

Appendix 2

HS2 Background

The Government has made HS2 one of its priority national infrastructure projects, which will aim to deliver key economic and transport objectives. The Government's key policy drivers behind its plan to deliver HS2 are:

- Transforms travel in Britain.
- Keeps Britain competitive.
- Changes the country's economic geography.
- Ensures the investment delivers a sound macro business case.
- Achieve huge increases in rail capacity.
- Slashes journey times between cities.
- Significantly reduces the demand for internal UK flights.
- Promotes long-term and sustainable economic growth.
- Helps to bridge the north south divide.

The HS2 key specification is:

- New High Speed Trains and new Classic Compatible Trains, the later being capable of running on the existing rail network.
- Maximum speeds of 225miles/hour, enabling a maximum line capacity of 18 trains per hour.
- To operate at maximum speed the track should be on a curve of no greater than 1m in 7200m. The total train length would be 2 units 400m, which can be split, and carry around 1100 passengers.
- Stations would have platforms around 500m long with an approximate 1km to 1.5km widening on each approach and associated roads, parking (up to 4000 spaces) and other access arrangements.

The Government is planning to develop the HS2 network in two phases.

Phase 1 would see the construction of a line from London Euston to the West Midlands with a link back onto the West Coast Main Line (WCML) in the Lichfield area. The line would have a spur off into the centre of Birmingham and a link to HS1 and the Channel Tunnel via the North London Line.

New stations are proposed for Birmingham City Centre, Birmingham International Airport, Old Oak Common (for interchange with Cross Rail, Great Western Line and Heathrow Express) and changes at Euston Station.

Classic Compatible High Speed Trains would operate from Lichfield back onto the WCML to serve destinations in the North West, including within Cheshire East. The target first year of operation is 2026.

Phase 2 would see the completion of proposed HS2 "Y" network. A branch would be taken from the Phase 1 line north of Birmingham to serve the East Midlands, South Yorkshire and Leeds with a link back onto the East Coast Main Line from this point.

The second branch of the “Y” would see the continuation of the Phase 1 line from the Lichfield area to somewhere either north or south of Preston where it would link back onto the WCML. This would include a spur line to serve a station in the centre of Manchester and at the Airport. It is proposed that the Classic Compatible Train services would continue to operate in the North West once this Phase 2 is operating, including through Crewe.

Three broad lines of route were considered; ones through the east of the Borough with no station, ones following the M6 corridor and ones following the West Coast Mainline. The West Coast Mainline option has been preferred as it was believed to provide the best balance between economic, environmental and community impacts. The target first year of operation is 2032/33, six to seven years after Phase 1.

For both Phases of the project, the HS2 team has identified potential depot and maintenance site locations to support HS2 operations. These have been strategically placed along the route and would support growth and job opportunities in the areas identified. An Infrastructure Maintenance Depot is proposed at Crewe as part of HS2’s initial preference.