

Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee 12 April 2012

High Speed Rail 2 - Update

Recommendation

Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

1. Support the approach being taken by WCC in terms of project management and also engagement with HS2Ltd.
2. Endorse further the County Council's opposition to HS2, and its resolution in December 2010 to work with government consultants so as to:

'Reduce the impact on Warwickshire of any high speed railway to ensure it does not unnecessarily harm the Warwickshire countryside or create blight on our residents, businesses and recreational facilities'.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Secretary of State for Transport, Justine Greening announced on the 10 January 2012 that she was satisfied that the case for HS2 had been made and that the scheme would proceed to the next stage.
- 1.2 Furthermore, following the public consultation last year, the Secretary of State announced that the Government and HS2 Ltd had listened to the consultation responses and a number of route amendments were therefore being proposed. Of these changes, the most high profile change is the 1.5 mile long tunnel under the Chilterns. In Warwickshire there are six key changes to the route; **Appendix A** shows the summary of changes.
- 1.3 In February Cabinet agreed to support a Judicial Review (JR) as part of the 51m Consortium. The grounds for the JR request are currently under preparation and will be submitted in early April 2012. The HS2 Member Working Group will receive regular updates on the progress of the JR. The High Court cannot order the Government to abandon HS2 permanently but it can order the Government to remedy flawed processes such as consultation. Engagement with HS2 may need to be modified in light of the outcome of a judicial review but the arrangements explained in this report are expected to continue pending that outcome.
- 1.4 At the same time, WCC has also agreed that, whilst the Authority objects to the proposal to build a high speed rail line, it is in the best interests of the residents and people of Warwickshire to engage with HS2 Ltd.
- 1.5 HS2 Ltd has also now set out a structure for engagement activities which consist of:

- (1) National Environment Forum
 - (2) Local Planning Forums
 - (3) HS2 Community Forums
- 1.6 The National Environment Forum will be drawn from national representatives of environmental consultees, plus government departments. The Forum will focus upon methodology and structures. We have requested that local and regional representation is included in this forum, and we currently await a reply from HS2 Ltd.
- 1.7 The first Warwickshire Planning Forum was held on 9 February 2012 and was attended by officers of Warwickshire County Council, North Warwickshire Borough Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Warwick District Council. In addition, the meeting was attended by the Chief Executive of HS2 Ltd, the HS2 Director for London to the West Midlands, the HS2 Head of Environment and a Stakeholder Advisor for HS2 Ltd, along with a number of local authority officers from the various disciplines.
- 1.8 During the meeting, HS2 Ltd outlined their approach to engagement and the objectives of the planning forum, which is to facilitate dialogue regarding design work of HS2 and communicate the method, progress and findings of the environmental impact assessment. This forum is designed to provide a focal point for ongoing engagement by the area based HS2 teams and for briefing on the programme and discussion of issues and queries about the process.
- 1.9 The HS2-led Community Forum meetings in Warwickshire began on the 26 March 2012 with the inaugural round of meetings due to be completed by 10 April 2012.
- 1.10 There are 25 Community Forums planned for the route, six of which will cover areas affected in Warwickshire:-
- (1) Ladbroke and Southam
 - (2) Cubbington and Offchurch
 - (3) Stoneleigh, Kenilworth and Burton Green
 - (4) The NEC Interchange (not within Warwickshire but impacting on the North Warwickshire community)
 - (5) Coleshill Junction
 - (6) Middleton and Curdworth
- 1.11 This initial round of HS2 Community Forum meetings are expected to cover governance matters such as constitution; membership; terms of reference; and process. Subsequent meetings will examine detailed requirements for the communities affected, preferences for mitigation and potential scope for community benefit.
- 1.12 Once the detailed requirements and mitigation issues have been gathered it will be the role of HS2 Ltd to work with the Planning Forum to develop the practicalities of the proposals. Warwickshire County Council will seek to influence these decisions throughout the process.

- 1.13 The final decision for implementation of any mitigation proposal will be taken by HS2 Ltd together with the Department for Transport (DfT) based upon on their criteria of “practicality” and “proportionality”.

2. WCC’s Project Governance and Methodology

- 2.1 WCC set up a formal project board in 2011 to coordinate and manage the consultation process for Warwickshire. This phase took us up to the Government’s announcement in January 2012 to proceed with HS2. Since then the Board has met and agreed the next stages of the project following Cabinet’s resolution to work with HS2 Ltd.
- 2.2 The governance diagram for the project and board is set out at **Appendix B**. The project has a dedicated project manager who is responsible for the day to day management of the project and the main point of contact for both the community and HS2 Ltd. In addition, elected members have a direct link to the ongoing operation of the project through the HS2 Members Working Group which meets every six to eight weeks.
- 2.3 Within the annual budget setting process in February 2012, the Council allocated £100,000 for the current year for costs associated with HS2. This allocation is to cover costs related to specialist support and advice in areas such as environment, ecology, and heritage or other bespoke specialisms, legal work, officer time and contributions to the 51m alliance during the year. In parallel to this WCC will work with the 51m alliance to agree a schedule of charges and reimbursement rates for costs incurred throughout the development of HS2.

3. Recent Events and Next Steps

- 3.1 Since the announcement in January the project has concentrated on three key areas of activities:
- (1) preparation
 - (2) engagement
 - (3) development and mobilisation
- 3.2 During the preparation phase there have been a number of regular meetings between elected members, action groups, and other local authorities along the route, local district and borough councils. Most recently the County Council hosted a day of seminars for the community. The objectives of the day were to allow the sharing of experience; the development of the knowledge base for Warwickshire, whilst also supporting the community in advance of the HS2 engagement process starting on the 26 March.
- 3.3 Feedback from the event has been very positive with a number of requests for a follow up event covering other topics including, the Hybrid Bill, the safeguarding route and blight.
- 3.4 The local engagement phase is divided into 2 parts:

1. Direct engagement with HS2 Ltd to help them develop their understanding of Warwickshire and the local issues in the area.
 2. WCC engagement through the HS2 Community Forum meetings across Warwickshire.
- 3.5 At the time of writing, one of the six HS2 Community Forum meetings has taken place, it is clear from the meeting that the community remain opposed to HS2 but understand that working towards mitigation plans is pragmatic. HS2 Ltd has given a commitment to continue the Forum meetings every 8 weeks or so until the Hybrid Bill is on deposit or until the community group decides to disband.
- 3.6 The development phase of the project will take us forward from now until summer 2012. We expect this area of work to encompass the release of details concerning the blight and compensation consultation process; the safeguarding route consultation process; details of the route north of Birmingham (known as the Y) and the development of mitigation. Each consultation from HS2 Ltd will be analysed by WCC with a formal response submitted to HS2 Ltd, we currently expect the timetable to be:

Date	Work area
TBC	Compensation and blight consultation
TBC	Safeguarding route consultation
Spring 2012	Y route business case announcement from the Secretary of State
Autumn 2012	Release of the Y route consultation

- 3.7 In addition to responding to HS2Ltd consultations, WCC will oversee and develop the relationship with HS2 Ltd, the Planning Forum and develop the mitigation standards Warwickshire expects HS2 to work to. WCC will consider the detailed route, along with any alternative proposals put forward by the community. This will be done by officers and where appropriate in liaison with 51m. In turn this will then be fed through to the Members working party on HS2, prior to discussions at the Planning Forum. The Project Board will review the appropriateness and timing of any future WCC-hosted community seminars.
- 3.8 At present it is almost impossible to critique or appraise the mitigation aspects of the route until the detailed design is more advanced. The next few months will see the development of baseline mitigation criteria and a process of internal appraisal.
- 3.9 HS2 Ltd has now created a “Warwickshire team” and will be mobilising that resource over the next few weeks. Once the team is established a detailed work plan and brief will be developed for Warwickshire. This will form part of the remit and scope for the Planning Forum. Once this is in place WCC will review its own work plan.
- 3.10 Furthermore, HS2 Ltd have been approached to come along to a WCC Members briefing session whereby senior HS2 Ltd staff would present to elected Members the most recent developments and also engage in questions and answers. It is hoped that this Seminar will take place in May.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The County Council remains opposed to HS2 which if it proceeds will have a significant impact on Warwickshire for many years to come. Notwithstanding this, WCC will be working actively to influence the final design and mitigation, and will work closely with all the stakeholders to ensure that, should it proceed, the final scheme has the minimum negative impact and maximum positive benefits for Warwickshire.

Background Papers

None

	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	Sara-Louise Board	saraboard@warwickshire.gov.uk Tel: 01926 412830
Head of Service	Louise Wall	louisewall@warwickshire.gov.uk
Strategic Director	Monica Fogarty	monicafogarty@warwickshire.gov.uk
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Alan Cockburn	cllrcockburn@warwickshire.gov.uk

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**High Speed 2
Changes Proposed to the Route in Warwickshire as Announced in
January 2012**

1. Middleton

- a. Revised alignment 50m to the east away from the village.
- b. Still at ground level lower viaduct across the flood plain.
- c. Small reduction in noise impacts and demolition but more difficult to screen.
- d. Saving of £20m.

2. Balsall Common

- a. Revised alignment 100m to the east avoiding Lavender Farm.
- b. Reduction in the viaduct height.
- c. Avoid demolition of two dwellings and one Grade II listed structure.
- d. Estimated to be £10-20m cheaper.

3. Burton Green

- a. Reduced depth of cutting, 27m down to 19m.
- b. Extend the green tunnel from 300- 520m.
- c. Reduction of spoil due to less digging.
- d. Expect there to be less noise.
- e. Estimated saving of £20-30m.

4. Kenilworth

- a. Revised alignment 100m further east to avoid golf club.

5. Stoneleigh Park

- a. Line to be lowered into cutting through National Agricultural Centre.
- b. Grade II building no longer directly affected (but the route will affect other farm buildings).
- c. Increase in landscaping to reduce visual impact.

6. Cubbington

- a. Reduction of the depth of cutting and alternation of the vertical alignment.
- b. Removal of access road.
- c. Spoil reduction due to smaller cutting.
- d. 1250m retaining wall through Cubbington Wood.
- e. Estimated saving for this and Kenilworth and Stoneleigh £10-20m.

7. Long Itchington and Southam

- a. Revised alignment slightly to the north east.
- b. Extend bored tunnel from southern edge of Long Itchington and Ufton Woods SSSI.
- c. Introduction of a green tunnel – which will have some impact on the Polo ground.
- d. Significant reduction in quantity of spoil.
- e. Southern entrance is along the line of the consultation route and slightly lower, reducing the need to the embankment to 2.3m.
- f. Reduced impact on Codemasters site.
- g. Estimated to save £130-140m.

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**High Speed Rail 2 (HS2)
Project Management Governance**

HS2 Project Structure & Governance v2

