

Contact our HS2 Helpdesk team on **08081 434 434**

# HS2 Update

Solihull | Spring 2024

High Speed Two (HS2) is the new high speed railway for Britain. This update will provide you with key information and news on HS2 works happening in Solihull.

## Carol Green Underbridge

### Progress continues with beam installation ahead of schedule

The structure that is visible from Truggist Lane and the Kenilworth Greenway, near Berkswell Railway Station is the Carol Green Underbridge. This bridge structure and its embankments will take the new railway over the existing West Coast Main Line.

Construction of the bridge started in March 2022 with piling works completed in May 2023 and the abutment walls formed in October 2023.

In February 2024 we started installing beams on the bridge. These installations are taking place on Saturday nights when the West Coast Main Line is not operational. We are ahead of schedule with this work which upon completion will enable the bridge deck and parapets to be installed over the next six months.

This bridge is a key component, not just of the new railway but for our construction activities.

Once the bridge has been constructed, including the connecting embankments, it will connect our hauls roads on the north and south side of the West Coast Main Line, providing a continuous haul road from the Aston Martin roundabout to Burton Green. This will reduce the HS2 construction traffic through Balsall Common on the local road network and disruption for local communities.



Progress of the Carol Green Underbridge - February 2024

## Upcoming works

For more information about upcoming works in Solihull view our 2024 Solihull Spring Construction Look-Ahead by scanning the QR code below.



The Solihull Construction Look-Ahead can also be found here:  
**[bit.ly/3vsLKse](https://bit.ly/3vsLKse)**



## Balsall Common Viaduct

In September 2023, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) approved the Balsall Common Viaduct Schedule 17 application. As part of this approval, the Planning Committee asked us to carry out additional engagement with the local community on elements of the viaduct design and the surrounding landscape.

### Design engagement

We held four events in January 2024 to ask the community to feedback on design options for:

- 1. The appearance of the acoustic parapets**
- 2. The landscape design**
- 3. The parapet patterning and its extent**

The feedback we gathered from these events has been incorporated into our designs and the results shared with communities at an event on Wednesday 20 March.

We have submitted our new proposals to SMBC who have accepted our submission for the revamped designs. Our plans build on the views expressed by the community, and we would like to thank local residents for attending the events and sharing their views.



An artist impression of Balsall Common Viaduct

### Community feedback

Results of the feedback from the January engagement have influenced the proposed design which will be taken forward to the detailed design stage. The feedback received was largely supportive of the consented Schedule 17 scheme. However, in response to the feedback, we will be making subtle changes to the design.

The feedback from engagement has concluded with the following outcome:

1. **A polished finish to the parapet**
2. **A blend of woodland and marshland landscape**
3. **A weave pattern on the bottom portion of parapet over the full length of the viaduct**

More detail on the new design proposals and community feedback can be found on the HS2 website: [bit.ly/48ZUFiL](https://bit.ly/48ZUFiL)

## Young people's engagement

We visited Balsall Common Primary School and Heart of England Secondary School to engage the pupils on the new design proposals for the Balsall Common Viaduct. The pupils were asked to respond to the same questions we had asked the wider community.

Through the use of a dot voting method, the children indicated a preference for polished concrete parapet with full-length weave pattern and additional woodland, closely aligning to the wider community feedback. Pupils also asked the team how the local ecology will be affected, how HS2 will improve connections to Birmingham and London and how their community will benefit from HS2.

## Key stages of construction

The construction of the Balsall Common Viaduct will involve several key stages.

Firstly, a working platform will be constructed to support heavy equipment. The topsoil is removed, platform built and the same topsoil will be reinstated after.

Concrete piles up to 30m deep will be installed using a temporary cylindrical casing and drilling method to tackle poor ground conditions and support the viaduct.

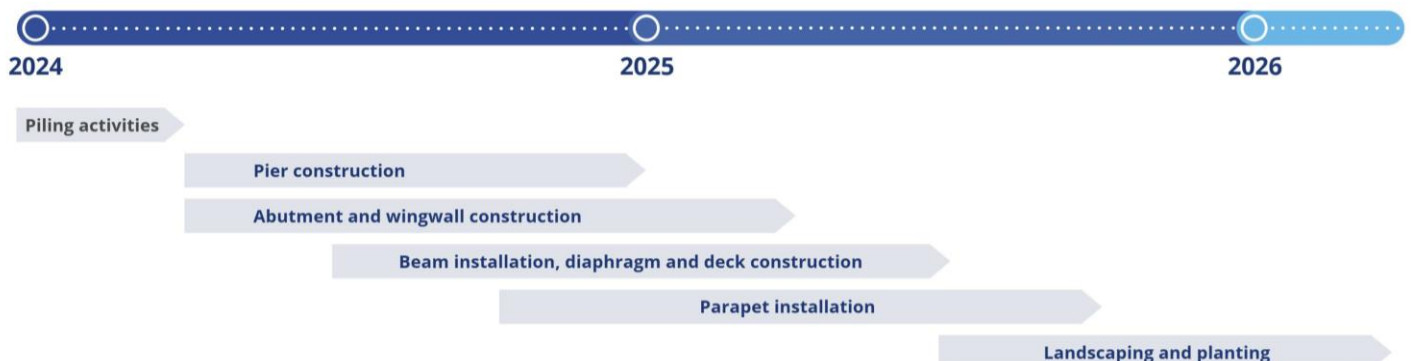
The pile caps (a dense concrete surface to support heavy structures) will be buried upon completion and cofferdams (an enclosure built within a body of water to allow the enclosed area to be pumped or drained out) will then be installed around piles to allow for safe pile cap construction, ensuring no risk of impacting Bayleys Brook or floodwater.

Abutments (the structures at the ends of a bridge span) and piers will be constructed on top of the pile caps, providing a sturdy platform for beam installation. Beams will be precast off-site and installed directly onto the piers, with in-situ diaphragms connecting them for structural integrity.

Finally, deck will be poured, tying all structural elements together. Parapet panels of varying heights will be installed for noise control measures. Upon completion, the working platform will be removed, and ground reinstated, including realignment of the brook and landscape planting.

## Indicative timeline of construction

It is expected that the construction of the viaduct will be complete in 2026.





## M42 bridge demolition

**Solihull based contractor Armac removes a 4,000-tonne bridge over the M42 to make way for the construction of a new twin box structure. The new structure will carry the high-speed line across the motorway near the new Interchange Station in Solihull.**

The bridge which carried the A452 over the motorway between junction 6a and 7 was only used by HS2 construction prior to the demolition. The original plan was to demolish the bridge next year. However, due to two vehicles on the motorway recently striking the bridge, National Highways asked HS2 to demolish the bridge sooner. The bridge had become unsafe and required a lane closure to be in place on the M42, causing disruption to road users.

National Highways, HS2, Balfour Beatty Vinci (BBV) and construction partners Armac were able to bring forward the planned demolition, preparing the site and completing the demolition safely. The bridge was demolished in a 52-hour operation with the motorway reopening to drivers ahead of schedule.

This year, we will start to construct the 300-metre twin box structure, which will carry HS2 trains over the M42. Enabling works commenced in March and piling is due to commence in August. While the structure is being built, three lanes of the M42 will be maintained, allowing traffic to flow.



HS2 contractor Armac removed the M42 bridge in February this year

You can read more about the bridge demolition and watch the incredible time-lapse video or visiting the HS2 website: [bit.ly/3THyJ7H](https://bit.ly/3THyJ7H)

## River Blythe Viaduct

### The River Blythe Viaduct has received Schedule 17 approval

Following engagement with residents and businesses in Hampton in Arden, most recently in December 2023, our plans have now been given the green light by SMBC to reinstate the surrounding area to enhance and protect the local environment.

We expect to complete the main construction works by early 2026, and reinstatement by mid-2026.

In order to minimise the impact on local residents and roads, we are constructing an alternate access route to the works area. We will be installing temporary traffic lights and a crossing on Diddington Lane between 13 May – 6 June. The haul route from the Aston Martin roundabout to the A45 Coventry Road will mean less lorries using local roads. Communications on the traffic management will be available by visiting [bit.ly/3xpwltd](https://bit.ly/3xpwltd)



## Burton Green Tunnel

### Planning approval has been granted for the design of the green tunnel in Burton Green

The designs of the green tunnel respond to the community feedback received, focusing on bigger and better green spaces around the railway.

The plans for the southern end of the structure have previously been approved by Warwickshire District Council. The railway will be hidden in a 400-metre green tunnel and the roof will be covered with landscape planting and new footpaths to integrate the railway into the surrounding landscape and enhance local biodiversity.

SMBC have now approved the northern section of the structure, where the railway exits the tunnel (north of Cromwell Lane) into a 1.4 kilometre cutting with retaining walls. A key feature for this area is the realignment of the Kenilworth Greenway, which provides a link from Balsall Common to Kenilworth via Burton Green for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders.

The new Greenway will cross under Cromwell Lane and then the roof of the green tunnel and run alongside the railway cutting, with noise barriers further minimising impacts on the local community. Large-scale planting of native trees and shrubs will provide biodiverse habitats for wildlife and visibly shield the Greenway from the new railway.

Before we commence any work, we will be sharing more details of the proposed designs of the Kenilworth Greenway and Burton Green tunnel with communities later in the year.



# Interchange Station and the Automated People Mover

## Designs continue to develop ahead of construction starting in 2025

In July 2022, Laing O'Rourke were appointed as the contractor to design and build the HS2 Interchange Station. Since then, Laing have worked closely with HS2 to develop their plans for constructing the Station and expect to start on the construction of the Station in 2025.

A revised design for the Interchange Station car park has also been submitted to SMBC for approval, reducing the size of the car park. This will allow more space for the development of Arden Cross, a proposed mixed use commercial and residential site which will surround Interchange Station.

Plans for the automated people mover, which will carry passengers from the HS2 Interchange Station over the M42 to the NEC, Birmingham International Train Station and Birmingham International Airport, are also progressing with two companies shortlisted to design and deliver the system and the vehicles for the mass transit system.



Artist impression of the Automated People Mover

## Engaging with local communities

**We know that planning and building the railway disrupts the lives of local people. We will always try to do the right thing and reduce disruption as much as we can.**

We have specialists working across each section of the route who will keep you informed and respond to any question you may have.

We hold events and drop-in meetings to provide updates on the project and gather feedback from the community. We work closely with community groups and local authorities to find ways to mitigate any potential disruption caused by the construction of HS2.

Our teams also support community and school projects to benefit the areas where we work. These include giving back to communities by volunteering, fundraising, or providing materials, labour or investment. Our helpdesk is open 24/7 – ring us on 08081 434 434 if you would like to discuss an idea with our team.

### Case Study - Balsall Common Primary School

The Community Engagement team recently arranged for the Environment and Ecology team to deliver water-related environmental workshops to support Balsall Common Primary School's curriculum. The workshops included activities such as singing the water song, identifying sources of water pollution, and looking at animal skulls and excrement to engage the year four pupils. The afternoon proved a huge success with shining feedback from the headteacher and pupils.

**"Our Year 4 pupils have had three brilliantly run water workshops linking to their Rivers topic. With Thanks to Balfour Beatty Vinci, six of their environmentalists and ecologists informed our pupils about the importance of water, specifically with fresh water only accounting for 2.5% of worlds water and how a construction site cleans the water from silt before it is released back to our rivers. We also learnt that our rivers are important for our marine and terrestrial ecosystems and of course, the water cycle and the overall impact climate change has on the water cycle across our globe"** - Social media post - Balsall Common Primary School



#### Keep up to date on HS2 activity in your area

To receive notifications of our upcoming activity, sign up for email notifications:

**<https://engagement.hs2.org.uk/join-mailing-list/>**

To view more detail on what work is happening near you, visit our interactive map:

**[www.hs2.org.uk/in-your-area/map](http://www.hs2.org.uk/in-your-area/map)**

Find out what engagement events are coming up in your area at:

**[www.hs2.org.uk/events](http://www.hs2.org.uk/events)**

### Tell us what you think

Thank you for taking the time to read this update. We invite you to complete our short survey. Your answers will be anonymous and will help us in improving these updates.



# Keeping you informed

We are committed to keeping you informed about work on HS2. This includes ensuring you know what to expect and when to expect it, as well as how we can help you.

## The Residents' Commissioner

The independent Residents' Commissioner oversees and monitors our commitments to you.

The commissioner's reports and our responses can be found at [www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-ltd-residents-commissioner](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-ltd-residents-commissioner)

The Residents' Commissioner makes sure we fulfil the commitments in the HS2 Community Engagement Strategy (<https://bit.ly/3oOA25j>).

The Residents' Commissioner can be contacted on: [residentscommissioner@hs2.org.uk](mailto:residentscommissioner@hs2.org.uk)

## Construction Commissioner

The independent Construction Commissioner regularly meets our Chief Executive Officer to raise any concerns or emerging trends across HS2.

The Construction Commissioner's role has been developed to monitor the way we manage and respond to construction complaints.

The commissioner mediates on disputes about construction, involving individuals and organisations, that we can't resolve. The commissioner advises members of the public about how to make a complaint about construction.

The Construction Commissioner can be contacted on: [complaints@hs2-cc.org.uk](mailto:complaints@hs2-cc.org.uk)

## Property and compensation

You can find out about HS2 and properties along the route by visiting:

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-property](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-property)

Find out if you can claim compensation at:

[www.gov.uk/claim-compensation-if-affected-by-hs2](https://www.gov.uk/claim-compensation-if-affected-by-hs2)

## Holding us to account

If you are unhappy for any reason you can make a complaint by contacting the HS2 Helpdesk. For more details on our complaints process, please visit:

[www.hs2.org.uk/in-your-area/contact-us/how-to-complain/](https://www.hs2.org.uk/in-your-area/contact-us/how-to-complain/)

## Contact us

Contact our HS2 Helpdesk team all day, every day of the year on:

 Freephone **08081 434 434**

 Minicom **08081 456 472**

 Email **HS2enquiries@hs2.org.uk**

Write to:

**FREEPOST**

**HS2 Community Engagement**

Website **[www.hs2.org.uk](https://www.hs2.org.uk)**

To keep up to date with what is happening in your local area, visit: **[www.HS2inyourarea.co.uk](https://www.HS2inyourarea.co.uk)**

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