



# Chapel & Hill Chorlton, Maer & Aston and Whitmore Neighbourhood Development Plan

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## **HS2 Phase 2A EIA Consultation – CA4 Whitmore Heath to Madeley**

The Steering Group for the Neighbourhood Development Plan for Chapel and Hill Chorlton, Maer and Aston, and Whitmore Parishes wishes to respond as follows to the HS2 Phase 2A EIA consultation.

The proposed scheme will have major adverse impacts in our Neighbourhood Area in the parishes of Whitmore and Chapel and Hill Chorlton. Our comments are organised under the following heads:

- Alternatives to the current proposal
- Residents' survey responses
- Mitigation measures

### **Alternatives to the current proposal**

Our group is aware that two alternatives are being considered that would substantially avoid the severe adverse impacts of the scheme in our area, both permanent and temporary.

#### *A Atkins Report Alternative option 1*

This alternative proposes to transfer HS2 trains onto the West Coast Mainline (WCML) a short distance south of Baldwins Gate, using the WCML fast tracks to run between here and Crewe.

Our group fully supports this option, which would avoid all permanent and temporary adverse impacts over all but a short section at the southern end of the route from Stableford to Crewe.

There would still be a significant adverse impact on the wetland area of the Meece Brook valley, which would have to be crossed at level in order to make the connection between the two lines. For this reason we urge HS2 Ltd to look closely into the possibilities for making the switch between the two lines further to the south.

#### *B Whitmore–Madeley tunnel*

This alternative proposes a twin bored tunnel all the way from Whitmore to Madeley, rather than separate tunnels at Whitmore Heath and Bar Hill.

Our group also fully supports this option, which would avoid all permanent and temporary adverse impacts from Whitmore Heath to Madeley. Because this alternative would require the track to run at a lower level it would also either avoid or mitigate many of the permanent and temporary adverse impacts between Stableford and Whitmore Heath, such as those arising from viaducts and embankments in the Meece Brook valley and from realignment of the A53 at the Whitmore Heath tunnel southern portal.

### **Residents' survey responses**

In August–September 2016 we conducted a residents' survey in the three parishes of our Neighbourhood Area. Questionnaires were distributed to around 2150 adults in some 1100 households; 540 responses were received, making a response rate of just over 25%.

Responses to the questionnaire highlighted:

- the high value that local people place on this rural area and access to the countryside
- the importance of the area's lanes, footpaths and bridleways and of outdoor leisure activities such as walking and cycling
- the high value placed on preservation of the landscape and natural environment
- opinion on the most suitable uses of land in the area
- concerns about the safety of highways and roads in the area
- concerns about the impact of HS2 on the area.

<b>What people like about living in the Neighbourhood Area</b>	<b>Important</b>
The rural location / lifestyle	98%
Easy access to the countryside	97%
<b>Recreation and leisure</b>	<b>Agree</b>
Provision for outdoor sport and leisure in the Neighbourhood Area is important	79%
Safe cycling routes are needed	70%
The Neighbourhood Area's public rights of way should be better promoted	68%
The Neighbourhood Area's public rights of way are easily accessible	61%
<b>Open space</b>	<b>Important</b>
Local lanes, public rights of way and bridleways	90%
<b>Heritage and conservation</b>	<b>Important</b>
To protect the landscape and the natural environment	95%
To retain the status of the 3 conservation areas	93%
To identify further local areas of wildlife/biodiversity that should be protected	86%

<b>Suitable uses of land within the Neighbourhood Area</b>	<b>Agree</b>
Agriculture	92%
Open space	88%
Woodland and forestry	87%
Nature reserves and trails	85%
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<b>Transport and roads</b>	<b>Agree</b>
The A51/A53 junctions at Blackbrook are a major hazard	82%
Our country lanes are used by too many heavy vehicles	75%
New developments outside the Neighbourhood Area are causing unacceptable growth in traffic through the Neighbourhood Area	75%
Traffic speeds on the roads in the area are too high	67%
The footpath network is well maintained and waymarked	29%
The A51 and A53 are safe for cyclists and pedestrians	4%
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<b>Impact of HS2</b>	<b>Agree</b>
I am very concerned about the environmental impact of construction work (noise, air quality)	88%
There will be a severe negative impact on the property market in the Neighbourhood Area	83%
Walking and other leisure activities will be seriously affected during construction	82%
Transport and accessibility to places/services within the Neighbourhood Area will be badly affected	82%
Transport and accessibility to places/services beyond the Neighbourhood Area will be badly affected	80%

### **Mitigation measures**

In view of the above, we urge HS2 Ltd to complete its study of the two alternatives and to put forward proposals for consultation by the community.

Should these alternatives prove infeasible, we expect HS2 Ltd to work closely with our group and with local residents to identify and implement suitable mitigation measures in our Neighbourhood Area that

- will compensate for proposed scheme's adverse impacts on wildlife and habitats, the landscape and the population of the three parishes of Chapel and Hill Chorlton, Maer and Aston, and Whitmore
- will assure the safety of the area's roads for all users, including cyclists and pedestrians
- will improve accessibility to public rights of way and other walking routes, create safe cycling routes and fully compensate for any loss of walking and cycling routes.

Richard Oppenheimer  
Chairman  
Steering Group