

High Speed 2 – (Phase Two)

Consultation Response



1) Wigan Council Support for HS2

- 1.1 Wigan Council endorses the consultation submission made by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA).
- 1.2 The Council welcomes and supports the proposed High Speed 2 (HS2) Phase 2 extension from the West Midlands to Manchester, which will include a new depot at Golborne in Wigan.
- 1.3 As the biggest infrastructure project in Europe, the Council recognises that HS2 will deliver significant economic growth, and major employment and business opportunities in its own right. The employment, skills and local business opportunities of HS2 could be significant for the borough across the wider supply chain to support the project through development, construction and operation.
- 1.4 Effective and reliable transport networks are vital if our businesses and communities are to develop and thrive. Situated directly on the West Coast Main Line (WCML), the Council recognises that the enhanced connectivity delivered by HS2 will offer significant new levels of economic potential, regeneration, development, and capacity for growth.
- 1.5 Alongside the improvements for passenger services, the Council also recognise the increased opportunities to support rail freight development, which will also help reduce congestion and provide road based connectivity improvements.
- 1.6 The Council strongly believes that there are opportunities to accelerate the implementation of Phase 2 and that this does not need to wait until the completion of Phase 1. If the UK is to reach its full economic potential, we need to have the ability to perform at the highest levels by removing the North-South divide and significantly improving connectivity.
- 1.7 The Council endorses the work undertaken to date and the Government's position that the proposals for HS2 represent the only feasible option to overcome the future capacity constraints to growth, by providing unique levels of increased capacity, journey speed, service reliability and support for agglomeration and long-term job creation.
- 1.8 While the Council recognises that any potential further extension of the network (Phase 3) is not being considered at this time, it does not support any proposals that would sever the borough, in order to provide a connection further north on the WCML. The potential route alignment and outline costs that would be incurred cannot be justified and the Council would strongly oppose any such proposal in future.

2) Route Alignment

- 2.1 The Council believes the shape of the network will maximise the impact of both the capacity and journey times in Greater Manchester, South Yorkshire, the West Midlands and West Yorkshire, which collectively offer the greatest cluster of economic growth potential outside the South East.
- 2.2 The Council supports the general line of route proposed in the consultation, with the clear understanding that HS2 Ltd and DfT will retain an on-going dialogue and a clear process with local planning authorities for the resolution of planning implications, so as to ensure that the long-term benefits of HS2 are secured in a manner that minimises any localised negative impact associated with the scheme.

- 2.3 To avoid the residential areas of Lowton and Lowton Common, the route passes through the Lowton Business Park and under the A572 Newton Road; this will require demolition of commercial property and a small number of houses on Newton Road. The route then turns northwest, passing through the existing Slag Lane / Byrom Lane junction and continues south of Critchley House and north of Lightshaw Hall, turning north again to join the WCML, adjacent to Viridor Wood.
- 2.4 The Council recognises the community concerns with regards to property demolition and business extinguishment, and also recognises the work undertaken by HS2 in minimising the amount of demolition along the route.
- 2.5 The proposed high speed route alignment enters the borough as it crosses over the Chat Moss railway line and under a realigned B5207 Wilton Lane. It then continues north under the A580 East Lancashire Road, just to the east of the Lane Head junction, travelling through the Pocket Nook broad location identified for housing development. The Council has reviewed the impact of the HS2 alignment and this has been taken into account as part of the Local Plan Core Strategy and does not predicate future development proposals.
- 2.6 Where HS2 crosses Byrom Lane and Slag Lane, existing highway connections need further investigation to ensure access routes can be confirmed for cleaning and maintenance at the depot. New highway connections in this area will also serve wider congestion management in the area. The Council expects HS2 and DfT to retain on-going dialogue with regards to new highway connections, route adoption, sustainable travel connections (walking, cycling and public transport).
- 2.7 The Council supports the Government's conclusion that none of the other route alignment options would provide the equivalent levels of capacity and national connectivity, or deliver the best balance between benefit and cost.

3) Rolling Stock Depot

- 3.1 The Council recognises and welcomes the job opportunities from the rolling stock maintenance depot although it awaits to see the detailed assessment of how many jobs are likely to be provided and the nature of those jobs. There are however a number of environmental impact concerns to be resolved when the detailed design work commences, especially relating to the impact on the green belt, ecological sites, listed buildings and access to the depot from the local road network.
- 3.2 The proposed location for the depot is alongside the high speed line between the WCML and the north of Golborne. The site is within the greenbelt, covers Lightshaw Hall (Grade II* listed), is adjacent to Byrom Hall (Grade II listed) and lies in very close proximity to the Pennington Flashes, which include Sites of Specialist Scientific Importance (SSSI).
- 3.3 The Council will need to be satisfied that the actual location, land take, infrastructure requirements and detailed design all take account of these sensitive environmental factors and harm to them is minimised.
- 3.4 The Council expects HS2 Ltd and DfT to retain an on-going dialogue with the Council and other partners to ensure appropriate mitigation will be secured and maintained.

4) West Coast Main Line (WCML)

- 4.1 Wigan is very well placed to support high speed proposals due to our direct connectivity West Coast Main Line. The routing of the high speed rail alignment for Phase 2 (HS2) goes through Wigan to connect with the West Coast Main Line, south of Wigan town centre. This nationally significant infrastructure project will offer a range of opportunities to maximise economic growth, regeneration, development and housing potential on the western boundaries of Greater Manchester.
- 4.2 The proposals will release capacity on the WCML to provide significant scope for improved passenger connectivity and freight traffic through the corridor in support of further growth. The Council expects a commitment to retain comparable or to secure better service connections in a manner that best complements the HS2 services to enhance the connectivity of the borough for residents and businesses.

5) Additional Stations

- 5.1 The Council does not believe there is justification for any additional stations outside the borough other than those proposed as this will reduce the efficiencies gained by HS2.
- 5.2 Wigan is very well placed to serve as an interim strategic high speed station between London / Birmingham and Scotland, particularly with the borough's proximity to the WCML and the location of the rolling stock depot controlling train speeds, minimising the impact of delay and dis-benefits to passenger journey times.
- 5.3 Through the connection onto the West Coast Main Line, there is potential for Wigan North Western Station to cater for HS2 services, which would support one of the GMCA transport infrastructure priorities; the Wigan Transport Hub. There are significant regeneration, economic and transportation benefits which would result from the identification of Wigan North Western as a HS2 station and these would lead to a major boost to the economy of the wider area.
- 5.4 Whilst the benefits to the borough are primarily seen to be at Wigan North Western Station, HS2 also presents an opportunity to create a new interchange station in the Leigh area of the borough.
- 5.5 The Council welcomes further dialogue with HS2, DfT, GMCA, TfGM and rail partners to develop the business cases for high speed services to serve the borough directly. Some initial feasibility and appraisal work has been undertaken and can be made available from TfGM on request.

6) Job opportunities

- 6.1 The increase in economic connectivity provided by HS2 will be significant to the borough through the creation of employment, skills and local business opportunities. The Council recognises and values the fact that nationally, this project could create jobs across the wider supply chain with the provision of approximately 50,000 jobs.
- 6.2 The Council wants to maximise opportunities for local construction companies to get involved in both the Phase 1 and Phase 2 contract procurement, and for skills training and local recruitment opportunities to be exploited at an early stage.

7) Sustainability Appraisal (Noise, Vibration and Externalities during Construction / Operation)

- 7.1 The scale of the project means that a wide range of specific arrangements will be required for managing the noise/local externalities of the scheme, both during construction and operationally.
- 7.2 The Council fully appreciates that a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment has yet to commence, and await further details on the following, both during construction and while in operation:
- i) noise and vibration surrounding the depot, the high speed rail line and any new highway infrastructure in close proximity to the high speed rail line and the depot;
 - ii) emissions to the air and air quality management plans;
 - iii) contaminated land assessments;
 - iv) artificial light assessments; and
 - v) other sustainability issues such as public health, well-being and equality.
- 7.3 The Council agrees that the approach proposed by HS2 Ltd and DfT is in accordance with that expected of schemes of this scale and nature, however further dialogue with HS2 Ltd and DfT is expected throughout the development of the project.

8) Accelerated delivery for Phase 2 in parallel / in advance of Phase 1

- 8.1 The Council strongly believes that there are opportunities to accelerate the implementation of Phase 2 and that this does not need to wait until the completion of Phase 1. If the UK is to reach its full economic potential, we need to have the ability to perform at the highest levels by removing the North-South divide and significantly improving connectivity.

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