

## **Weston and Basford Parish Council response to HS2 Consultation on the Environmental Statement**

### **Question 1**

#### **Please let us know your comments on the Non-Technical Summary**

The Non-Technical Summary gives a good overview of the whole project. Its language is clear, making it relatively easy for a non-technical person to read and understand.

However, the title is not 'user-friendly'. It is not obvious that this is the document that should be read to give an overview of the whole project. It would be better called 'Executive Summary' or 'Project Overview'.

This document should be highlighted on the HS2 website as the key document to read to gain an overview of what the project entails, the methodology used, the construction programme and a summary of the likely environmental effects and mitigation measures proposed.

### **Question 2**

#### **Please let us know your comments on Volume 1 – introduction and methodology**

Consultation and engagement – Section 3 sets out the engagement and consultations undertaken to date. In our view it is vital that HS2 continues to engage with stakeholders and local groups, such as Parish Councils, as the detailed design and planning and construction moves forward. We suggest that local liaison groups are set up in each of the Community Areas, such group to meet regularly with HS2 representatives. The aim of such engagement would be to ensure that local people and interested groups are kept informed of progress and should enable any issues to be addressed in a spirit of co-operation.

Changes to design since draft EIA in CA5 - Section 4 sets out the changes to the design in CA5 since the draft EIA. The Weston and Basford Parish Council supported the three changes proposed for this area and are pleased that they have now been incorporated into the final design. We note that there is some opposition to the proposed new site of the infrastructure maintenance facility at Stone. In our view, this is a much more appropriate location for the facility and the reasons why the facility should not be sited at Basford remain as compelling as ever.

The description of the permanent features of the Proposed Scheme is helpful, particularly the drawings of these features.

### **Question 3**

#### **Please let us have your comments on Volume 2: Community Area (CA) reports and map books**

CA5 – South Cheshire

Section 3 Stakeholder engagement and consultation – see our comments on Volume 1 re the importance of engagement going forward and setting up of local liaison groups.

Community – Section 6 sets out the likely significant impacts on local communities from construction and operation. One community which does not appear to be mentioned and is

likely to be severely adversely affected during the construction period is the residential properties along Weston Lane near to Larch Avenue and along Larch Avenue itself. The Basford Cutting Main Compound and Batching Plant are located very close to these properties. We would like to understand what disturbance these properties are likely to suffer, for how long, and what measures are proposed to mitigate the impact on the people living in this area.

Health – Section 9 assesses the likely impact on the health and wellbeing of people in the South Cheshire area. In the Weston and Basford Parish, the community most directly affected will be those residential properties in Weston Lane and along Larch Avenue that are near to the Basford Compound. There is no doubt that the people living here will likely experience a severe adverse change in the quality of life during the construction period and this may well affect the health and wellbeing of some of them.

In the South Cheshire area generally, during construction the changes in the visual landscape, the additional noise and additional traffic are all likely to adversely affect people's quality of life and their perception of the quality of their neighbourhood and this could lead to feelings of dissatisfaction and stress.

Landscape and visual – Section 11 gives details of the likely visual effects within the South Cheshire area. It is evident that there will be considerable adverse visual impact during the construction period and that it will take some years before the proposed new landscaping and planting develops sufficiently to 'soften' the effect. In the longer term the effect of the mitigation measures will be to change the landscape from predominantly open views across arable farmland to developing woodland.

We do not believe that sufficient information is presented in the Environmental Report to enable people to envisage what the landscape and visual effect will be in the short, medium, and long-term. The lack of maps showing the vertical alignment, the lack of cross sections and of landscape drawings showing final contours make it difficult to envisage how the embankments, the noise barriers, the viaducts and the bunds will look at the various stages. It is noted that HS2 intends that the landscape retains its rural feel, and this is appreciated, but there is no doubt that the effect on the landscape will be considerable, especially during construction and in the years immediately following.

We believe more mitigation measures may be required to try to 'soften' the effect in the construction period and the years immediately following, before the trees and other planting have had a chance to become established.

Sound, noise and vibration – Section 13 reports the likely noise and vibration effects arising from construction and operation. We note the measures being taken to keep the noise to a minimum, both during construction and during operations. However, we remain concerned that the noise during construction and from the HS2 trains, especially those travelling on the embankments and viaducts, will carry a considerable distance and could adversely affect the communities of Basford, Hough and Weston, as well as the properties closer to the line in Wychwood and Chorlton. Such noise is likely to be more noticeable in the early years of operation until the landscape planting provides the planned mitigation. We do not feel

enough has been done to inform people of the likely effects of the noise created by the trains and this could become a big area of concern.

We note that a concrete batching plant is planned to be situated at Basford. This is likely to be a noisy activity taking place close to properties on Weston Lane and especially close to the properties in Larch Avenue. We can find no reference to any acoustic screening at this site. Indeed, we are concerned that the properties along Larch Avenue will be highly adversely affected during the construction period, suffering the loss of the visual screening they currently have for the A500, being sited right next to an active construction compound and with additional traffic in the area.

### Traffic and transport

14.4.6 Key construction transport issues - Casey Lane East satellite compound and Basford Hall Southbound satellite compound are both shown as potentially being accessed via Weston Lane. Weston Lane is a narrow local road and as it approaches Weston village it narrows into a single track round a sharp bend, known locally as Piggins Bank. Piggins Bank is acknowledged to be a dangerous stretch of road and would become even more so if there was an increase in traffic. If HS2 construction traffic is to use this stretch of road action needs to be taken to realign the road in the Piggins Bank area to remove the blind bend.

14.4.3 Cumulative effects - states that 'the assessment includes the cumulative effects of planned and committed development during construction by taking this into account within the background traffic growth'. We are concerned that a lot of development will be taking place in the South Cheshire area at the same time as the construction of HS2. The widening of the A500 between Meremoor Moss and M6 Junction 16 should be completed prior to the start of HS2 construction, as should a development of 100 houses in Weston Village. But it is currently planned that more than 1,600 residential properties will be built in the area – large developments such as the South Cheshire Growth Village and Basford East - as well as industrial and commercial developments on Basford West. Much of this development will be taking place at the same time as the construction of HS2. There needs to be a close liaison and working relationship between HS2 and its contractors with not only Cheshire East but also with all the developers and construction activities active in the area to ensure a seamless and co-ordinated programme of infrastructure works. As a parish council we should be involved in commenting on this detailed programme and this should be the one of the areas of focus of the Liaison Group we propose is set up in our area. If there is not close co-operation between all the various parties there could be chaos and the quality of life and amenities enjoyed by our residents will be severely adversely affected. The requirement for liaison between HS2 and all the developments taking place in the area should be included as an Environmental Minimum Requirement.

14.4.34 Crewe Hub – construction activity for the building of the proposed new hub station at Crewe, assuming this goes ahead, will overlap with HS2. It is stated in the EIA that this is not likely to have a significant effect on traffic congestion, traffic-related severance, air quality, community, health or sound, noise and vibration. This will need to be fully assessed in the EIA for the Crewe Hub project and both parties should be required to liaise to ensure disruption is kept to a minimum.

**Question 4**

**Please let us know your comments on Volume 3: Route-wide effects**

We have no comments on Volume 3

**Question 5**

**Please let us know your comments on Volume 4: off-route effects and map book**

We have no comments on Volume 4

**Question 6**

**Please let us know your comments on Volume 5: Technical appendices and map books**

The map books are very useful. However, the lack of vertical alignments makes it difficult to envisage how high the embankments, the noise barriers and the viaducts will be, how much higher they will be than the existing ground level and the existing WCML, what these structures will look like and the effect on the visual landscape.

September 2017