

# Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee

## HS2 funding update – April 2022.

### Introduction

Following Royal Assent for the HS2 Act in 2017 several funds were created by the Government to add benefit over and above committed mitigation and statutory compensation to communities and local economies along the HS2 route.

A quarter of the HS2 Phase One (London to West Midlands) track – 54 kilometres – is being built in Warwickshire over the next decade.

The funds are the HS2 Community and Environment Fund, the HS2 Business and Local Economy Fund, the HS2 Road Safety Fund and the HS2 Woodland Fund.

There is an additional mechanism for smaller projects called the HS2 Community Investment Programme which is not necessarily a monetary fund but provision in the form of workforce resources and materials.

### **1. HS2 Community and Environment Fund and the HS2 Business and Local Economy Fund**

HS2 Ltd has established the Community and Environment (CEF) and Business and Local Economy (BLEF) Funds worth a total of £40 million along the HS2 Phase One route.

Administered by Groundwork, the primary objective of the funds is to add benefit to communities and local economies along the route that are demonstrably disrupted by the construction of HS2.

There are two types of CEF grant eligible to local authorities and community organisations. The first is CEF Local for smaller projects (up to a maximum of £75,000 per project) which aims to benefit quality of life for individual communities. The second is CEF Strategic for larger grants (from £75,000 up to a maximum of £1 million per project) to provide a legacy by supporting projects which benefit multiple communities along the Phase One route.

A total of £15 million will be shared amongst the Shire counties along the HS2 route for community and business projects during the construction period.

Since the funds opened five years ago - with the support of Warwickshire County Council – 28 projects in the county have secured HS2 funding from the [HS2 Community and Environment Fund](#) (CEF) and the [HS2 Business and Local Economy Fund](#) (BLEF) worth £1,400,093.

Successful projects include village hall refurbishments, new play areas, nature reserves improvements, better sports facilities and town centre promotion.

Among the most recent projects in Warwickshire to receive funding from the HS2 CEF are:

- Knightcote Children's Play Area Trust secured £50,000 to upgrade and replace 20 year-old playground equipment.
- Radford Semele Parish Council secured £30,000 to provide an outdoor gym on the village playing field.
- Talisman Theatre in Kenilworth received £75,000 to provide a new fringe stage, bar and reception area at the popular local theatre.
- Warwick Arts Centre secured £250,000 towards its refurbishment including the transforming the entrance and foyer, creating a new three screen cinema and relocating the Mead Gallery from the first floor to the ground floor, improving accessibility.

Other communities who have benefited include Long Itchington Parish Council which received £74,500 for improvements to the facilities for families at Long Itchington Park, Friends of Bodymoor Heath Victory Hall was granted £75,000 for modernising the venue, and Harbury e-Wheels scheme received £10,000 to provide transport for people in need.

Kenilworth Town Council was successful in obtaining £74,500 from the HS2 Business and Local Economy Fund to provide a town centre initiative to promote Kenilworth as being 'open for business' during HS2 disruption.

Other towns and villages in the county who have received funding include Wormleighton, Ladbroke, Eathorpe, Burton Dassett, Southam, Harbury, Cubbington, Offchurch, Coleshill, Water Orton and Kingsbury. To find out more about any of the projects funded in Warwickshire visit: <https://hs2funds.org.uk/home/projects-funded-by-hs2-funds/>

The majority of the successful projects have sought practical support and guidance from the county council's HS2 Project Team in preparing their submissions.

Communities and business can continue to apply for grants from the HS2 Community and Environment Fund (CEF) and the Business and Local Economy Fund (BLEF). More information is available on the website <https://hs2funds.org.uk/>

## **2. HS2 Road Safety Fund**

In 2017 The Department for Transport (DfT) made £8.045m available to Warwickshire County Council to be spent on road safety interventions across Warwickshire, in locations that are closely associated with the route of the HS2 railway.

The funding is held by HS2 Ltd and is periodically drawn down through a defined process. Funding can only be spent on locations where there is a known injury collision problem, road safety education or on new or upgrading of cycle facilities, as defined by DfT. All projects must leave a legacy of road safety improvements.

There are also geographical restrictions, in that locations can only be selected for interventions if they are closely located to the line of the railway or impacted by a HS2 lorry route and traffic associated with the build.

The first tranche of funding included the following list of projects and feasibility studies:

Casualty Reduction schemes – feasibility studies	£10,000
Warwickshire Road Safety Club – road safety education	£20,000
Green Man Crossroads Coleshill – road safety improvements	£150,000
Casualty Reductions Schemes – feasibility Fosse Way study	£30,000
Cycle infrastructure - feasibility studies (x5)	£50,000
Vehicle Activated Sign (A446)	£25,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£285,000</b>

### 3. HS2 Woodland Fund

The HS2 Woodland Fund (HS2WF) opened in February 2018, with an initial budget of £1 million. A further £4 million budget was made available to be allocated to projects until 2022/23.

The aim of the HS2 Woodland Fund is to support native woodland creation or the restoration of Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) within a 25-mile zone surrounding the HS2 Phase One route from London to the West Midlands.

The table below details the schemes which have been successful in applying for funding:

	No. of schemes	Scheme value	Creation area (Gross area of woodland creation)	PAWS area (Gross area for PAWS restoration)	Total tree numbers
<b>Committed - agreement in place or offered, application approved, in progress or received</b>	2*	£346,494.05	33.38ha	0ha	66,938

<b>Completed – interim or final claim received or paid</b>	3	£152,127.90	22.33ha	0ha	33,832
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\*One scheme is currently on hold awaiting final design of woodland, one scheme has submitted an application to the Forestry Commission’s England Woodland Creation Offer, but is yet to receive an offer so remains at application stage with HS2WF.

One site is located in the Leek Wootton area but HS2 Ltd has not yet agreed with landowners to publish the details of the other schemes so the exact locations remain restricted due to data regulations.

#### **4. HS2 Community Investment Programme**

HS2 Ltd oversees a Community Investment Programme operated by contractors based on a model previously run by the Crossrail project in London.

Community investment takes the form of a donation of skills, time, money and expertise to help bring additional benefits to the local communities where HS2 contractors are active.

Recent examples in the county include the donation of fencing to a charity and the construction of a temporary footbridge on a public footpath.

The main works contractors in Warwickshire - Balfour Beatty Vinci (BBV) and Eiffage Kier (EKFB) - are now carrying out several small projects each month. They continue to welcome suggestions from communities or organisations for future projects.