

Cheshire West and Chester Council
High Speed Two (HS2) Phase 2b Crewe to Manchester
Consultation 2016 Submission

Foreword – Cabinet Member Economic Development and Infrastructure

Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaCC) welcomes this important opportunity to comment upon the range of compensation and discretionary assistance schemes for communities and businesses whose properties are affected by HS2.

CWaCC gives high priority to working closely with all communities and has presented opportunities to contribute to the content of this consultation submission, via Parish and Town Councils and Ward Councillors. Contributions were also made by a number of stakeholders and specialist teams, with a multi-disciplinary officer steering group, Chaired by Dr Alison Knight, Director of Places Strategy, overseeing preparation of this submission.

Councillor Samantha Dixon, Leader of CWaCC received a letter dated 12 January 2017, from Alison Munro, (Managing Director of Development, High Speed Two Ltd), stating that some postcodes in our area located within the vicinity of the HS2 route, had been omitted from postal communications at the time of the announcement. Subsequently, they did not receive a leaflet with details of information events supporting the consultations, and that those affected by this error, had been granted an extension to the consultation to 3 May 2017, instead of the original 9 March 2017 deadline. It was considered that our commitment to take on board and represent the views of all those affected in our borough, by the HS2 announcements, could only be achieved effectively if the Council's response deadline was similarly revised and aligned with those affected by the "mailing error" i.e. 3 May 2017. Based upon advice received from officers of HS2 Ltd, Councillor Dixon sought agreement for this extension from the Secretary of State for Transport. We were therefore extremely disappointed to receive a reply from the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, rejecting that request.

CWaCC is a member of the Northern Gateway Development Zone Partnership, driving forward a Growth Strategy to maximise the benefits of HS2 and wider infrastructure development. The Growth Strategy has been allocated approximately £1.2m from Government and will direct growth and regeneration to where it is most needed will have the most impact.

CWaCC is also a member of the North Wales and Mersey Dee Rail Taskforce of Growthtrack 360, bringing together representatives of the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership, North Wales Economic Ambition Board, Mersey Dee Alliance, and Merseytravel along with Business Representatives from North Wales and Cheshire. The Task Force has significant political support for the modernisation of cross border rail infrastructure providing the critical links between this strong

economic region with the high speed rail network, Northern Powerhouse and Midland regions.

Our comments are based upon an expectation of 7 high speed trains per hour in each direction stopping at the Crewe Hub, providing direct high speed connections to Birmingham, London and Manchester.

Effective, frequent and convenient multi directional connectivity between the Northern Gateway Development Zone area's classic rail network and the high speed rail network is essential to drive growth of the unique economic and social strengths of this region. This investment must include improvements to the West Coast Main Line (WCML) enabling an effective combined service specification for WCML and HS2 services as one combined passenger and freight rail network. To that end we would encourage the Secretary of State to bring forward proposals for the Crewe Hub and the Crewe North Junction as soon as possible.

In many respects, our consultation responses are constrained by the limited detail of information that has been provided by HS2 Ltd. CWaCC has major concerns regarding the vast extent of significant adverse impact on communities and businesses throughout the borough, of the proposed route alignment, infrastructure and proposed rolling stock depot location in addition to the suitability of ground conditions and is therefore currently unable to give its support for these proposals.

Further information is required from HS2 Ltd, which must be shared with residents and stakeholders with technical knowledge, and must include fully assessing any potential impact fracking may have. This will create a greater understanding of the actual impacts of HS2 and comments to be made upon that. I wish to emphasise strongly, the importance of building an ongoing dialogue between communities, businesses, CWaCC and the Government, through HS2 Ltd, beyond the closing date of this consultation exercise.

If clarification would be of help in respect of any part of our submission, please do let me know.

Councillor Brian Clarke

Cabinet Member – Economic Development and Infrastructure

Property Consultation 2016

Question 1

The Government believes the proposed schemes outlined in the Property Consultation document provide a comprehensive package of assistance and compensation to communities along or near the preferred Phase 2b section of HS2. Are there any factors which you think should be considered to make the proposed schemes more suitable for the preferred Phase 2b section of HS2 ? Can you suggest any ideas you may have to improve the package of compensation and assistance schemes for the preferred Phase 2b section of HS2 ?

CWaCC needs a commitment from HS2 Ltd, to ensure that the full impacts on communities and residents are understood clearly, and that these are considered and responded to with equal importance as needing to resolve the issues for delivery of high speed rail. All assistance schemes must be equally available in respect of the proposed Rolling Stock Depot (RSD) location, as well as for route alignment. Residents and businesses must have convenient access to free and impartial professional advice to assist them regarding options available and in respect of finalising details of assistance to be provided by HS2 Ltd. The fairness criteria should also reflect the longer term financial /productivity loss originating from HS2 and compensate for that.

Assistance schemes must embrace all geographical areas affected, and include impacts of the construction phase, as well as operation. The former will include a wider area and should include the impacts of additional congestion from road closures (for example at Hartford), air quality (e.g. dust), and the impacts of construction traffic.

The existing geographical boundaries of assistance schemes may not necessarily be adequate to include all affected areas, therefore a fair and flexible approach is required in respect of the eligibility to use these. One example of this is the need to ensure that assistance schemes include those affected by the visual impact of significantly high infrastructure both in close proximity and over a wide geographical area.

Those who have purchased property prior to this significantly revised proposed route, (and proposed RSD location), announcement, who can reasonably demonstrate that their purchase decision would have been affected, had this preferred route been known at the time of purchase, must be included. This would include those who have purchased property at recently built housing developments.

The consultation document states that the assistance schemes are primarily intended to help residential owner occupiers and small businesses, excluding larger businesses and investment properties, stating that generalised blight has a lesser effect on investment or commercial property. CWaCC expect that businesses of any size are given fair support to manage the impact of HS2, including recognition of the

impact of uncertainty in respect of the actual business, and also of the significant personal stress and the impact on the quality of life of business owners. Assistance should also include residential property tenants, as well as property owners.

In respect of land use, assistance schemes need to support the distinct impacts for both land owners and tenants (including tenant farmers). Farmers (and other businesses), may have difficulty in securing funding for long term planning and investment, because of uncertainty and lack of detail regarding the impact of HS2 on their land or upon business viability and land value / productivity. Many tenants (farming, other business and residential) have been in occupancy for several years, and the assistance schemes must address the disturbance burden created by HS2. – For farming and businesses alike, this can destabilise significantly, long term work and investment, potentially making continuation unviable.

Whilst welcoming inclusion of ensuring the functioning of the housing market, additional criteria are needed for ensuring the continued functioning of farming, (owners and tenant farmers) and other commercial markets which are of great significance in our area.

The extent of property purchase by HS2 Ltd, in certain areas poses a significant risk to the future of these communities. For example, in the small parish of Stanthorne and Wimboldsley, at least 17 properties are either sold or committed to be sold to HS2 Ltd. 7 of the 10 houses at the Stanthorne Mews development, off Clive Green Lane, as well as the original Dairy House Farmhouse, are owned by HS2 Ltd.

Deep tunnels

This submission does not comment on measures relating to deep tunnels, as none are currently proposed within the borough of Cheshire West and Chester. If any proposals are made subsequently to include deep tunnels, the Council requires that a public consultation exercise of at least 12 weeks is undertaken.

Express Purchase Scheme

Values of property and land need to be determined on a fair basis, taking in to consideration historic, (pre HS2 announcements), and prevailing local market rates and market conditions (i.e. not based on a standard formula). The latter needs to have an adjustment for any overall suppressive impact on market rates generated by HS2 or consequential works (e.g re alignment of highways)

Extended Homeowner Protection Zone

No comment

Need to sell

Please see text below regarding no prior knowledge criterion.

Rural Support Zone - Voluntary purchase and cash offer

The Rural Support Zone (RSZ) would be created outside the safeguarded area and up to a fixed distance of 120m from the centre line of the railway in rural areas (other

than in a deep tunnel), although where safeguarding more than 120m from the centre line, the fixed boundary distances for the RSZ would remain unchanged. It would seem reasonable to assume that there would be a particular reason why safeguarding would be extended beyond 120m, and therefore that the RSZ should be extended by the same distance in such locations. Noting that the Need To Sell scheme has no geographical boundary, should the same apply for RSZ?

Rent back

A rent back agreement will be subject to a value for money test. This test must be focused primarily on value for money for the owner occupier, whilst still having regard to value for money for public funds. The rent charged may be higher (or lower) than the payments previously made by the occupant for a mortgage (and associated payments).

This process must determine rental rates, that seek overall, to make the owner occupier no better or no worse off than had the status quo prevailed (whilst recognising that the owner occupier has the benefit of accruing interest from the capital purchase payment of the property).

Homeowner Payment Scheme

This scheme also needs to include criteria for those directly and significantly affected, by the impacts of the construction of HS2, on their property or land.

Atypical properties and special

No comment

Question 2

What are your views on the proposed boundary of the Rural Support Zone (RSZ) at the southern end of the Western Leg (to the north of Crewe)?

No comment.

Question 3

Do you have any comments on the current operation of the 'no prior knowledge' criterion in relation to the Need to Sell scheme? Do you believe change should be made to this criterion and, if so, what changes should be made and why?

Until the route of HS2 is finalised, an individual could purchase a property with the prior knowledge that the property value may become blighted, if the preferred route (and Rolling Stock Depot) location is pursued. However, the final route may subsequently change and not affect the property's value.

Although the “no prior knowledge” criterion aims to protect use of public funds, from a property being purchased at a blighted value, with the intention to sell it to the Government for its un-blighted value, further consideration is needed, regarding whether there should be a phased process relating to no prior knowledge. After announcing a preferred route, the likelihood of that becoming the actual route will become increasingly clear as HS2 Ltd obtain the results of its programme of detailed ground investigation checks etc. As a result “no prior knowledge” becomes increasingly applicable as the extent of certainty of the route increases.

These assistance schemes need to accommodate a potential scenario whereby a property / land owner has sold their asset to HS2 Ltd, the route of HS2 is actually changed to reduce / remove impact on their asset, and the owner wishes to re-acquire their house / land. The payment made should be on a no better or no worse off basis.

The property compensation and assistance schemes must also meet the needs of those who purchased property / land with prior knowledge, but subsequently have a need to sell for reasons unconnected with HS2.

Further work is needed between Government, local communities and businesses to develop modified guidance to the compensation and assistance schemes that strike the optimum balance between safeguarding public funds, yet are able to accommodate all reasonable circumstances. This also needs to ensure that HS2 does not distort normal property purchase / sales.

Route Refinement Consultation

Question 1 – Relocation of western leg Rolling Stock Depot

The Secretary of State is minded to relocate the proposed western leg Rolling Stock Depot from Golborne to a site north of Crewe.

Do you support the proposal to locate the western leg Rolling Stock Depot on the site north of Crewe? Please indicate whether or not you support the proposal together with your reasons

Prior to considering support for the proposed Rolling Stock Depot (RSD) location and proposed route alignment, there is an urgent need for HS2 Ltd to establish a multi-disciplinary technical forum, to determine whether this is a suitable route for high speed rail and location for a RSD, and whether robust, safety and locality mitigation measures can be committed by HS2 Ltd on a long term and value for money basis.

The forum should include, and not be limited to appropriate representation including from the salt brine and underground gas storage industries, utility infrastructure providers, CWaCC, Cheshire East Council and Warrington Borough Council. HS2 Ltd will need to satisfy this forum and itself that the issues identified can be fully addressed, if a route for high speed rail through this area is to be progressed.

Examples of issues this forum would consider include for the construction and operational phases:

- Details of the extent of underground works (depth and width) and extent of vibration, showing proximity to mines, caverns & infrastructure for those.
- The ongoing maintenance, by HS2 Ltd, of non-operational underground brine cavities and gas cavities, to accommodate safe operation of the railway.
- Issues HS2 Ltd have identified on this preferred route and how these are proposed to be addressed.
- Impact on landscape, historic buildings, woodland and other natural sites.
- Assessment of evidence based options, for further route refinement.
- Impacts (and solutions) of severance of land (for farming, public rights of way, underground gas storage / brine / salt works, highways, realignment of A556).
- Understanding of the measures to be taken to ensure the long term stability of embankments and viaducts, particularly in areas of unstable ground conditions.
- Capacity or enhancement of the drainage systems for rain water runoff from HS2 (including impact on existing waterways), disposal of all waste material (including fluids) and commitment that no ongoing maintenance costs will fall upon CWaCC.
- Disruption to other rail services.
- Impact on surrounding communities and highway network from construction traffic and how will those be managed.
- Betterment measures for communities affected, to offset the inconvenience caused during construction, and through reduced (highway) connectivity when operational.

CWaCC will require HS2 Ltd to meet the full cost of any external work (including use of consultancies) that is required to be commissioned, and to recover the full cost for use of any of its own staff on specific work relating to, or as a consequence of HS2.

Further details are needed in the basis on which HS2 Ltd concluded this location was most suitable for the RSD, in comparison to possible, alternative locations, and whether Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEAs) were conducted for the alternative options.

HS2 Ltd state that the selection of this location for the RSD, is based upon the balance between a range of factors including environmental, impact, cost and engineering complexity. CWaCC wish to see these details, including the proposed mitigation measures, (visual, night time lighting and noise), for this depot, which will operate on a 24 hour basis.

An electronic, scale model of the RSD, (and of the route and infrastructure throughout the borough) including electric power supply infrastructure, is required to enable meaningful interpretations to be made. It is regrettable that these were not made available throughout the consultation period.

It is noted that HS2 Ltd indicate that the reasons for not retaining the original proposed RSD location at Golborne included impacts on the setting of Grade II listed

buildings and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), yet the proposed location within a green field with severe visual intrusion at Wimboldsley also impacts on Grade II listed buildings, with the route to the north of the RSD impacting on further buildings, which are also listed.

Clarification is required as to whether the RSD would be subject to the conventional planning process, or is that process integral to the land acquisition (and change of use) for high speed rail? CWaCC is extremely concerned about how the detailed design of the scheme, hours of operation of the RSD and impacts on the highway network, environment and amenity will be controlled and mitigated if in the absence of planning conditions through a planning permission or other legally binding agreements being established.

There are several pipelines identified as crossing the proposed HS2 route within the borough. One of the pipelines crosses the proposed location of the RSD, (FM25 Bridge Farm to Mickle Trafford – National Grid). Early engagement with pipeline operators and the Health & Safety Executive is advised.

Given the proximity of the RSD to the Winsford 1 to 5 industrial area, a commitment is needed to ensure that the highway network including addressing conflicts and improvements for Clive Green Lane will be improved by HS2 Ltd, to enable easy access (including for cycling and walking) between these areas, helping to maximise opportunities for local businesses.

CWaCC requires further details of the realistic expectations for local job creation, and to secure commitment from HS2 Ltd to provide public transport services to access employment opportunities at the RSD, including for its construction.

CWaCC also seeks further commitment from HS2 to work with local businesses and schools, colleges and universities to maximise opportunities to secure contracts and build rail industry skills in to curriculum.

The HS2 “Property Map Books Volume 1” publication shows the geographical extent of the property and community assistance schemes, either side of the HS2 track. These exclude Wimboldsley School and nearby properties situated on the A530, facing the proposed RSD site. A commitment is required to ensure that the full adverse impacts of the RSD including that of air quality on the school and these properties are fully understood, along with details of effective and robust mitigating measures. These must also be included within the property and assistance schemes as appropriate, including potential relevance of the “Atypical and special circumstances”, facility described within paragraph 6.3 of the Property Consultation 2016 document.

The location of the proposed RSD depot will require changes to the local road infrastructure, and will have significant impact on roads and public rights of way, during construction and operation. Details and mitigation measures need to be clarified and understood, including the impact (anticipated volume and journey flows), on surrounding roads, for both construction and operation periods.

It is stated that empty trains will access the RSD from both HS2 infrastructure and the existing network. However, clarification is needed to understand how trains will actually access the RSD from each direction, including the visual, vibration and noise impacts, in addition to whether such manoeuvres will impact on the operation of classic rail services such as Inter City West Coast services.

Details are also required to establish whether it is envisaged that this RSD may also serve rolling stock of the West Coast Main Line, and if this would require a greater land take than currently proposed. As this could introduce operation of diesel powered trains to the RSD, how would fuel be supplied and stored?

Multi directional connectivity with frequent high speed rail services calling at a Crewe hub station is of critical importance to unlocking the regional and national benefits of investing in HS2 and of the classic rail network. Infrastructure in the Crewe area must be configured to enable at least 3 trains per hour between Crewe, Chester and beyond to north Wales. Of equal importance, is for this infrastructure to also enable improved through services, linking Cheshire West and Warrington with Stafford, Stoke and the East Midlands. These improvements form part of a pan North Wales, Cheshire, Warrington and Potteries region, strategic rail development plan, demonstrating how these investments will deliver sustainable economic growth, and strengthen two-way connectivity with the high speed rail network.

In recognition of the significant adverse impact of the RSD, (and the viaduct), a commitment is required to fund infrastructure improvements, to enable Inter City West Coast Mainline services to call at Winsford or Hartford. These services currently pass through both stations, but do not stop. Bearing in mind that this location for the RSD, instead of Golborne requires significantly less infrastructure at the junction to Manchester, this cost saving could be used for these improvements to the Inter City West Coast Mainline services. HS2 should represent investment that is in addition to investing in our current rail (and road) passenger transport network, and not as an alternative to that.

Question 2 – Route between Middlewich and Pickmere

The Secretary of State is minded to change the alignment between Middlewich and Pickmere and raise the route as it passes through the Cheshire salt plains.

Do you support the proposal to change the alignment and raise the route through the Cheshire salt plains? Please indicate whether or not you support the proposal together with your reasons

CWaCC is unable to indicate its support for the revised route alignment between Middlewich and Pickmere until more detailed information and collaborative assessment of the impacts and options takes place.

In addition to forming the technical forum referred to earlier, CWaCC requires a commitment from HS2 Ltd to collaborate with CWaCC, Cheshire East Council, Warrington Borough Council, local communities and businesses, to develop a

portfolio of bespoke mitigation measures of exceptional effectiveness, to actually make positive contributions to the area. This must include mitigation measures relating to construction, (communities, landscape and businesses), as well as ongoing HS2 operations, to integrate HS2 with the receiving landscape.

Landscape

The CWaCC Landscape Design & Built Environment team will work with HS2 Ltd, to develop a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, to inform and help shape these developments and advise on matters to address such issues as viewpoints and zones of visibility. This needs to be an iterative process and any development would need to positively respond to the local environment and complement the existing local character, quality and integrity of the site and its context.

Overall, the revised proposed route alignment, rolling stock depot, significant infrastructure and ground works, will have many major adverse impacts, affecting communities, environment and landscape. The proposed route passes through the landscape character areas of:

- Cheshire Plain East - Stublich Plain
- Cheshire Plain East – Lostock Plain
- 10 Cheshire Plain East – Wimboldsley + Sproston Plain
- Undulating Enclosed Farmland East Winsford
- River Valleys –Dane Valley
- Salt Heritage Landscape –Northwich

Details of the Local Landscape Character Assessment - Landscape Strategy 2016 are available in the following link:

<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/planning-and-building-control/total-environment/landscape-character-assessment.aspx>

Further information is required as to how the risk of flooding, caused by the route and RSD will be managed. CWaCC wishes to receive a copy of the statutory Strategic Environmental Assessment for the route through the borough, including the assessment of alternative options, assuming this has been undertaken.

The proposed route passes over a number of waterways which are of great importance as tourist visitor attractions, for recreational use and part of our natural landscape. For example, the proposed route crosses the Shropshire Union Canal (Middlewich branch, part of which is also a Local Wildlife Site) between Clive Green and Middlewich and the River Dane and the Trent & Mersey Canal (a conservation area) further north in the Whatcroft area. The continued use and condition of all of these waterways must be preserved and effectively managed throughout construction and operation of the high speed rail network and RSD.

It is imperative that mitigation measures successfully ensure integration of HS2 infrastructure with the receiving landscape. These will need to be of bespoke design and of exceptional quality, character and design to make positive contributions to the surrounding areas.

Visual and noise impact

To the north of the River Dane valley, for approximately 12km, the route has been raised up onto a series of embankments and viaducts. When on embankments, the route is generally 3 – 15m height, interspersed with viaducts over flood plains with a maximum height of 23m over Peover Eye. – To the north of the RSD, the route is up to 8m height with the viaduct between Stanthorne and Whatcroft being a maximum height of 26m. These heights represent the height of the railway, with overhead electric power supply being an additional height.

The vast extent of railway on raised embankments will have a major and widespread impact on land take, noise, visual and creation of vibration, in addition to environmental implications. Noise levels will be transmitted through the air to a greater extent, than by being absorbed within the ground or screening to both sides of the track. Whilst measures will be taken by HS2 Ltd that endeavour to address the needs laying the high speed rail line, they are at a huge cost to the communities and landscape over an extensive area. The latter must be given equal priority.

Although the HS2 Ltd public engagement events included sound booths, CWaCC requests that an accurate “sound footprint” is produced for the section of route throughout the borough. Having made this available to communities affected, a revised sound footprint should be produced, to demonstrate the impact of any suggested changes to contain sound (and vibration) intrusion.

There will also be wider impacts and disruption generated by the construction period, that may not yet be fully appreciated, based upon information from this consultation, however they need to be fully understood and taken in to consideration, to evaluate the suitability of this proposed route.

Highways

CWaCC is responsible for the management and operation of the local highway network. Detailed discussions are needed, (in collaboration with Cheshire East Council and Warrington Borough Council), to ensure clarity of understanding of HS2 Ltd’s impact and proposals for all highways, public rights of way and cycle paths, that are / may be affected by the proposed route and RSD.

The A556 is a principal route, connecting both Northwich and Winsford areas, to the motorway network. The proposed rail route has been moved to within close proximity of the A556 and appears to require realignment of the A556, with clarification of this required. Further issues to be discussed include:

- the option of a direct link from A556 at Rudheath, to a new M6 motorway junction, in the vicinity of Lower Peover, or a new A556 bypass, to be built from Rudheath to connect back to the A556, in the vicinity of Plumley Moor Road, Plumley
- Gadbrook Industrial Park is located close to the proposed route. A road link into the park would need to be considered, along with a new railway station.

In identifying potential employment land allocations for Northwich, the Council is assessing potential transport impacts in this area. The A556 / Gadbrook Road traffic signal junction and the A556 / A530 King Street roundabout, would be operating close to, or over capacity, during peak hours. To address and mitigate potential transport impacts from new development, the Council has undertaken, a high level, transport modelling assessment, to consider a new link to provide a connection between the A530 and A556 and potential development sites. This would provide an alternative route for traffic travelling through the areas of Rudheath and Higher Shurlach and would provide congestion relief at the existing A556 / Gadbrook Road traffic signal junction and at the A556 / King Street roundabout.

The proposed HS2 route would dissect a parcel of land to the south of the Morrisons distribution depot, and would impact on any future connections between the A556 and A530. As such, the revised route alignment results in uncertainty when planning for the strategic transport needs of Northwich and any future solutions to mitigate the transport impacts of new development and resolve current transport issues affecting the Gadbrook area south of Northwich. It is not clear from the consultation, where there are opportunities for crossing points on HS2 route to meet long term development needs.

CWaCC require HS2 Ltd to commit to provide funding to address these identified issues including other highway constraints that may be further adversely impacted upon by construction and operation of the RSD and the high speed rail network. These solutions must be in place before any HS2 construction work commences. CWaCC will fully collaborate with HS2 Ltd to identify and prioritise these locations.

Minerals supply and safeguarding

Although the revised proposed route alignment seeks to be based upon the corridors with the least risk, regarding salt related subsidence,(including consideration of the impacts on communities and the environment), CWaCC requires further work with HS2 Ltd, to determine whether this represents the most suitable route in our area, and whether satisfactory mitigation measures will protect from the risks and impacts on ground stability and underground infrastructure, for both the construction and ongoing operation of HS2.

The adopted CWaCC Local Plan states that the council will make provision for the adequate, steady and sustainable supply of sand, gravel, salt and brine, contributing to the sub-national guidelines for aggregate land-won sand and gravel, whilst ensuring the prudent use of our important natural finite resources. The area safeguarded for sand and gravel, salt and shallow coal, within the Local Plan (Part One), includes the majority of the east of the borough and the route of HS2 goes through this area. Additional sites and preferred areas and / or areas of search for sand and gravel, will need to be identified within the Local Plan (Part Two) in order to provide an adequate supply of sand and gravel. Therefore the council requires a better understanding of the implications of the development of the route in this location, on minerals supply and safeguarding for the borough. Further information is required on the construction phases of development, including the source of construction materials and disposal of construction waste.

Cheshire is nationally important for the production of salt, with extraction concentrated in mid-Cheshire. The environmental implications of salt extraction in this area, and previous work to stabilise former mines, must be taken into consideration. It is important that prospective development above salt mines or brinefield, is undertaken in full knowledge of the underground workings and historic rock salt mining activities. The former brine caverns are used for storage, including underground gas storage. The council seeks to achieve the sustainable and prudent use of all natural mineral resources, including salt and brine, whilst having regard to the need to contribute to the provision of nationally significant gas storage capacity. Natural dissolution of salt in this area can also have implications for land stability.

The proposed RSD and route of HS2 are between 150 – 300m from cavities of 80m height and 100m diameter, at the Warrington Brine Field and Gas storage (known as wet rockhead features), giving a high likelihood that HS2, (and the Inter City West Coast Main Line), are within areas of potential subsidence from these and would be within a hazardous zone. There also are several pipelines identified as crossing the proposed HS2 route within Cheshire West, both hazardous and non-hazardous, with significant safeguarding buffers and consultation zones associated with them. These are concentrated around the A556, between the junctions with the A559 and A530. These all represent factors that could constrain development, for which HS2 Ltd must engage and respond to appropriate technical investigation and guidance.

Issues that HS2 Ltd need to investigate thoroughly, with the priorities being, safeguarding the best interests of public safety and appropriate land use, include:

- Winsford Rocksalt Mine.
- Controlled brine pumping operations at both Warrington and Lach Dennis.
- Areas known as ‘wet rockhead’ and any natural dissolution.
- Historic development of subsidence hollows.
- Abandoned rocksalt mines as necessary, but these appear to be removed from the route.
- Former brine wells and shafts used for brine pumping purposes.

Cultural Heritage and Heritage Assets

Historic Built Environment

A number of heritage assets and their wider settings will be affected by the RSD and proposed route alignment. Some are statutory designated heritage assets - listed buildings, typically Grade II, some Grade II*; and conservation areas. Non statutory heritage asset designations include locally listed buildings and historic parks and gardens.

Listed buildings and conservation areas are protected principally by legislation under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. All heritage assets are considered under Section 12, planning policies 126 - 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF outlines the economic, social and

environmental values relevant to sustainable development, which should be mutually dependent.

Legislation will require HS2 Ltd to:

- Assess the significance of any heritage assets affected, including an contribution made by their setting.
- Assess the conservation significance of a designated heritage asset and setting when considering the impact of a proposed development.
- Harm of loss of significance through alteration or destruction of the heritage should be exceptional to a Grade II listed building , park or garden, and wholly exceptional to Grade I and II* listed buildings and registered parks and gardens.
- Be aware that development proposals of "less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal"

Local Plan Policies are contained in the adopted Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan Adopted Local Plan (part One) Strategic Policies 2015 ENV5, and in the retained Vale Royal Local Plan policies BE1, BE4, BE5, BE6, BE7, BE8, BE9, BE10, BE11, BE15, BE22.

Given that it is highly likely that some heritage assets may be demolished (potentially Park Farm, Grade II) or significantly compromised (potentially Wimboldsley Grange (Grade II* barn) appears to become isolated), Whatcroft Hall (Grade II*), Lea Hall, Grade II*, Bostock Conservation Area, Shropshire Union Canal Conservation Area, Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area), as part of this proposal, an up to date Heritage Impact Assessment will be required for each heritage asset and its setting, in order to assess their significance, prior to any works commencing. This should be proportionate to the asset's importance, and sufficient to understand the potential impact on their significance. Such assessments must be based on an understanding of what constitutes significance, as defined in Historic England's document on Conservation Principles, Policy and Guidance (English Heritage, 2008), and Historic England's Good Practice Advice Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision Making; and 3:The Setting of Heritage Assets; and Advice Note, HEAN 2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets. Such assessments must be undertaken by a competent Heritage Specialist.

Significance is also considered within the wider setting of a heritage asset. Views will be an important part of this assessment and should be clearly identified in the Heritage Impact Assessment. It should be cross referenced with any Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, requested by the Council's Landscape Officer. Please note that views are not the only aspect of setting, and significance of the heritage asset is a fundamental aspect in assessing its setting. Winter and summer viewpoints should be identified, plus a topographical survey identifying the construction corridors, with the heritage assets and views annotated.

The introduction of viaducts is not a new concept in railway development, and many are now listed. Their design and appearance, and materials used will be critical, and

should also be relevant to any historic landscape setting and landscape mitigation strategy.

Further mitigation measures, such as a building recording, as detailed in the Historic England guidance note "Understanding Historic Buildings - A Guide to Good Recording Practice", should be discussed and agreed prior to any works commencing. A landscape mitigation scheme, appropriate to the significance of heritage assets affected will also be important.

As per the High Speed Rail (London-West Midlands) Draft Environmental Minimum Requirements Annex 3:' Draft Heritage Memorandum March 2016, it is assumed that a Heritage Agreement will be made, with both the local planning authority and Historic England, which will identify each listed building and the works proposed to them. As part of this document all affected heritage assets, and not just listed buildings, should be included, and also agreed with the Canal and River Trust.

Archaeology

Although no physical effect, on any statutorily-designated Scheduled Monuments by the proposed route, has been identified, there needs to be an archaeological mitigation strategy, which effectively addresses the very real problems of rural archaeological site definition and identification in lowland North West England.

Our Development Management Archaeologist has already had some dialogue with HS2 Ltd, with regard to construction of the high speed rail line from the Staffordshire border to Crewe, and is aware that further thought on this issue is ongoing, including an extensive geophysical survey along the easement, (where access can be gained), and examining LIDAR data. In both cases, the aim will be to identify areas of archaeological potential, where field evaluation, (trial trenching), and, possibly, more extensive excavation will be required. The developing strategy will also be informed by full consultation of the Cheshire Historic Environment Record and an assessment of historic mapping, aerial photographs, and readily-available secondary sources. It is expected that all these data will feed into a comprehensive mitigation strategy, which will form the basis of the relevant chapter on archaeology and cultural heritage in the Environmental Statement.

A similar approach would be appropriate for the section between Middlewich and Pickmere, including the desirability of utilising innovative techniques, to allow the identification of archaeological sites in this region. These techniques include detailed analysis of the local topography, to identify locations attractive for past settlement, targeted topsoil sieving, to establish the presence of artefacts in the topsoil, assessment of peat deposits for palaeoenvironmental analysis, examination of early township boundaries, and structured, supervised, metal detecting. All of these suggestions, (which are in line with national and local planning guidance), have been received with interest, (and discussed with various parties at Historic England), by the archaeological team at HS2, and will hopefully contribute to the emerging mitigation strategy in the easement.

Ecology

Assessment of the final route needs to be informed by up to date ecological surveys, which it is understood are to be undertaken during 2017 by HS2 Ltd. These need to be in accordance with Natural England Standing Advice, BS402020 and protected species guidelines.

The impacts of the scheme should also be assessed against the ecological network produced for consultation, as part of policy DM 38 of Part 2 of the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan.

http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/cw_lp_part_two/pref_ap
[p](#)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the achievement of sustainable development includes 'moving from a net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains for nature' (para 9), and that 'the planning system should contribute to...minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible' (para 118). The scheme should follow the mitigation hierarchy and demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity. Where impacts are unavoidable, eg loss of part of Long Wood Local Wildlife sites, these should be adequately compensated for.

The incorporation of viaducts as means of passing through areas with sensitive, irreplaceable, ecological habitats and corridors, e.g. ancient woodlands of Winnington and Peas Wood, Leonards and Smoker Wood and river corridors is welcomed though the impacts cannot be fully assessed at this stage in the absence of detailed design and the width of the construction corridors.

The effects of fragmentation for protected and priority species will be a key issue in Cheshire West and Chester due to the length of embankment proposed, especially between Winsford and the proposed RSD. Species such as great crested newts, have a limited dispersal distance in any case and the creation of a barrier through the construction of the route could divide breeding and terrestrial habitat, as well as affect species populations which often exist as 'metapopulations', i.e. groups of associated populations within the landscape. Similarly the impacts on commuting and foraging routes for bats will also need to be assessed.

Measures to minimise fragmentation of the landscape should be maximised, including the provision of tunnels for priority and protected species through the embankments, and the provision of compensatory woodland planting around Winnington and Peas Wood and Leonards and Smoker Wood.

The long term maintenance and management of mitigation measures and compensatory habitats will also need to be addressed.

Local Plan (Part One)

This sets out the strategic development requirements for Cheshire West and Chester Council from 2010-2030. The settlement hierarchy established for the Borough

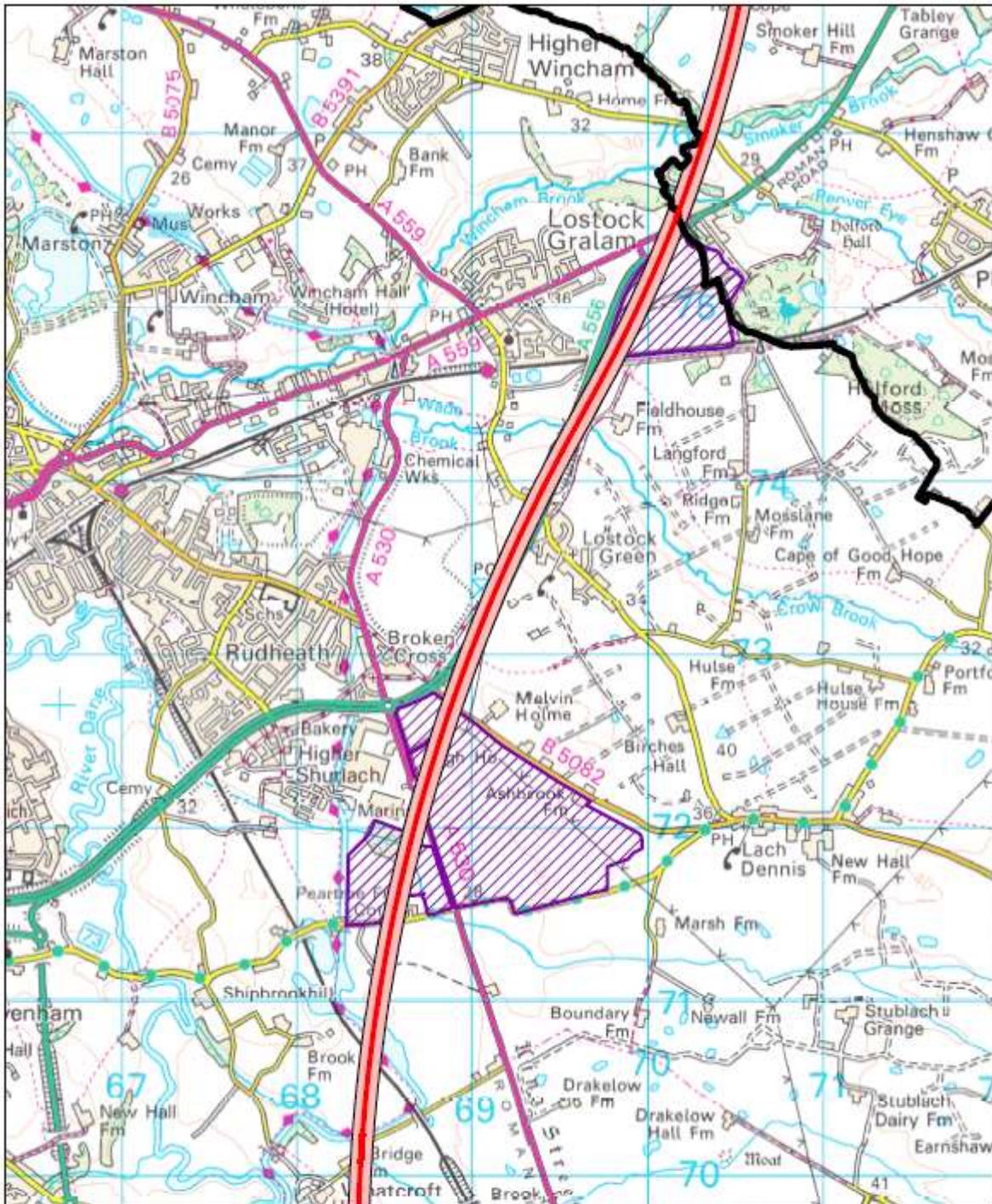
seeks to locate the majority of new development within or on the edge of the main towns, including Northwich and Winsford to maximise the use of existing infrastructure. The route refinement brings the proposed route of HS2 closer to Northwich and would have a greater impact on the residents and businesses in Northwich and also residents of Lostock Green.

Northwich is a key focus for development in the east of the Borough and provision is made for at least 4,300 new dwellings and additional 30ha employment land. In line with national policy, the green belt to the north of Northwich will be maintained. Gadbrook Park is identified as a key site for employment use and the potential expansion of the Park is being assessed through the Local Plan process. The Lostock Triangle (Cheshire Business Park) has in the past been identified as a flagship location for new employment development.

The revised alignment of the HS2 route runs through sites identified in the recent Local Plan (Part Two) preferred approach consultation, adjacent to Gadbrook Park and Lostock Triangle that could have the potential to meet the strategic employment requirements for Northwich. The various sites for consideration are identified on the plan on the next page, hatched in purple. In particular, the preferred site for employment development at land west of King Street was identified through the Local Plan (Part Two) preferred approach consultation, has been severely affected (see map on next page). The proposed route now runs directly through this site, significantly reducing the developable area and future access through the site onto the A530.

As such, the revised route alignment hampers the Council's ability to deliver the requisite level of employment land to support the economic growth and regeneration of Northwich. This is a key strategic priority as set out in the Council's up-to-date adopted Local Plan.

Map showing revised proposed HS2 route and CWaCC Local Plan (Part Two) preferred approach proposed site allocations



Cheshire West
and Chester

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Ordnance Survey 100049045 100049046



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Classic rail services

The HS2 services are to be operated through the West Coast Partnership franchise, including the West Coast Main Line services. These services pass through Winsford and Hartford without stopping. Given the importance of WCML and HS2 to combine to provide long distance rail services, a commitment is sought for the infrastructure (and service) improvements to be made to introduce halts at either of these locations, bearing in mind the overall impact of demand growth generation of HS2. – These measures will also help offset the growth of car traffic to Crewe.

The need for rail infrastructure investment and service improvements, to the classic rail network, has also been made elsewhere in this submission. These are needed to make a significant contribution to HS2, forming an effective network (for passengers and freight) for local, regional and national connectivity.
