

Borrow Pits

This Factsheet describes the case for the proposed use of borrow pits on the Western Leg of Phase 2b, their location, use, the proposed controls on the excavation of material from borrow pits under the Bill, and their restoration.

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.
- 1.1.1 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.
- 1.1.2 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.
- 1.1.3 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.

- 1.1.4 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.
- 1.1.5 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 describes the case for the proposed use of borrow pits on the Western Leg of Phase 2b, their location, use, the proposed controls on the excavation of material from borrow pits under the Bill, and their restoration.

3 The case for borrow pits

- 3.1.1 The Proposed Scheme will require granular materials, for instance aggregates such as sand and gravel, as well as cohesive materials such as good quality clay, to construct railway embankments. However, at some locations along the Proposed Scheme, there is likely to be a shortfall of both material types necessary for construction.
- 3.1.2 Options that have been considered to address this shortfall include:
- transferring material from other parts of the Proposed Scheme to the locations they are required at, leading to long haul distances;
 - stabilising clay excavated as part of the Proposed Scheme with cement or lime to bring it to the quality required for a high speed railway;
 - using high quality aggregate imported from commercial quarries; and/or

- excavating material of appropriate quality from borrow pits¹ in areas as close to the route of the Proposed Scheme as possible.

- 3.1.3 Excavating borrow pits would enable material of appropriate quality to be extracted and processed locally, then transported via on-site haul routes within the construction area of the Proposed Scheme or via short haul distances on the local road network to where it is needed. This would generate fewer and shorter HGV movements than importing the material from elsewhere on the route or from commercial quarries, reducing impacts on the local road network and communities.
- 3.1.4 Following their use, the borrow pits created during excavation can then be backfilled with materials generated from the construction of the Proposed Scheme. This presents a more sustainable option, reducing the need to move this material off-site, further helping to limit impacts on the local road network and communities.
- 3.1.5 For these reasons, borrow pits have been taken forward as the preferred option for the Proposed Scheme.

4 Borrow pits and the Proposed Scheme

- 4.1.1 Four locations have been identified as potential borrow pit sites on the Western Leg of Phase 2b. The proposed borrow pit locations are set out in Table 1 below.
- 4.1.2 Three of these sites are immediately adjacent to the trace of the Proposed Scheme and are expected to provide cohesive fill of an appropriate quality.
- 4.1.3 A fourth site, which could provide granular material of an appropriate quality, has been identified approximately 5km away from the trace of the Proposed Scheme.
- 4.1.4 The land at the sites identified for potential borrow pits is currently in agricultural use.
- 4.1.2 It is expected these borrow pits would be in use over a maximum period of four years, which would include their excavation and backfilling, to be followed by a period of restoration activity. The general process for excavating, backfilling and restoring borrow pits will be set out in Volume 5 of the ES.

¹ A borrow pit is an area where material, usually sand and gravel, is excavated for use in the construction of a nearby infrastructure project.

4.1.3 The proposed borrow pit locations are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Proposed borrow pit locations

Proposed borrow pit location	Community area (CA)
Open land south of Wimboldsley	Wimboldsley to Lostock Gralam (MA02)
Open land north west of Wimboldsley	Wimboldsley to Lostock Gralam (MA02)
Yew Tree Farm, Stanthorne	Wimboldsley to Lostock Gralam (MA02)
Open land between Byley and M6	Wimboldsley to Lostock Gralam (MA02)

5 Environmental controls

- 5.1.1 The nominated undertaker would require its contractors to apply, and to comply with, the requirements of the Code of Construction Practice (CoCP) and would ensure the use of best practicable means to reduce the effect of the borrow pits on the local environment.
- 5.1.2 The nominated undertaker and its contractors would comply with the EMRs which will set out commitments to mitigate the environmental impact of the Proposed Scheme. These sit alongside the environmental controls contained in the Bill, see Western Leg Factsheet: Control of Environmental Impacts. These controls will form part of the Local Environment Management Plan (LEMP), which will be prepared in accordance with the CoCP. The nominated undertaker and its contractors will also each prepare and operate an Environmental Management System in accordance with BS EN ISO 14001 appropriate to the scale and nature of the construction works
- 5.1.3 It is expected that the Bill would require the nominated undertaker to obtain approval from the relevant planning authority, where they are a qualifying authority, for plans or specifications and site restoration for the excavation of bulk materials from borrow pits. Further information on the role of qualifying authorities and non-qualifying authorities will be made available at Bill deposit.
- 5.1.4 The grounds on which the relevant planning authority can refuse approval or impose conditions are expected to relate to the design or external appearance of the borrow pits, the methods by which they are worked and arrangements as to noise, dust, vibration or screening during their operation. In addition, where the site is not within the limits of deviation, the grounds may relate to the location of the site.

- 5.1.5 Requests for approval under the Planning Conditions Schedule would address the specific matters that are relevant to the authority's determination of the submission. For dust control the submission would have regard to the Institute of Air Quality Management mineral guidance.
- 5.1.7 Where the excavation of Borrow Pits necessitates the temporary abstraction and/or discharge of ground water, the Bill would set out the requirements for approving these works with the relevant body (either the Environment Agency or Lead Local Flood Authority). Such works, which could affect the water environment, cannot commence until the relevant body is satisfied that any impacts are properly understood and that any necessary mitigation and monitoring has been adopted.

6 Restoration

- 6.1.1 The Borrow Pits Restoration Strategy, which will form part of the Environmental Statement, establishes the principles for the restoration of the sites.
- 6.1.2 A key principle of the Borrow Pits Restoration Strategy is to use material from the excavation of the Proposed Scheme as backfill to restore borrow pits to original ground levels and to a condition suitable for their previous land use.
- 6.1.3 In accordance with the Bill, if the relevant planning authority is a qualifying authority, the excavation of bulk materials from borrow pits could not commence unless the authority has approved a scheme for the restoration of the borrow pit site.
- 6.1.4 The relevant planning authority can only refuse to approve or impose conditions on the approval of a restoration scheme on the ground that the scheme ought to be modified and is reasonably capable of being modified.
- 6.1.5 The Bill would require the nominated undertaker to carry out the approved scheme once it has completed its use of the land for the excavation of bulk materials from the borrow pit.

7 More information

- 7.1.1 More detail on the Bill and related documents can be found at: www.gov.uk/HS2