

# CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

## Cabinet

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> January 2014
<b>Report of:</b>	Corporate Manager of Strategic Infrastructure
<b>Subject/Title:</b>	Cheshire East Council High Speed Rail 2 (HS2) Consultation Response
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Cllr David Brown, Strategic Communities

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### 1.0 Report Summary

1.1 This report seeks approval of the Council's HS2 Phase Two consultation response on the proposed route from Birmingham to Manchester, which passes through the Borough. The consultation closes on the 31 January 2014.

1.2 The Council has taken a supportive stance on HS2 subject to the inclusion of a new Hub Station at Crewe and the highest standards of mitigation and compensation being applied. It also recognises the need for HS2 for these key reasons:

- Meet the future demand for strategic connectivity in the UK for business, freight and personal travel.
- Relief to the West Coast Main Line (WCML), which is the busiest rail corridor in Europe for both passengers and freight.
- HS2 would support sustainable development and travel patterns.

The Council supports the findings of the HS2 Growth Task Force that identifies the unique opportunity HS2 offers the UK as a driver of economic growth.

1.3 The Council agrees with the need to connect Manchester to London and serve Manchester Airport.

1.4 The Council believes Government can improve HS2 in four ways:

- A new station and track layout for Crewe to be delivered by Network Rail by 2020 to accommodate an HS2 stop. This investment would deliver over £1.5bn of transport benefits and £1bn GVA uplift for the South Cheshire economy including 20,000 additional jobs.
- HS2 deliver the full HS2 Hub Interchange Station at Crewe by connecting into the new station. The Hub would offer access to dedicated and classic compatible HS2 services, capturing the vast connectivity opportunity and boosting the Borough and the UK economy by up to £3bn GVA and 40,000 to 60,000 jobs.
- The section from Lichfield to Crewe be implemented to coincide with the delivery of Phase One delivering £2bn of additional transport benefits for the case for Phase One.

- The highest standard of compensation is offered to blighted homes through the Exceptional Hardship Scheme now and the eventual statutory provisions, including the consideration of a Property Bond Scheme. This should be supported by engineering solutions that maximise the mitigation against the impacts of HS2 on residents, businesses, farms and the local environment.

1.5 The draft consultation response is attached in Appendix 1.

1.6 This consultation response will be supplemented by a detailed report on the proposition for Crewe and an assessment into significant mitigation measures to address the impacts of the line of route. This work is still ongoing and will be submitted and made more widely available in January.

## **2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 That Cabinet approve the proposed consultation response on HS2 as set out in Appendix 1.

2.2 That Cabinet authorise the Director of Economic Growth and Prosperity, in consultation with the Strategic Communities Portfolio Holder, to sign off the consultation material, supplementary reports and final submission.

## **3.0 Reason for recommendations**

3.1 The recommendations above have been made in order to maximise the economic benefits of HS2 for Cheshire East, whilst at the same time ensuring that the negative impacts to residents, businesses, farms, local highway networks and the environment are minimised and mitigated against to the greatest potential extent.

3.2 Planned properly, HS2 would bring about significant economic growth in many areas across the UK and the Council are looking to ensure the solution for Cheshire East maximises the positive impact on the local economy. Economic growth would be realised through jobs directly related to HS2, either during construction or associated to its operation, and also as a result of better transport links to other major towns and cities across the UK.

3.3 At this stage of the project Cheshire East Council has the opportunity to increase its influence with Government on a key national infrastructure project that could have knock-on benefits of further infrastructure investment to support our growth plans.

## **4.0 Wards affected**

4.1 All

## **5.0 Local Ward Members**

5.1 All

## **6.0 Policy Implications**

- 6.1 A major national project such as HS2 has national policy objectives. Addressing the development impacts of a project of this scale will cover all the Council policy areas within the scope of the emerging Local Plan and would form the policy framework for considering the proposal.
- 6.2 The Proposition for Crewe would also support the delivery of infrastructure improvements detailed in the Council's emerging Infrastructure Delivery Plan, and will also facilitate growth through strategic employment and residential developments included in the emerging Core Strategy.
- 6.3 The Council has also worked with the Cheshire and Warrington Local Transport Body (CWLTB) to develop a coordinated position across Cheshire and Warrington on the initial route presented by HS2.

## **7.0 Financial implications**

- 7.1 The work required to complete the Council's HS2 Phase 2 consultation response and to support engagement with the DfT and HS2 Ltd will be funded from within existing service budgets.

## **8.0 Legal implications**

- 8.1 None

## **9.0 Risk Management**

- 9.1 It is considered that by submitting a robust consultation response to HS2 Ltd will increase the ability of the Council to maintain its influence as a key stakeholder and achieve the best possible final decisions for the Borough.

## **10.0 Background**

- 10.1 The Secretary of State for Transport, the Rt Hon Patrick McLoughlin MP, announced the initial preferred line of route and station options in January 2013 and the first round of public consultation was launched in July and this will run until the end of January 2014. It is expected that the decision on the final preferred option for Phase 2 will be made toward the end of 2014. This report considers the Council's response to this consultation. Further background information on the HS2 proposals is attached in Appendix 2 for information.

### **HS2 Consultation Events**

- 10.2 The HS2 Phase 2 consultation launched on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2013 and is running to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2014. As part of this consultation process HS2 Ltd are currently undertaking a number of local consultation events, these are being held at areas affected by the Phase 2 proposals between October and January.

- 10.3 A Member briefing session took place on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2013 at Westfields followed by a number of the HS2 local consultation events across the Borough:
- Tatton Park - Friday 6th December 12pm - 8pm
  - Tatton Park - Saturday 7th December 10am - 5pm
  - Crewe Alex - Friday 13th December 12pm - 8pm
  - Crewe Alex - Saturday 14th December 10am - 5pm
- 10.4 All the consultation material is available from the HS2 website (<http://hs2.org.uk/phase-two/route-consultation/document-library>), with the exception of the "Sound Booths". These are accessible at the local consultation events and are designed to give the public an impression of the noise that will be generated by passing HS2 trains from various locations along the route.
- 10.5 As part of the HS2 Phase 2 consultation all respondents (including the public and the Council) will be asked to answer nine questions, which can be seen in Appendix 3.
- 10.6 The relevant questions for the Council's consultations response fall into four categories, which are summarised as:
- The proposed route alignment and connection to the existing rail network.
  - The proposed new stations in Manchester.
  - Any requirement for additional stations on the route from the West Midlands.
  - How capacity released on the existing rail network could be used.
- 10.7 The HS2 project would have significant transport, economic, environmental and social impacts across the Borough. The Council has been and will continue to be engaged with the Government and HS2 Limited at both political and officer levels to influence the HS2 proposals.
- 10.8 Key successes to date have been to:
- The Initial Preferred Route is via Crewe, which, if confirmed, would enable access to high speed services to London at a reduced journey time of 55 minutes and boost jobs and economic activity in the Borough.
  - HS2 Ltd conducting detailed Parish Council liaison meetings.

### **Connection Between Crewe and Lichfield**

- 10.9 The Council is also developing a case for the early completion of the section of HS2 from Lichfield to Crewe as part of the second Hybrid Bill. This would bring the benefits of HS2 further north sooner, reducing concerns over the macro economic impacts for the North West, including Cheshire and Warrington, from not having the same connectivity gains as the Midlands and South East from Phase 1 investment.

- 10.10 Given Crewe's unique connectivity to the entire North West, North Wales and the North Midlands, delivering the connection to Crewe to coincide with the planned opening of Phase One would spread the benefits over a wider area. In addition, it would free up the West Coast Main Line south of Crewe where significant capacity constraints exist.
- 10.11 An initial estimate of the benefits suggests that the early delivery of the connection to Crewe would add around £2bn of transport benefits to Phase One, of which £0.8bn will be derived in the North West. This represents more than a 50% increase on the benefits to the North West based on Phase One alone. Also, in appraisal terms there would also be a benefit from these early benefits being discounted less over time, and cost expenditure in the early years results in avoiding real cost inflation.
- 10.12 The benefits of early delivery would be maximised across the Borough, if the Government were to adopt the Council's proposition for Crewe. This would also lead to cost savings through synergies between the Council's proposition for Crewe and the HS2 works.

### **The Proposition for Crewe**

- 10.13 The Council is working with the railway industry to develop a compelling case for a new station at Crewe. The proposition aims to address all the issues that arise at the existing station, from future rail passenger and freight growth and the delivery of HS2. A separate report is being prepared for the Secretary of State which will supplement our consultation response.
- 10.14 In the HS2 Command Paper the Secretary of State stated that Government is keen to explore how a connection at Crewe between the existing rail network and HS2 could effectively serve the wider Cheshire and Staffordshire areas. The Proposition for Crewe is the Council's initial response to this opportunity and would form the basis for future dialogue. The proposition can be summarised as:
- i. A new station and track layout for Crewe to be delivered by Network Rail by 2020, capable of accommodating an HS2 stop.
  - ii. A full HS2 Hub Interchange Station delivered by HS2 at Crewe, offering access to dedicated and classic compatible HS2 services, which would capture the vast connectivity opportunity.
  - iii. A station environment fit for the 21st Century which will provide a major gateway and improve the image of Crewe.
  - iv. A station capable of handling significant passenger growth with high quality road and local public transport connections and improved parking facilities. An investment package is being developed in the detailed report.

- v. Additional rail capacity for stopping and through services at Crewe Station, maximising the economic benefits the Station creates both locally and regionally.
- vi. Maximise the economic impact of Crewe Station and HS2 on the strategic sites at Basford East and West, whilst also delivering new opportunities for brownfield land development, and a new site for the proposed Infrastructure Maintenance Depot.
  - a. The new Network Rail station would deliver up to £1bn in additional GVA and up to 20,000 additional jobs for the South Cheshire economy.
  - b. The Full Integrated Hub Station with the HS2 connection would increase this opportunity to up to £3bn in GVA and up to 60,000 new jobs across the local and wider economic area and destroy the argument that HS2 will only benefit a few areas of the UK.
- vii. Remove the need for the major viaduct south of Crewe, reducing the severe and unacceptable environmental and community impacts.
- viii. Investment into freight operations to support growth and specific new markets, such as the port, Liverpool Two, through the provision of a new facility.

10.15 Our proposition for Crewe requires the Government to change its initial proposal. It is our intention to present the case for the proposition directly to the Secretary of State ahead of the end of the HS2 Phase Two consultation period. Once finalised the preferred option will also be presented to both Members and made available to the public.

10.16 To highlight the case for the proposition for Crewe a high profile public campaign will take place at key locations and with key businesses in the Borough, including at Crewe Station. The main focus will be to promote our proposition for Crewe and to encourage local people and businesses to submit a consultation response in support of our proposition.

### **Line of HS2 Phase 2 Proposed Route**

10.17 As the HS2 route passes directly through the Borough it will inevitably impact on residents, businesses, farms and the local environment. At the August meeting, Cabinet reaffirmed its commitment to HS2 and to securing maximum economic benefit for Cheshire East whilst minimising harm to our residents, land and property.

10.18 Meetings have already taken place with HS2, and will continue to do so. Wherever possible and prudent to do so, our aim should be to negotiate an increase in the amount of tunnelling, cuttings and false cuttings, for example, and reduce the severance of communities and farms by providing bridges and under bridges along the route. If such changes can be secured the Borough

would suffer reduced blight, maintain the maximum amount of productive farmland and reduce the loss of property and harm to residents.

- 10.19 Having said this there will still be a large number of residents, businesses and farms that need to be appropriately compensated. This compensation requires greater clarity as currently there is confusion over who would be eligible for compensation, what the extent of the compensation would be and when it becomes available. The Council believes the area covered by any compensation scheme needs to be extended to cover a wider corridor either side of the Phase Two proposals. The Council hopes that the outcome of the consultation process on Phase One will deliver these improvements and that these are then adopted on Phase Two.

### **Liaison with Local Ward Members and Parish Councils**

- 10.20 In August Cabinet also reaffirmed its commitment to continue to work with the local community and HS2.
- 10.21 The Leader of the Council and officers have attended meetings in the affected Parish Council areas, which included Local Members, residents, farmers and businesses, to understand their concerns and views on HS2. These meetings have helped the Council to construct its consultation response and have been shared with HS2 Limited.
- 10.22 In addition, on the instigation of the Leader of the Council representatives from the HS2, route engineering and stakeholder engagement teams met with the affected Parish Councils on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2013.
- 10.23 These meetings enabled a critical review of the local impacts and a discussion about how the proposals might be changed and additional mitigation provided. The meetings also helped the Parish Councils understand how best to present their views and to respond to this consultation.
- 10.24 Six key issues have emerged through this process on where the Council should focus its efforts to change the existing line of route:
- Impacts on farms.
  - The impact of the proposed “fly-over” junction south of Crewe.
  - The long viaduct proposed from Lostock Gralam to Pickmere.
  - The M6 crossing.
  - The delta junction in the M6 / M56 / A556 triangle and the link to Wigan.
  - The crossing of the Mid-Cheshire Rail Line south of Ashley.

### **Line of Route Assessment**

#### **Impact on Farms**

- 10.25 The quality of our Borough both as a place to live and farm demands the highest standards of design, environmental protection and mitigation and compensation and this needs to be given greater recognition in the HS2 work going forward. To ensure that the severance impact on farmland is minimised

and that as much land as possible remains viable, localised crossing points would be required for livestock and farming equipment.

- 10.26 To ensure that the impact on farms is considered in detail, representatives of the local National Farmers Union and other local representative bodies should be engaged in the next stage of any design process.

#### Fly-Over Junction

- 10.27 South of Crewe a large 'fly-over' junction is proposed to facilitate the link from the HS2 mainline to the existing West Coast Mainline for 'classic compatible' high speed trains through Crewe and also to maintain the existing freight services.
- 10.28 The scale of this infrastructure solution is considered to be unacceptable and the Council is working hard to identify an alternative solution through its proposition for Crewe. The structures will have a severe detrimental impact on the local communities of Chorlton, Basford and Weston with significant realignment and loss of existing roads and the proposed railway being up to 25m above the existing ground levels, creating very significant noise and visual impacts and community severance.
- 10.29 The proposed junction will also result in the rebuilding of the new A500 dual carriageway to the north with a significant loss of development land at both of the Basford strategic investment sites.
- 10.30 To mitigate these impacts very significant bunds would be required to both sides of the rail corridor, including the West Coast Main Line, and the level of the railway lines would need to be dropped. The removal of the need for the freight connection and connections between the existing line and the HS2 line would equally reduce the severity of the impact.
- 10.31 One of the knock-on benefits of our proposition for Crewe would be the removal of the need for the 'fly-over' junction south of Crewe and the realignment of the A500. It would also increase the developable land at the Basford sites.

#### Long Viaduct

- 10.32 Over the last few months the Council has worked extremely hard to assess ways to protect the north of the Borough. The emerging view is that the section close the Cheshire West and Chester border near Tabley and Pickmere will have a significant impact on Smoker Brook. It appears that straightening the alignment by moving the route slightly east could also result in a lower vertical alignment, and therefore reduce the impact here and potentially enable a less intrusive solution for the crossing of the A556. This should be complemented by further additional mitigation measures.

#### M6 and Mid-Cheshire Rail Line Crossings

- 10.33 Where the HS2 plans cross both the M6 and the Mid-Cheshire Line south of Ashley that these should be under rather than over the existing motorway and

railway line. By lowering the alignment in these two locations it would have a significant benefit of increasing the lengths of cutting through this entire area.

#### Delta Junction and Wigan Link

- 10.34 In the north of the Borough, the height at which the route is proposed to cross over the Manchester Ship Canal on the Wigan Link means the line has to rise up quickly after it has passed under the M56. With the inclusion of the triangular delta junction to provide a spur into Manchester, this means the links on and off the HS2 north south route have a significant impact on the surrounding areas as well as affecting numerous farms.
- 10.35 To mitigate the impact of the delta junction the line should be lowered from north of the M6 crossing with the inclusion of cuttings and false cuttings and numerous farm crossings. This would be more easily achievable if the line passes under the M6. Cut and cover options should be considered wherever possible to completely hide the line, in particular around the Rostherne Mere section of the scheme near to the A556.
- 10.36 The Council has issues with crossing over the Manchester Ship Canal and its associated infrastructure. The impact of going under the Manchester Ship Canal should be considered by HS2 and further dialogue is planned with HS2 on this matter.

#### **11.0 Access to Information**

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

Name: Andrew Ross  
Designation: Corporate Manager of Strategic Infrastructure  
Tel No: 01270 686335  
Email: [andrew.ross@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.ross@cheshireeast.gov.uk)