



Cabinet (Resources) Panel

07 January 2014

Report title	HS2 – Response to Government Consultation	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Peter Bilson Economic Regeneration and Prosperity	
Key decision	No	
In forward plan	No	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Tim Johnson, Education and Enterprise	
Originating service	Transportation	
Accountable employee(s)	Lydia Barnstable	Head of Transportation
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Report to be/has been considered by	Strategic Executive Board	9 Dec 2013

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Cabinet (Resources) Panel is recommended to:

1. Approve the draft response to Government on the High Speed Rail 2 (HS2) Phase One environmental statement consultation.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To outline the anticipated impact of HS2 Phase One on Wolverhampton Railway station and highway access to the station and approve the response to Government on the recent HS2 environmental statement consultation as set out in section 3 of this report.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 On 25 November 2013 Government launched a consultation on the environmental statement for HS2 Phase One, which accompanies the HS2 Phase One Hybrid Bill. The HS2 environmental statement includes likely and significant environmental implications of construction and operation along the route, and measures to manage and reduce these.
- 2.2 The objective for HS2 Phase One investment is to increase capacity on the key north-south routes out of London through a combination of new infrastructure and released capacity on existing lines. The Hybrid Bill, effectively the planning application for the HS2 scheme, will give the Government the powers to construct and operate the railway. If Royal Assent is achieved then construction on the line is expected to commence in 2016/17 to allow for opening in 2026.

3.0 Progress, options, discussion, etc.

- 3.1 The proposed HS2 Phase One route does not include any rail infrastructure or station facilities within Wolverhampton, however the environmental statement includes an appraisal of the likely impacts 'off route'. Off route impacts are defined as those that may occur at locations beyond the proposed scheme's route corridor. Below is a summary of the likely impacts upon Wolverhampton as a result of HS2 construction and operation, as addressed within the environmental statement.
- 3.2 Most works on operational rail infrastructure will be undertaken at night or during weekend possessions, but such a long programme of works may cause disruption to the travelling public and freight services. Proposed works at Euston Station to increase platform numbers from 18 to 24 have the most potential to cause substantial disruption to passengers. Activities during construction will put pressure on the available capacity and will have a potential impact upon network performance and consequent delays to services and passengers on the West Coast Main Line (WCML).
- 3.3 In terms of general highway impacts after HS2 becomes fully operational, the annual vehicle kilometres on long distance highway routes will reduce and result in some level of relief of congestion and improvement in traffic speeds, particularly on the West Midlands to London highway corridor.
- 3.4 The transfer of long distance passengers from the classic rail network to the proposed High Speed route will create the opportunity to provide additional services and stops at more locations. The released capacity will also help to address some of the reliability and overcrowding issues experienced on existing routes, including those operating through Wolverhampton. The general assumption for the proposed scheme is a reduction in long

distance WCML services, replaced with an enhancement of medium distance and local commuter routes into London and Birmingham. This will result in changes to future rail services through Wolverhampton.

- 3.5 Wolverhampton station is referred to specifically as one of six off-route stations impacted by HS2 which required further analysis to determine whether, as a result of the anticipated increase in passenger numbers, there will be any substantial local transport impacts. The focus of the impact was upon the number of cars and taxis accessing the station as a result of HS2 being implemented. An appropriate methodology and up to date baseline figures have been used to undertake the impact assessment.
- 3.6 It is forecast that by 2036 passenger demand at Wolverhampton station will increase by 13% as a result of HS2. The future impact study does not account for any changes to the access or drop off arrangements for the railway station. It is estimated that the implementation of HS2 will result in an additional 105 trips in the morning peak hour and 89 trips in the evening peak hour at Wolverhampton railway station. Beyond Railway Drive, when these trips are distributed between the available routes, there is a less than 3% impact upon each link. Upon completion of the planned Wolverhampton Interchange works, access to Wolverhampton railway station will be altered and the additional traffic will impact upon other parts of the network. It is important that government continues to support the Wolverhampton Interchange development which will deliver the improvements that are required to accommodate the additional trips likely to be generated as a result of HS2.
- 3.7 It is concluded that there is sufficient future capacity within the available highway infrastructure to accommodate the likely future trips generated as a result of the HS2 proposals. On this basis it is proposed that the City Council should offer no objection to the HS2 proposals on these grounds. The trip generation figures and assumptions within the environmental statement can now be used to inform the on-going development of the interchange proposals, to ensure sufficient capacity is retained for future growth in passenger trips.
- 3.8 The outputs of the environmental statement support the conclusion that **the principal direct benefit to Wolverhampton is the released capacity on the West Coast Main Line** and consequent opportunities for improved rail services to and through the City. Whilst there is a measurable impact upon Wolverhampton station as a result of the proposals, the growth in traffic can be accommodated within the existing infrastructure.
- 3.9 The City Council has previously made it clear that there is a strong requirement for the capacity released on the 'classic network' to be fully utilised to improve rail connections to London and elsewhere to support the Wolverhampton economy. Also important for Wolverhampton would be wider service improvements to enhance its role as a gateway for mid-Wales and towns and cities to the north as well as new links to Milton Keynes, etc.
- 3.10 The closing date for consultation responses on the environmental statement is 24 January 2014.

3.11 It is felt that in the consultation response **the City Council should continue to support the principle of developing a High Speed Rail Network** on the basis that it would provide a step-change improvement to the national rail network. There would be clear and demonstrable economic benefits to the West Midlands region by reducing travel times to London and the South East and it would have a consequent impact on expanding the 'catchment area' of businesses.

4.0 Financial implications

4.1 There are no direct financial implications for the Council arising from this report or the proposed consultation response. However it is anticipated that the development of HS2 will in due course bring positive economic benefits to the City. [RT/17122013/F]

5.0 Legal implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report or the proposed consultation response. [KR/13122013/G]

6.0 Equalities implications

6.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

7.0 Environmental implications

7.1 The environmental implications of the HS2 proposal are covered within the main report.

8.0 Schedule of background papers

8.1 High Speed 2 – Wolverhampton's Perspective: Transportation and Highways Management Board 2 June 2011.