Lowton East

Neighbourhood Development Forum

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Phase Two Route Consultation
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Response to HS2 Consultation

LENDF does not support the proposed route from Warburton to Bamfurlong including a rolling stock depot at Golborne.

It is unreasonable and unacceptable to prematurely end a consultation on such an important proposal before all of the plans are made abundantly clear to the local Council and residents. This has not happened. HS2 Engineers were vague at the meeting held by LENDF (8th January), saying that more detailed planning was required. LENDF requests the right to extend this consultation to **after** a date when all appropriate information is made fully available. We also believe that the residents of Crankwood (to the north of the depot) have not been consulted.

The housebuilders Taylor Wimpey are currently developing two sites either side of the depot and we feel sure they are not aware of your proposals. The first is a 474 quality residential development at Bickershaw South, adjacent to the Leeds/Liverpool Canal and the second is a 425 residential development at Rothwell's Farm, Golborne, which is to the west side of the depot.

We therefore set out below a summary of our objections and concerns, followed by a section containing more detail on each of them:

Summary

The Route

- The proposed spur is needed to support several requirements that can be more cost effectively placed elsewhere:
  - The depot
  - The connection to the West Coast Main Line. There is a viable and more cost effective alternative – please see Appendix 1.
  - The beginnings of a route to Scotland (HS/3). HS2 Engineers have implied that it is technically easier to build HS/3 up the East Coast and therefore the route is unlikely to go up the West Coast, making the spur an expensive route to service a rolling stock depot.

The Depot

- The depot will destroy designated greenbelt land and have significant and irreversible impact to the local environment. It will encroach on to a site of special scientific interest (SSSI) and will impact other environmental reserves – see Appendix 2.
- The depot will significantly impact residential areas and the destruction to the surrounding land cannot be mitigated:

    - This is in effect a three dimensional structure. Tracks to enter and exit will be high above ground level which is expected to be adjacent to Byrom Hall – a Grade II listed building.
    - Noise and light pollution from a 24 x 7 operation.
- Significant and costly changes to local infrastructure will be required, specifically roads – it will cut the already heavily congested village of Lowton in half.
- The depot has been sited at Golborne because HS2 will converge with the West Coast Main Line (WCML) there. There are three preferred options which all use Brown Field Sites:
    - Crewe
    - Barton
    - Bamfurlong Sidings
- The depot will create 125 jobs, 75% of which will be low skill / low paid (e.g. emptying toilets, cleaning trains and replenishing consumables). The 25% of higher skill jobs are likely to be filled by people from outside the area – according to HS2 Engineers. The net effect is a loss of skilled jobs in the area – see later section on jobs.
- Complete plans for the depot are not available. It will extend a minimum of 1.5 km with sheds being capable of housing 40 trains of 200m in length. This is a massive blot on our greenbelt landscape.
- The depot is planned to be built on a floodplain prone to subsidence.

<u>Costs</u>

- Planned additional costs of £800m for building the Golborne connection are not credible – see later.
- The real cost of the Golborne connection is £1.25bn substantially more than upgrading the WCML.

<u>Jobs</u>

- The loss of jobs equates to 150 at Lowton Business Park and 500+ at Taylor Business Park at Culcheth. The loss of these jobs cannot be mitigated by the creation of 125 jobs at the depot.

<u>Community & Environmental Impact</u>

- The impact to the environment – the whole spur runs through greenbelt and safeguarded land – please see Appendix 2.
- The impact to the housing market is unknown. Residents risk having their properties seriously de-valued. People may look to re-locate away from Lowton.
- Two Grade II listed buildings (Byrom Hall and Lightshaw Hall) will be impacted. Please refer to your own statements.
- Loss of greenbelt land, open public space and community woodland, public footpaths and bridleways.
- Visual impact of a 3D monstrosity on a flat greenfield landscape.

<u>Potential For A Station</u>

- Although not a formal part of the consultation, our local MP Andy Burnham, together with Transport for Leigh, are lobbying for an HS2 interchange station adjacent to the A580.
- This will carve up the greenbelt at the opposite end of the village to the depot.
- The impact will be significant, not dissimilar to the impact of the depot.

- The residents of Lowton **do not want** a station.
- Lowton would be the sacrificial lamb to serve the wider community and fulfil the alleged desire for the town of Leigh (some 3km away) to have a station.

General Observation

LENDF questions the "need" for HS2 in terms of the business case for saving journey times when we already work in a time which supports remote working via audio & video conferencing, cloud computing, ever changing technology and the ever increasing rate of change. How do we know that HS2 will be fit for purpose in 20 years time when it becomes operational? Will it not already be defunct and replaced by other technology?

Detailed Information

The Route

Please refer to Appendix 1 for a recommended viable alternative which has been produced for LENDF by a retired WCML Senior Manager. The alternative proposal will not impact on greenbelt land and will generally run through existing transport corridors and still serve Warrington.

A previous proposal to route a M6/M62 link road through the area where the HS2 spur is proposed, was dismissed by the Department of Transport in 1993 as they "concluded that there was no satisfactory way of overcoming the concerns" of the impact to the local communities. Nothing has changed so why is it now acceptable to route HS2 in the same location with considerably more impact?
(*Ref The Department of Transport letter CNW M56-62/1/1/08, dated September 1993 from Ruth Moyniham*).

The whole line from Warburton to Bamfurlong is planned to run through greenbelt land with massive destructive impact in its wake.

In HS2's own Sustainability Statement at Appendix E2 it is stated:

"Byrom Hall and the impact to its surroundings is classed as a **moderate** impact"

There are high pressure **gas** pipelines that HS2 will impact at several places along the proposed line, notably at Culcheth and Lowton. See Appendix 3

There is an eight foot diameter **water** main that runs parallel with the A580 which has to be at least 4.3 metres below a rail track! When this was raised with the HS2 Engineers they were unaware of its existence. See Appendix 4

If the WCML proposal was developed both the gas pipes and water mains would be avoided.

The Depot

In HS2's own Sustainability Statement at Appendix E2 it is stated:

"Lightshaw Hall and the demolishing of its outbuildings is classed as a **major** impact"

The destruction of the designated greenbelt land by the creation of the depot is not justified by the creation of just 125 jobs.

The depot is planned to destroy greenbelt land, sites of special scientific interest and surround Lightshaw Hall which is a Grade II* listed building. Lightshaw Hall will effectively sit in the depot car park.

In HS2's notes about the depot it is stated "We envisage that the depot would help to transform the surrounding area." In this they are correct – but the transformation will not be a positive one and will not be welcomed by local people. This is not a brown field site, but a much valued rural area - the transformation will be from rural to **industrial**.

There are viable alternatives to the Depot:

- Crewe - Brownfield land close the intersection of the HS2 and WCML.
- Barton – Close to Manchester.
- Bamfurlong Sidings – If the spur absolutely must be built and HS2 can justify this then the depot must be sited at the more sensible alternative of Bamfurlong sidings which is a brownfields site adjacent to the WCML.

Detailed plans are simply not available. Despite the fact that LENDF held a public meeting with HS2 Engineers we still do not know:

- How the trains will enter and leave the depot – we believe that high track viaducts will be built to accommodate entry / exit.
- The size of the depot and the size of the sheds.
- Service road access points to and from the depot.
- The number of tracks required.
- Anticipated pollution from noise and light (from the depot and the trains) – this is close to a residential area and realistically the majority of work and movements will happen during the night.

There will be significant upheaval to the road infrastructure, requiring the re-alignment and elevation of Wigan Road so that it can cross over the depot and the line.

Additionally the tracks entering and exiting the depot will require elevation to the side of Byrom Hall – a Grade II listed building. This cannot be mitigated and is totally unacceptable. In essence HS2 is creating a 3 dimensional structure for all to see.

At their recent public meeting organised by LENDF, HS2 agreed that there will be up to 40 trains a night each 200m in length being serviced (cleaned, light maintenance etc.) and that these trains will be shunted into and out of the shed during the overnight period. The proposed depot site is in a low lying area, and noise travels and is amplified across this area.

There will also be light pollution. Currently the area of the woodlands and fields is very dark. No details are available regarding lighting, although we believe the depot is likely to have some form of external lighting. This will also impact on residents as well as wildlife.

To service the HS2 trains that will operate from Manchester a 40 mile round trip to the depot at Golborne would be needed. This does not make sense economically and environmentally.

Both HS2 trains and classic compatible trains are planned to be serviced by the depot. This implies that the roads going over the depot and the tracks entering the depot will need to be considerably elevated creating a 3 dimensional structures at both ends.

The depot will create 125 jobs, 75% of which will be low skill / low paid (e.g. emptying toilets, cleaning trains and replenishing consumables). The 25% of higher skill jobs are likely to be filled by people from outside the area – according to HS2 Engineers. The net effect is a loss of skilled jobs in the area.

Costs

HS2 argue that the Golborne connection at £800m will only be slightly more expensive than the alternative of upgrading the West Coast Main Line from Crewe to Golborne at £750m and deliver a reduction in journey time to Glasgow of 13 minutes, which they value at £1.2bn.

The HS2 estimate for the Golborne connection of £800m is not credible when compared with the average cost of the whole network. It represents a cost per km of only 28.6% of the average for the line as a whole. Taking the average cost per km for the whole line, excluding costs for stations, tunnelling, and the viaduct over the Manchester Ship Canal, the cost for the Golborne link would be in the region of £2,000m, £1.25bn more than upgrading the West Coast Main Line.

HS2 claim the value of the reduction in journey time is £1.2bn. This is largely composed of the value attributed by business travellers, for whom the time spent on the train they consider to be non-productive. This argument has since been discredited; business travellers will usually be working whilst on the train, so the time is spent usefully. Removing this element reduces the value to £0.4bn.

We believe that the true picture is therefore that the Golborne connection will cost £1.25bn substantially more than upgrading the West Coast Main Line, for an additional value of £0.4bn, clearly not good value for money.

Taken individually, the West Coast Main Line upgrade has a Benefit/Cost Ratio of approximately 1.5 – on the borderline of medium value for money – whereas the Golborne Connection has a Benefit/Cost Ratio of 0.5 – poor value for money, with the costs outweighing the value created.

This clearly demonstrates that the proposed Golborne connection should be replaced by a connection at Crewe and an upgrade to the West Coast Main Line from Crewe to Golborne. This provides better value for money as well as minimising the impact on the local communities.

Jobs

Lowton Business Park will be affected by the demolition of the main office block. The park currently has 150 high quality jobs many of which are held by local people. The route through this area would cause displacement of businesses and could lead to them moving out of the area. A similar situation has already occurred when Millingford Industrial Estate was cleared for a supermarket development – the employers relocated outside the area. The net impact is that more jobs will be lost in the area than created by the operation of the depot.

Community Impact

The effect of these proposals on the Lowton and Golborne communities cannot be overstated, as it will devastate a large area of greenbelt land and recreational space widely used by local residents and will be a huge scar in the landscape.

In their introduction to the Greenheart Regional Park (See Appendix 5), Wigan Council state that Greenheart is an area at the heart of Wigan Borough and includes some of the areas best countryside surrounded by local communities. The proposed HS2 line and particularly the site of the proposed rolling stock depot affects a number of Greenheart areas, driving a wedge right through this section of the Greenheart Regional Park, reducing its area and effectively splitting it in two.

Part of Lightshaw Meadows (community orchard / picnic area / bird viewing screen) appears to be within the curtilage of the depot site. Lightshaw Meadows, which includes an area of SSSI, was purchased with over £350,000 of Lottery funding by Lancashire Wildlife Trust and Red Rose Forest, and developed between 2010 and 2013 with local community involvement. A link was created between Lightshaw Meadows and Byrom Hall Wood.

Byrom Hall Wood, a 28 acre site, was purchased by the Forestry Commission in 2002 and 25,000 native trees were planted and a circular multi-user track laid. This woodland is also likely to lose some land with the remainder being immediately adjacent to the depot site. This area is extensively used by local walkers, runners, cyclists and horse-riders.

As already acknowledged in HS2's own comments on the route, there will be significant visual impact on the users of Pennington Flash and the Leeds / Liverpool Canal in addition to the accompanying noise and light pollution. Pennington Flash is home to a large sailing club and, as stated elsewhere, is nationally renowned for its birdlife and a classic example of natural regeneration. Over 230 bird species have been recorded on site. However, Pennington Flash is also widely used by the general population and visitors purely for recreational purposes and the walking circuit of the Flash (Jubilee Legacy Walk- 2012) is used on a daily basis. This route will be blighted by the proposed spur and maintenance depot – the landscape will be unrecognisable. A number of well used public footpaths also lie within the proposed depot site area.

At the 2011 Census the population of Golborne and Lowton West ward and Lowton East ward was 11,914 and 12,617 respectively (13% of whom are in the most deprived quintile in England – Golborne and Lowton Health Profile 2011 – Ashton Leigh and Wigan PCT) and for whom the largest remaining area of free accessible public space lies in the Greenheart Regional Park.

Wigan council have recognised there is an obesity problem within this borough and to remove recreational land of this nature is not acceptable.

Finally, Lowton is already over-burdened with traffic. The local infrastructure cannot adequately support the volume of traffic. The Newton Road / A580 junction is the second most congested in Greater Manchester with 56,000 movements per day.

Appendix 1

Proposal For An Alternative Route To HS2 Avoiding The Need To Build Warburton To Bamfurlong

Proposal prepared for LENDF by MALCOLM HITCHEN, Retired Senior WCML Manager

The Route North from Crewe

i) The proposed alteration to HS2 starts in the area of 159 mileage post (mp) Coppenhall old junction, it is here where the proposed new route emerges from the underpass tunnel under the present Crewe station, from this point the new route would continue alongside the present West Coast Main Line (WCML) towards Winsford, constructed on the Up Slow side, this is presently open farmland until it reaches Winsford South Jnc, where the four track section reduces to two track on the approach to Winsford station at Rilshaw Lane.

ii) To widen the present route would require the removal of Winsford station which is in essence a glorified Bus shelter, constructed in 1961 and is by part remote from the town centre, this would require a new station to be constructed at Wharton, (Winsford Jnc) area (165 mp) where there is adequate space and would be more central to the new Winsford town centre.

iii) This would facilitate the widening of the present two tracks between the165 mp and the 167mp to four tracks using the land presently used for storage or car parking of the adjacent industrial units which are set back from the present Up fast side and would be unaffected. The new HS2 route could be in a cut and cover tunnel which would return the present facilities to the owners and also act as a noise barrier with added security to the adjacent housing estate located on the Down main side at Wharton (166 mp).

iv) At this point the WCML opens up to six tracks, three of which were redundant sidings historically to serve the salt industry, these are referred to as Verdins Sidings, there is adequate space along the up goods loop to construct HS2 tracks.

v) At the 168 mp the WCML becomes a two track formation through to the170 mp, which goes beyond the present day Hartford station which would require to be demolished, it is built in a deep wide cutting, this feature would facilitate the widening of the route to construct a parallel HS2 line. The over bridge south of Hartford station, which carries the A556 was constructed in the early 1950s and was built to provide four railway tracks, and widening of the present route. Between these two points the WCML route crosses the river Weaver at Vale Royal viaduct at the 168 ¾ mp, the new HS 2 route would require a parallel viaduct. The present day station at Hartford could be relocated to the area adjacent to the overbridge at the 170½ mp which carries the Altrincham to Chester route and would become a dual station for both routes. Again the present day station was constructed in the 1950s style of British Railways, a glorified bus shelter. Between the 170 ½ mp and the 172 ½ mp the WCML was 4 track but was rationalised in the mid-80s with the removal of the Down loop but the space of infrastructure is still in place. At this location there is a redundant siding on the Up slow side it originally served ICI at Winnington, there

is also access to the Altrincham to Chester route via Green bank. I will refer back to this location both as a potential Northern cord to Manchester Airport located (10 miles away) and as a location of a rolling stock servicing facility

vi) At Acton Bridge station, 172 ½ mp, the WCML is in a two track formation with open farmland either side, at the174 mp it crosses the river Weaver for a second time at Dutton viaduct, the HS2 route would require a second structure on the east side, this is to allow the line to leave the present WCML, through open farmland re-joining the WCML at Preston Brook at the 177 mp prior to going through the overbridge that carries the M56. This motorway overbridge was built to facilitate the widening of the WCML. The diversion of the HS 2 route would also avoid the complexities of Weaver junction fly- over with the lines into Liverpool and the necessity to build an additional tunnel at Preston Brook.

vii) The WCML between the 177mp and 180 mp is in open route (i.e. open country side with no line side development) so the HS2 route could run parallel the existing line on the Up main side to Acton Grange Jnc, at this point the WCML has a junction with the line from Chester. There are two alternatives available first is to use the existing crossing of the Manchester Ship Canal on the Up and Down Helsby lines viaduct which would access Warrington south Jnc, (Bank Quay)via the re-instatement of the Up and Down slow Lines to form the HS2 route directly into Warrington Bank Quay station. Alternatively, a dedicated viaduct could be constructed on the East side of the present viaduct using the route of the Grand Jnc railway from the Moore area, rising up and over the Chester lines and adopting the route of the present Helsby lines into Warrington

viii) It is of note that there is a vast area of underused railway sidings parallel to this proposed HS2 route, these are known as Walton old sidings, Arpley sidings and Canal sidings, which parallel the WCML and are approximately over a mile and a third in length with access on and off the WCML. This could possibly be another suitable location for a rolling stock servicing depot. Warrington would become a hub station with passengers accessing the facilities of HS2 from North Wales and Merseyside areas

ix) Upon leaving Warrington at the 182 ¼ mp, on the Up slow side the HS2 route could be constructed alongside the present route but, there are some problems and considerations to the industrial units and the Royal mail depot in the Dallam area, possibly resolved by cut and cover tunnelling. Beyond Dallam the route is bounded by industrial units, storage facilities of a road haulage company, once past this location the proposed route would requires a widened section of the overbridge carrying Cromwell Ave. From there on the proposed route would require the removal of a small industrial site (Craven court) located on the former Winwick Quay railway sidings and the closure of Mill Lane, Alder lane, Watery Lane and the lane leading towards Burtonwood Road. This would allow the HS2 route to pass under the M62 using the space presently occupied by these small minor roads without any disruption to the Motorway, or major construction expense.

x) In the area of the 185 ¼ mp the HS2 route could leave the WCML in a North Easterly direction across open farmland crossing the A49 to access the Brownfield site of the former Parkside Colliery, there, a cut and cover tunnel and a bored tunnel could be constructed under the Liverpool to Manchester line and the M6, surfacing in the area of farmland beyond Golborne Jnc between Newton road and the A580. This diversion would avoid the complexities of the present Winwick Jnc with the Earlestown lines, the need to widen the present rock cutting at Redbank, between Winwick Jnc and Golborne Jnc and the present severe speed restriction on a curve on the WCML at the 187 mp (Golborne Dale road / Newton Road area).

xi) This new tunnel could, if necessary, emerge on the site of the present Millingford Industrial site (which is due for redevelopment), on the Up and Down slow side or beyond Golborne centre and the A580, between the Kid-glove industrial estate and Mid way overbridge (Ashton road); this area adjacent to the WCML is the site of a former colliery slag heap.

xii) The route could continue northwards towards Wigan, with brown field land adjacent to the west, which would also be suitable for a rolling stock servicing depot, there is very little occupation of this area, as it was again it was an ex colliery site. From Lilly Lane/Bolton Road in the Bamfurlong area on the south side of Wigan the HS2 route could be constructed on land formally railway sidings and colliery waste tips (Ince Moss tips), again land suitable for a rolling stock servicing depot with no surrounding domestic occupation to create any noise pollution with the operation of the site.

xiii) The final approach to Wigan North Western station would be on the Up and Down slow side of the WCML were from Cemetery road overbridge there is adequate land to construct the new HS2 route into Wigan via canal sidings into the station area, this route would require a Junction with the existing route to Liverpool via St Helens, at this point any trains on the HS2 route would be operating at restricted speeds due to stopping or starting from Wigan NW.

Alternative HS2 Connections to the WCML for Manchester Airport

i) Southern Cord

At Crewe the planned HS2 route is to create an underpass tunnel to provide a non- stop facility for through trains not programmed to stop at the surface station, this tunnel is designed to start in the Basford area (157 mp) and emerge in the Coppenhall area (160mp).During the construction of this tunnel a spur to the east could be created to make a high speed junction towards Manchester, the present surface junction at Crewe for trains travelling to Manchester is limited to 30mph due to a sharp curve in the tracks, this high speed connection could allow trains to leave the WCML at Crewe and head towards Manchester at much higher speeds.

To avoid the present independent goods lines tunnels which take freight traffic off the main surface junction area and divert trains onto the independent lines this allows freight trains to avoid using the main junctions. This new HS2 tunnel would require to surface in the Maw Green area (160mp) on the present Down Slow side of the Crewe to

Manchester line, this would permit the construction of the HS2 line to be parallel to the existing line towards Sandbach.

This area of Cheshire has no lineside development until the line reaches Ettley Heath 162 ½ mp which is approximately 1mile south of Sandbach station, the HS2 route at this point could be routed through a undeveloped corridor in north westerly direction crossing the A533 at Stud Green area there is an existing unused freight line to Middlewich/ Northwich, at this location there are two brown field sites of former chemical and specialist gas industries which parallel both the A533 and the freight line.

The HS2 route could be constructed alongside this redundant line towards Northwich, at Middlewich the route would need to be constructed in a cut and cover tunnel through the centre of the town emerging at the 4 mp, the HS2 route could continue along this route up to the Broad heath area (Gadbrook farm) 5-6 mp. Here the HS2 route would turn east heading towards the Lostock Gralam area, where the line could parallel the existing railway, Altrincham to Chester line mid-way between Lostock station and Plumley station (19 ½). At Knutsford the HS2 route could either be in a cut or cover tunnel or be diverted to the south of the town re-joining the Altrincham Chester line in the Mobberley area turning towards Manchester International airport at Hough Green/Thorns Green area(10-11mp).

ii) Northern spur for trains headed towards Scotland.

In the Lostock Gralam area a junction could be created with the southern spur to Manchester, to form a northern spur, taking the HS2 route towards Northwich routed on the north side of the town heading towards Winnington, taking a route on the north side of Neumanns Flash.

At this point there is an existing freight line and sidings (Oakleigh) which served ICI works at Winnington, this could be made into a HS2 route as the infrastructure and road bridges under Winnington lane and the A559 Beech road/ Northwich road are already in place and the line is presently unused. To utilise this route would require a bridge over the Weaver navigation canal, in the town centre of Northwich this freight line is in a very deep cutting so therefore it could be constructed as cut and cover to eliminate any environmental impact or noise problems to the surrounding area.

The present freight line joins the route from Manchester to Chester at the22mp Chester road area, the HS2route could be taken through the Hartford Heath area to join the WCML at Hartford junction (171) mp,(Walliscote sidings), much of the route would be on brownfield land that was part of ICI chemical industrial site.

Appendix 2

Impact To The Environment From The Construction Of HS2 And The Depot

Prepared for LENDF by Mr Roy Rhodes, Conservation Officer,
Leigh Ornithological Society

Wigan MBC's Greenheart Regional Park initiative covers the area concerned and HS2 will take a large slice of land while simultaneously isolating a parallel stretch to the south. That stretch lies between HS2 and the urban edge of Golborne. Given the Government's stated intention to leverage service providers into sites adjoining HS2 depots, this piece of greenbelt/Regional Park will be vulnerable to loss by development.

Similarly, the current local £3.7m Nature Improvement Area (NIA) initiative which Wigan MBC is carrying out with wildlife bodies, other local authorities and government support, is intended to demonstrate in this very area that wildlife and development can exist together if schemes are developed sensitively – rather than causing significant damage like this proposal. The Greater Manchester Wetland Living Landscape Area is a stirring project.

Abram Flashes SSSI will be damagingly constrained by this proposal to the detriment of the wildfowl and waders which form one of the core reasons for the nationally important status of the site. The 24/7 operation of the depot and the proximity of the through-line will eliminate the vital open character of the buffer area surrounding the SSSI and discourage its use by these birds.

The RSD and through-line are at the break of slope on the flank of Hey Brook valley, where visible and audible disturbance will be maximised across the valley to the north and exacerbated by lighting and power supplies to each track in the depot. The line emerges from a cutting 75m from the open water of the SSSI and will have maximum disturbance potential. Tree planting to mask the impact of all this is out of the question because of the requirement for open country around the SSSI. Drainage of the RSD and the HS2 track/ballast may prove an issue for surrounding watercourses and the SSSI.

Lightshaw Meadows (including the SSSI) has been developed as a nature reserve with public access by Lancashire Wildlife Trust and Red Rose Forest. Some parts will be eliminated by this proposal while the rest will be vastly diminished in value for wildlife and visitors alike. Over 140 bird species have been recorded here, with breeding Skylark, Grey Partridge, Lapwing, Redshank, Barn Owl, Linnet, Yellowhammer and Tree Sparrow being particularly important.

The whole setting of the Grade II Listed Byrom Hall will be wrecked by the proposed combination of new roads, bridges, crossover viaducts for rolling stock access to the depot and the loss of a slice of its actual garden. Grade II* Listed Lightshaw Hall will remain standing, but *in a car park* in the middle of the depot. Wigan has only 31 Grade II* Listed Buildings and this proposal is entirely unacceptable. Highly visible viaducts, bridges, re-routing of the A573, track widening and sterilisation of further ground will also occur in agricultural land at the WCML junction at Bamfurlong. West of the main line here is another small wetland SBI which could be affected by track widening.

The land south of the proposed RSD contains a Grade A Site of Biological Interest (SBI) of county significance notified for its amphibian and bird communities, including Great Crested Newts which are specially protected with the habitats they occupy. Mitigation measures would be needed. The farmland here includes an arable component which hosts breeding finches, buntings and Lapwings likely to be disadvantaged directly by this development or indirectly by changes it may wreak on farming practice. The bird community of arable farmland is under national threat and Wigan has a limited resource of such land. A second Grade A SBI is centred on Lightshaw Lime Beds on the SW edge of this land – it also is of significance for Great Crested Newts and wildfowl.

Extensive public footpaths cross this area and most of that along Lightshaw Lane with its old hedges, mature trees and adjacent ponds will be eliminated, together with a nestbox scheme operated by Leigh Ornithological Society. The Forestry Commission site of Byrom Wood which is a prime recreational area and of value to wildlife will be devalued by this industrial scale development and the noise of the depot and through-line. Mammalian wildlife in particular will be further constrained throughout by the high barrier fencing of the entire HS2 undertaking.

Apparently an access track for maintenance vehicles normally flanks HS routes, although little mention has been made of the topic. Such a feature would increase the width of land-take/cuttings and the landscape impact. It could also negate the concealing and sound-damping abilities of cuttings.

South of Lowton along the route there are two Cheshire Wildlife Trust/Warrington BC wildlife sites: Eleven Acre Common adjoining the southern end of Kenyon Golf Course, notified for its floristically diverse unimproved neutral grassland, with flanking hedgerow, woodland and some open water/ditch. Silver Lane, Risley adjoins the Risley Tip adjacent to the HS2 route and was created as part of the restoration of the landfill site. It contains a variety of habitats and is still establishing. The tip closed in October 2011. Both wildlife sites seem likely to be compromised.

HS2 passes between Risley Moss Nature Reserve and Holcroft Moss, precluding any possibility of joining them to form a larger protected area in the future. Despite assertions to the contrary at Holcroft Moss it does seem that the scale of operations - to form a haul road, excavate peat and build an embankment as well as the associated construction compounds and adjacent bridge over the M62 – could have impacts not yet identified to Natural England.

HS2 envisages twin 11.9km tunnels with crossovers being constructed under Manchester and they will have a 2.7km lead-in cutting to a depth of 22m at the tunnel entrances. These excavations will generate a bare minimum of two million cubic metres of spoil which is probably intended for use on the embankments to get the route over the Ship Canal and M62. That will produce a 4km (2.5mile) long embankment from the viaduct at the Ship canal to where it reaches existing ground level next to the tip at Risley. A shorter length will be south of the Ship Canal. The net result will be further despoilation of open country in the Mersey valley – gaily dismissed by the project because there are other high-level crossings in the wider area. If it is accepted that the Golborne spur is a non-starter, the tunnel waste needs a home and there must be cost implications at that volume. Further, there are extensive limestone deposits crossed by the tunnels and that component material must be kept away from the mossland environment.

The proposal from Transport for Leigh for a combined Manchester-Liverpool/HS2 station adjacent to the East Lancs Road is not supported by Leigh OS because of

the creeping urbanisation that is likely to accompany it and eliminate the open farmland wildlife corridor between the settlements of Lowton and Culcheth. However, it is acknowledged that a road by-pass from Atherleigh Way to Winwick Lane has strong local support and if sensitive routing and design were employed, the loss of farmland could be minimised and the wildlife corridor could be retained.

The possible alternative site for the RSD at Bamfurlong, would put it next to the Bryn Marsh and Ince Moss SSSI which is also part of the Wetlands initiative. However, the site is already surrounded by railways and the impact would be much less than at Lightshaw.

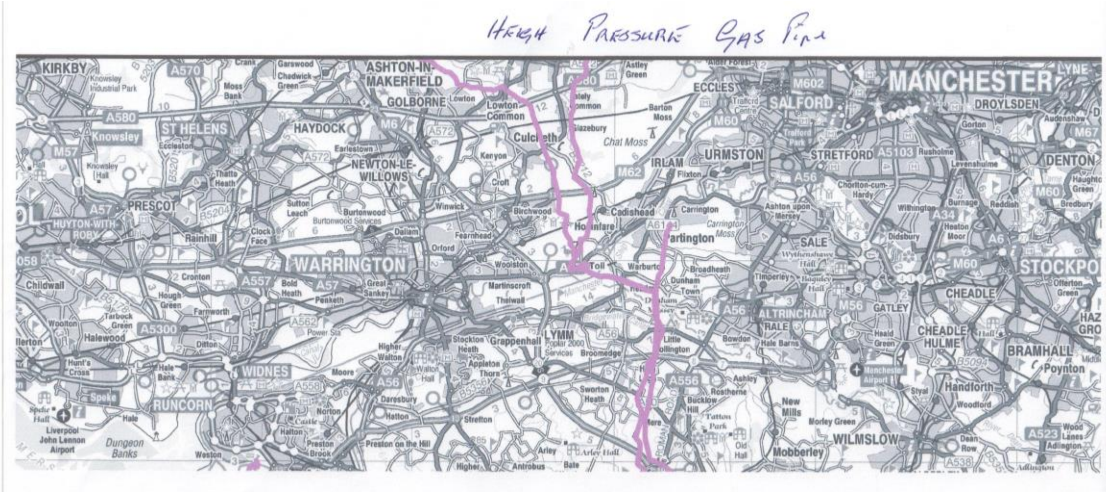
Construction of a station for the Manchester-Liverpool line at either Kenyon Junction or Golborne would have limited wildlife impacts, especially if new access roads were sensitively designed and positioned.

While HS2 have said they will work with local authorities to reconnect severed footpaths where possible, whether there is any commitment to replace lost lengths as new paths is not clear. Neither is it clear from whose pocket the necessary funding for either action would come.

Re-routing HS2 via Warrington Bank Quay would be far more environmentally sound and avoid the demonstrably incorrect economic and practical justifications made for the Golborne spur. Equally, alternative routes into Manchester exist which would need shorter tunnels/produce less spoil.

Appendix 3

Diagram of High Pressure Gas Pipeline



Appendix 4

Diagram of Main Water pipeline recently installed

Appendix 5

Map of Greenheart Regional Park