

Roads and public rights of way

This factsheet outlines how it is expected that the effects of the Proposed Scheme on roads and public rights of way (PRoW) along the line of route would be managed.

1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 High Speed Two (HS2) is the Government's proposal for a new, high speed north-south railway. The proposal is being taken forward in phases. Phase One will connect London with Birmingham and the West Midlands. Phase 2a will extend the route to Crewe. The Western Leg of Phase 2b comprises an extension of the network to Manchester and a connection to the West Coast Main Line at Golborne, and is referred to as the Western Leg hybrid Bill. The Eastern Leg of Phase 2b currently comprises an extension of the network from the West Midlands through the East Midlands to Leeds.
- 1.1.2 HS2 Ltd is the non-departmental public body responsible for developing and promoting these proposals. The company works to a Development Agreement made with the Secretary of State for Transport.
- 1.1.3 The construction and operation of Phase One of HS2 is authorised by the High Speed Rail (London – West Midlands) Act (2017). In July 2017, the Government introduced a hybrid Bill to Parliament to seek powers for the construction and operation of Phase 2a.
- 1.1.4 In February 2020, the Government announced its intention to draw up an Integrated Rail Plan. This will recommend a way forward on scoping, phasing and sequencing the delivery of HS2 Phase 2b, Northern Powerhouse Rail, Midlands Rail Hub and other proposed rail investments across the north. At the same time, the Government asked HS2 Ltd to prepare the Western Leg hybrid Bill, provided it does not prejudice any recommendations or decisions that will be taken in this plan, which will be published by the end of the year.
- 1.1.5 It is intended to deposit a Western Leg hybrid Bill seeking powers to construct and operate this phase in Parliament in early 2022 or sooner if possible (the Proposed Scheme). The work to produce the Bill will include an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), the results of which will then be reported in an Environmental Statement (ES). The ES would be submitted alongside the Bill when it is introduced to Parliament. As was the case with Phase One and Phase 2a, when the Bill is introduced to Parliament the Secretary of State will also publish draft Environmental Minimum Requirements (EMRs). The EMRs will set out the environmental and sustainability commitments that will be observed in the construction of the Proposed Scheme.
- 1.1.6 A series of information papers were produced for the Phase One and Phase 2a hybrid Bills, explaining the commitments made in those Bills and EMRs. It is the Secretary of State's intention to follow a similar process for the Western Leg Bill. These information papers will be used to provide information about the Proposed Scheme itself, the powers contained in the Bill and how decisions on

the Proposed Scheme have been reached. It is currently proposed that these information papers for the Western Leg of Phase 2b will be published at the time the Bill is introduced in Parliament.

- 1.1.7 The Secretary of State for Transport will be ‘the Promoter’ of the Western Leg Bill. The Promoter will also eventually appoint a body responsible for delivering the Proposed Scheme under the powers to be granted by the Bill. This body will be known as the ‘nominated undertaker’. There may well be more than one nominated undertaker. However, any and all nominated undertakers will be bound by the obligations contained in the Bill, the policies established in the Western Leg EMRs and any commitments provided in the Western Leg information papers.
- 1.2 These Western Leg factsheets have been produced to provide information on the emerging proposals for measures to manage the design process for the Proposed Scheme and to control impacts which may arise from the construction and operation of the Proposed Scheme. These measures may then be applied to the Western Leg as commitments made through the eventual Bill, EMRs or information papers.

2 Overview

- 2.1.1 This factsheet sets out how it is expected that the effects of the Proposed Scheme on public highways, including both roads and public rights of way (PRoW), along the line of route would be managed.

3 Environmental design aims

- 3.1.1 One of the Proposed Scheme's environmental design aims is to promote sustainable transport choices for all. HS2 Ltd aims to maintain existing pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access as far as reasonably practicable during construction and operation of the Proposed Scheme¹.
- 3.1.2 Local roads and public rights of way provide important connections between communities and their health and social services, retail facilities, schools and other educational facilities, community centres, leisure centres and faith centres. Some roads and public rights of way also form significant links in a regional or national context. Additionally, many rural lanes and public rights of way are used by pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians to access the countryside for recreational purposes.

¹ A separate Phase 2b Western Leg factsheet has been produced for private means of access.

- 3.1.3 The Proposed Scheme is designed with the aim of minimising the effect of severance on local communities, particularly with regard to the re-design or replacement of roads and public rights of way. Where reasonably practicable, existing pedestrian, cycle and public transport links between communities and their local facilities, amenities and countryside will be maintained.
- 3.1.4 Any temporary changes to the road and public rights of way networks during construction of the Proposed Scheme would be discussed with the relevant highway authority and permanent alterations will be designed to blend into their surroundings as far as reasonably practicable.

4 Roads

- 4.1.1 The Proposed Scheme would cross many existing roads, which range in function from minor country lanes through to motorways. Where reasonably practicable, the railway alignment will be designed with bridges and tunnels to carry the new railway over or under the roads that it would cross rather than alter the existing layouts. There will be no level crossings on the high-speed rail network.
- 4.1.2 In some places, road diversions or realignments may be required to connect with a new crossing over or under the railway. The nominated undertaker will adopt the shortest route that can reasonably be achieved, consistent with design and safety requirements. As well as aiming to minimise the impacts on vehicular traffic, the needs of non-motorised users (i.e. pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians) will also be considered when developing new road layouts.
- 4.1.3 All alterations to major rural roads will be designed using the UK's national standards given in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) produced by Highways England (and including Scotland National Application Annexes, where required).
- 4.1.4 However, country lanes are very different to the main road network, and it is important to retain the existing character of these minor rural routes where reasonably practicable. Since most published standards do not cater adequately for this type of road, HS2 Ltd has developed a set of design criteria which is based on experience from the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (High Speed One) project and industry good practice. These will be applied where new, realigned or diverted routes are required, helping them to retain a similar 'feel' as other roads in the locality.
- 4.1.5 In both urban and rural areas, local authority design standards will be used, where appropriate, together with national guidance, including the Manual for Streets and Manual for Streets 2, both produced by the Ministry of Housing,

5 Public rights of way

- 5.1.1 Most rural areas have an extensive network of public rights of way which include footpaths, bridleways and byways. Where these are crossed by the Proposed Scheme, they will generally be carried over or under the railway by means of an overbridge or underpass.
- 5.1.2 Where a temporary or permanent realignment or diversion of a public right of way is unavoidable, the design objective is to seek the shortest practicable route. In a few cases, users may be redirected using a reasonably convenient alternative route to a nearby public right of way – or road, if suitable for non-motorised users – prior to closure, with appropriate signage. Temporary arrangements required during construction would remain in place until the public right of way is either re-established or a permanent diversion or realignment is constructed. Public rights of way would also be re-established where 'cut and cover' tunnelling techniques are used.
- 5.1.3 Where several neighbouring public rights of way are affected during construction, any temporary closures would be phased, where reasonably practicable, to help maintain public access.
- 5.1.4 As part of the detailed design process, after Royal Assent, the nominated undertaker would work with highway authorities, local access forums, user groups (e.g. the Ramblers) and communities to identify the best way of maintaining public rights of way during construction. Design would also continue to be informed by guidance produced by organisations such as the British Horse Society.
- 5.1.5 As with roads, the intention is that any new, realigned or diverted routes should retain similar characteristics to other public rights of way in the locality.

6 Maintaining bus routes

- 6.1.1 Where public bus routes are affected by temporary road closures during construction, a diversionary route and (where necessary) temporary bus stops would be identified. In certain cases, there may be permanent changes to bus routes and the nominated undertaker would work with local authorities and transport operators to develop suitable alternative arrangements.
- 6.1.2 In the case of other bus services provided by local authorities under statutory and policy based obligations, such as home to school transport and adult social

care services, these may also be subject to temporary diversion and to some delay. The nominated undertaker would engage closely with the local authorities on the management of any impacts arising during construction in the preparation of local traffic management plans and again in advance of works taking place in those locations.

7 Cycle routes

- 7.1.1 During the construction phase, meeting the needs of cyclists and other vulnerable road users would be a key consideration when plans are prepared for road closures or other works in the highway that could disrupt existing routes.
- 7.1.2 Appropriate provision for cyclists is a key consideration in HS2 Ltd.'s environmental design aims and the design criteria for roads and public rights of way crossed by the Proposed Scheme.
- 7.1.3 The design of cycling infrastructure will be informed by relevant advice and guidance published by the Department for Transport, Highways England and Transport Scotland, as appropriate. Due regard will also be given to the applicable aspects of other advice and guidance, in relation to urban roads, and other relevant standards or guidance as appropriate.

8 More information

- 8.1.1 Further factsheets and details on the Proposed Scheme can be found at: www.hs2.org.uk/phase2b

