Start Phase 2 engineering design, environmental impact assessment and preparation of Hybrid Bill
 - 2020/22: Phase 2 construction starts
 - 2032: Phase 2 opens for passengers.

Background Papers

HS2 Phase 2 Route Consultation
<http://hs2.org.uk/route-consultation>

Report to Cabinet – 15 October 2013 – High Speed 2; Developing a Response to the Government's Phase Two Consultation
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=3635&Ver=4> (Minute 53 refers)

Report to Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 28 November 2013 - HS2 Consultation: Proposed Response on Implications for Leicestershire

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1044&MId=3889&Ver=4> (Minute 21 refers)

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Topological plan of proposed HS2
Appendix B – Proposed HS2 route through Leicestershire
Appendix C – Proposed HS2 route through Leicestershire
Appendix D – HS2 consultation in Leicestershire
Appendix E – Impact of HS2 proposals in Leicestershire
Appendix F – Impact of HS2 and mitigation required
Appendix G – Response to HS2 consultation questions

Equal Opportunities Implications

28. The impact of HS2 in the county is in its line of route, social and environmental impacts. There are no specific Equal Opportunities impacts.

Environmental Impact

29. Any current environmental concerns relating to the preferred route will be included in the Council's response to the Government's consultation.

30. HS2 Ltd will carry out a full environmental impact assessment on the proposed route.