

We use cookies to help us make this website better. If you continue without changing your settings, we'll assume that you are happy to receive all cookies from this site. For more information, including how to turn cookies off, see our [privacy notice](#)

WARRINGTON
Borough Council



Contact us Jump to content Accessibility
Cookies



Services A-Z

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Bins, waste and recycling

Business and trade

Children and young people

Community and living

Council, democracy and elections

Education and learning

Health and social care

Housing

Jobs and careers

Leisure, culture and heritage

Planning and the environment

Transport and roads

[Home](#) > [Latest news](#) > [Council publishes details of HS2 response](#)

Council publishes details of HS2 response

Published Monday, 3rd February 2014

The full text of the council's response to HS2 Ltd's consultation over the route of the proposed high-speed rail line intended to link Manchester and Leeds with Birmingham and the South.

The council reiterated its support for high-speed rail in principle, but voiced very strong concerns about certain aspects of the proposed route.

Council leaders maintained their firm stance with regard to the part of the route that connects Hoo Green to Bamfurlong. This part of the route, they said:

- Would be "unnecessary".
- Would offer journey time savings on services to Scotland of only 13 minutes.
- Would miss the opportunity to improve services to Warrington Bank Quay, Wigan North Western and Liverpool.

And as well as failing to take proper account of Warrington's importance to the North West economy, said the council, the proposed route would have severe impacts on parts of the borough:

- The villages of Glazebrook and Hollins Green would each be cut in two.
- Hollins Green would lose its "distinctive identity and rural ambiance".
- Successful dairy businesses in Lymm and Agden would cease to exist.
- The proposed mile-long, 30-metre-high viaduct over the ship canal would result in high noise levels in the parish of Rixton with Glazebrook.
- There would be severe impacts on the local environment of Culcheth, Croft and the area surrounding these two villages, including Culcheth Linear Park.

A council spokesperson commented: "The council will continue to work with HS2 Ltd after the close of the consultation. It's vital that we make sure all of our economic and environmental concerns are heard, and that Warrington gets the deal it deserves from this development."

Note

The full text of the response letter is below. [View the accompanying response form.](#)

Full text of Warrington Borough Council's letter to HS2 Ltd

Dear Sir / Madam,

High Speed Rail: Consultation on the route from the West Midlands to Manchester, Leeds and beyond

We are writing with regards to your request for formal responses on the proposed Phase 2 of the North-

South HS2 High Speed Railway.

Please find attached our completed Consultation Response Form; we have completed this only insofar as it relates to the proposed 'Western Leg' from Lichfield to Manchester as we do not feel, that our position as a Local Transport Authority in the North West qualifies us to offer comment on plans for the route to Leeds (via the East Midlands and Sheffield).

Our response was the subject of extensive consultation and discussion with neighbouring transport authorities, local businesses and residents. A detailed report setting out the Council's views on HS2 was approved by the Council's Executive Board at its meeting, held on the 13th of January. At this meeting, the Executive Board authorised me to prepare this response letter in close partnership with the Council Leader, Councillor Terry O'Neill.

Officers have held numerous meetings with colleagues from HS2 Limited to gain a greater understanding of the likely impact of the proposed Phase 2 route and I would like to place on record my appreciation for their generous commitment of time.

The Council fully supports the principle of High Speed Rail as the most logical solution to the capacity crisis emerging on Britain's rail network and is keen to see an early extension of the Phase One (London – Birmingham) route, northwards to assist in spreading the benefits of improved connectivity and potentially greater economic growth. In this respect we are pleased to note that Sir David Higgins (the new Chairman of HS2 Limited) is now examining the potential to advance the construction timescale for Phase 2.

We support the construction of major new stations at Manchester Airport and Manchester Piccadilly. The Council recognises these will be of considerable benefit to the wider regional economy and accepts that both of these proposed new stations will potentially be of considerable benefit to Warrington residents, businesses and visitors to the Borough.

Likewise the Council fully supports the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership and Cheshire East Council in its proposals for regenerating and developing Crewe as part of HS2 construction; the 'High Speed City' concept.

The Council would also support a connection being constructed between HS2 and the Derby to Birmingham line. With this likely to be electrified through to Bristol in CP6, Manchester to Birmingham services could be extended on to Bristol and Cardiff (utilising classic compatible rolling stock). This would provide a step-change in journey times and greater route capacity for travel from the North West to South West and on into South Wales.

The Council however does not support that section of the proposed route which connects Hoo Green to Bamfurlong (this section of route connects the spur to Manchester Airport and the City Centre across to the West Coast Main Line, immediately south of Wigan). HS2 Limited has advised that this is intended to form the new main line on to Scotland via Lancashire.

This proposed routing cuts through the eastern part of Warrington, causing considerable disruption to local residents and businesses not least the total loss of the highly successful Taylor Business Park located to the south of Culcheth Village.

This section would be very expensive to construct (current outline estimates provided by HS2 Limited range between £750 – 900 million). We are also aware of other responses to the consultation which suggest the actual cost could be far higher, particularly given the proposed use of a substantial viaduct to cross the Manchester Ship Canal and River Mersey at a height of some 28 – 30 metres above water level and the considerable cost of necessary mitigation measures and the compensation required to relocate the Taylor Business Park.

We therefore question the value of this proposed routing and the economic benefits claimed by HS2 Limited. It is not necessary to construct this section of line to serve Manchester Airport and Manchester Piccadilly and it would only offer journey time savings on services through to Scotland of some 13 minutes.

This link therefore has no beneficial impact on services to Warrington Bank Quay, Wigan North-Western and Liverpool with the timetables as currently proposed by HS2 Limited. It would only be the three trains per hour on to Scotland which would benefit from this somewhat marginal journey time reduction.

The Council would wish to see an alternative routing developed that uses an upgraded / rebuilt West Coast Main Line alignment from the proposed new Crewe HS2 hub to Wigan via Warrington; with Warrington Bank Quay station substantially enhanced and expanded to accommodate 400m long 'captive' rolling stock. This would also enable a higher number of 'classic compatible' services to serve Warrington Bank Quay to / from London and Scotland, rather than the currently proposed one an hour London to Preston service, which does not provide a connection from Warrington Bank Quay to Scotland.

The Council has very serious concerns about the potential economic and environmental impact of the proposed HS2 routing through the Borough and is looking for a complementary 'Warrington Connectivity Package' to be delivered prior to the opening of Phase 2. These points are fully outlined in the following sections.

Economic Impacts

Warrington is currently one of the UK's most successful economic locations. Recent independent national studies, for example by the Centre for Cities (Cities Outlook 27th January 2014) and Local Futures (February 2013) indicate that Warrington is in the top four 'cities' in the UK for economic growth and is overall the second most important investment location in England. It is a proven economic powerhouse regularly outperforming most of the Core Cities that HS2 will directly serve.

Data included in the *Cities Outlook 2014* published by the Centre for Cities this Monday shows Warrington:

- Having the third highest employment rate of all the cities researched. The 77.5 percent rate at June 2013 is the highest in the North of England.
- Ranked tenth in terms of total private sector employment growth between 2010 and 2012 with job numbers rising by 4,000 to 93,700. This reflects a 4.5 percent increase.
- As the fifth best (and top North of England) location for the ratio of private sector to public sector employment. At 3.7 private jobs for everyone in the public sector the rate is twice that of the level for e.g. Blackburn.

The HS2 Growth Task Force, in their publication 'The Challenge' (October 2013) emphasises the critical importance of HS2 in connecting markets, businesses and people to create opportunities for economic growth. The Government has taken to referring to HS2 as the 'new North-South railway' and argues that it will lead to a fundamental rebalancing of the British economy. In this context it is disappointing that Warrington is effectively 'bypassed' by HS2 and instead is only offered the prospect of a limited 'classic compatible' hourly service running between London and Preston.

The proposed Hoo Green to Bamfurlong main line passes through the centre of the Taylor Business Park. This long established employment area is home to fifty companies, employing 497 staff and generating rental income of around £1.5 million per annum. Closure will mean the loss of £640,000 per annum in Business Rates. The current line of route will lead to total closure and loss of this important business park, with substantial compensation payments accruing to the HS2 project.

Local Environmental Impacts

The route as proposed from Hoo Green to Bamfurlong passes through the east of the Borough causing significant environmental impact on the local communities of Lymm, Agden, Broomeedge, Croft, Culcheth and Rixton with Glazebrook, including Hollins Green. These are long established, semi-rural settlements to the south and north of the Manchester Ship Canal.

The proposed Phase 2 route heads north from Crewe to Hoo Green where it divides into two. At this point a grade separated junction will carry the spur line on to Manchester Piccadilly, via Manchester Airport.

Another leg, effectively the new main line on to Lancashire and Scotland will run northwards past Agden, where it will cross the Bridgewater Canal at Agden Bridge. At this point the bridge will be six metres high and wide enough to accommodate four tracks (as a further spur from the Manchester line will join as part of a large 'delta' junction). There will also be a substantial cutting to the south at Agden Hall that will have a significant impact on Cooksons Farm, a large dairy undertaking.

The potential impact of construction on the local environment in Lymm and Agden cannot be understated. It would appear that the likely implications of such major construction work (access roads, site compounds etc) are that both Cooksons Farm and Roberts Farm (successful dairy businesses) would cease to exist.

Just to the south of Warburton, the four track section merges into double track crossing the Bollin Flood plain and the flat topography towards the Manchester Ship Canal at a height of around eight metres,

climbing to a major viaduct crossing the Ship Canal at a height of 28 – 30 metres. This viaduct will be approximately one mile long.

The impact of this viaduct will be severe on the Parish of Rixton with Glazebrook. Even with attenuation noise levels from passing trains will be high. The proposed routing effectively cuts the villages of Glazebrook and Hollins Green in two. The close proximity of the route to Hollins Green in particular will mean that the character of the village with its distinctive identity and rural ambiance will be irrevocably altered. The designated Green Belt at the eastern boundary of Warrington with Greater Manchester forms a 'buffer zone' that serves to prevent commercial and residential development coalescing into a single, continuous built-up Mersey Valley area. The Green Belt includes areas of local mossland which are of great ecological value supporting wildlife, flora and fauna.

These considerations clearly weighed heavily on the mind of the Secretary of State for Transport in 1993 when he directed that a new M62 motorway link route, including a high-level viaduct crossing of the Manchester Ship Canal be abandoned due to its unacceptable impact on this key area of Green Belt.

After the route has crossed the Manchester Ship Canal on viaduct it continues north through the Borough significantly impacting on the local environment of Culcheth, Croft and the area surrounding these two villages. The route is particularly disruptive to Culcheth Village (a well established district shopping centre) where potential construction works are likely to effectively 'cut off' residents. The most damaging environmental impact will be on Culcheth Linear Park.

Culcheth Linear Park is a well established greenspace, converted from a disused railway line. It is a mainly wooded walk approximately 2.5km long. The main access point is alongside a bridge, where Wigshaw Lane crosses the park. The proposed route crosses Wigshaw Lane at the same point at a very acute angle, via a new bridge which of necessity will be considerably larger than that existing. The line will be in a cutting at this point and will be considerably wider than the linear park.

The linear park will be cut in two by the HS2 line and the main access point will be effectively removed. A short stretch of the linear park would be retained to the south of Wigshaw Lane bridge with access from Warrington Road. This access point would not be suitable for the mobility impaired, or parents with buggies and the main section of remnant park will be cut off from the access via Wigshaw Lane. The only access to this part of the remaining linear park will be via unmade footpaths, across open fields.

The whole of the proposed routing crosses through semi-rural and rural areas of the Borough where there is considerable impact on public rights of way and key cycle routes and bridleways, not least the nationally important 'Trans Pennine Trail'. Fourteen definitive rights of way are affected, including two 'greenway' multi-user routes.

If the route were to be progressed as proposed we would expect a comprehensive package of mitigation measures to be put in place to secure these paths and avoid any severance, either by use of subways under embankments, bridges over cuttings and designated areas underneath viaducts. In some locations there is scope to undertake rationalisation of routes and potentially reduce the number of crossings required.

The Council welcomes the recent Government commissioning of a Feasibility Study to examine the scope for a shared-use cycleway alongside the route of HS2, linking in to existing National Cycle Network routes and other active travel facilities and would ask that further consideration be given to designating some sections of this (in more rural areas) as bridleways.

Warrington Connectivity Package

The Council's support for Phase 2 of the High Speed Railway is dependent on a range of associated and complementary infrastructure upgrades, rolling stock enhancements and proactive joint working to bring forward rail investment key to Warrington's focussed economic growth programme 'Warrington Means Business'.

The starting point needs to be a thorough review of the justification, cost and impact of the proposed Hoo Green to Bamfurlong routing; assessed against the realistic alternative of upgrading the existing West Coast Main Line. The Council are firmly of the view that a routing north of the proposed HS2 Crewe Hub Station, with 'captive' trains regularly calling at Bank Quay Station will benefit the wider mid-Mersey area, including the regionally important Science Park at Daresbury.

A firm commitment is sought from the Department for Transport and wider Rail Industry (Network Rail and the key Train and Freight Operating Companies) to deliver both the Warrington Arpley improvements (including the Arpley Chord) and a major redevelopment of the wider Bank Quay Station area. These works facilitating respectively, the Warrington Waterfront development area and Bank Quay Gateway project as outlined in 'Warrington Means Business'.

As an absolute minimum we would expect two platforms at Bank Quay to be extended to accommodate 400m long 'classic compatible' rolling stock, enabling high speeds services between London and Preston to operate through Warrington. Mindful of the importance of retaining links to other parts of Britain we would want to see continuing regular Pendolino services connecting Warrington to the West Midlands and Scotland and the introduction of more local service connections for example to Hartford and Winsford using capacity released by HS2.

We note that the Department for Transport are establishing an 'Electrification Task Force' to look at priorities for the rolling programme of electrification across the North of England. We expect the Cheshire Lines Committee route that runs from Manchester to Liverpool (via Warrington Central) and the Manchester to Chester line (via Warrington Bank Quay) to be part of the commitment for electrification and associated investment in the early stages of CP6 (2019 – 2024).

The early construction of the proposed Warrington West railway station is sought together with provision of appropriate train services, linked to implementation of the Northern Hub works. As part of the DfT / Rail North refranchising process we would expect newer, higher capacity rolling stock to be made available for all services operating through the Borough.

We would also expect replacement and upgrading of catenary on the West Coast Main Line (originally installed in 1974) to the latest Network Rail express standards, resignalling for 140mph operation and provision of freight loops to accommodate 775metre long intermodal services on the more northern sections of the route (towards Shap and Beattock summits).

Finally, we would wish to confirm our desire to continue to have an ongoing dialogue with HS2 Limited following the close of formal consultation.

Yours Sincerely

Professor Steven Broomhead
Chief Executive

More
articles

More articles in the [news archive](#).

Print this page

Share on Twitter

Share on
Facebook

 Council
information

News

Events

Job vacancies

Council meetings

Consultations



© 2012 Warrington Borough Council