

Meeting date: 28th March 2019
Report to: Cabinet Member for Transport & Highways
Subject/report title: High Speed Rail 2 – Highway works update
Report from: Head of Highway Services
Report author/lead contact officer: Paul Tovey / Ashley Prior



Wards affected:

- All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood |
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle |
 Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South |
 Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege

Public/private report: Public

Exempt by virtue of paragraph: Select an Exemption paragraph from the Quick Parts drop-down list

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an update on the Solihull highways element of the HS2 project and to review the associated Schedule 4 (application to carry out works on the public highway) approval process and recent decisions taken by the Head of Highway Services.

2. Decision(s) recommended

2.1 Cabinet Member is asked to:

- (a) Note the update on the HS2 project as detailed in section 3.
- (b) Note the recent decisions taken by the Head of Highway Services in respect of HS2's Schedule 4 applications to carry out works on the public highway, as detailed in Appendix A.
- (c) Agree that all HS2 Schedule 4 applications, seeking approval to make major changes to the layout of the public highway in Solihull, should be referred to the Council's Cabinet for approval, as set out in paragraph 4.3 and 4.4, and
- (d) Agree to receive a further update report at the next Transport & Highways Cabinet meeting on the 16th May 2019.

3. What is the issue?

- 3.1 Over the next 6 years, High Speed 2 Limited (HS2) under the powers provided in the High Speed Rail (London-West Midlands) Act 2017, are planning to construct approximately 14km of high speed rail infrastructure and a new station at Bickenhill with parking for 7,400 customers and staff. As part of this project, a range of permanent and temporary changes to the public highway network in Solihull have been approved by the Government.
- 3.2 The current issues and pressures resulting from HS2 are summarised as follows.
- 3.3 **The Scale of the Project** - HS2 will be working along a corridor right through the borough from the south-eastern corner of Balsall Common, travelling north-west through Berkswell, Hampton-in-Arden and Bickenhill, where a new multi-modal station will be constructed providing links with other public transport systems, the National Exhibition Centre and the Airport. The HS2 line then travels north through Chelmsley Wood and Smiths Wood before continuing its route through north Warwickshire and into Birmingham City Centre where it will initially terminate at a new Curzon Street station.
- 3.4 As a result, Highway Services are expecting a significant increase in workload to manage applications from HS2 seeking approval for:
- Construction routes under Schedule 17 of the Act;
 - Temporary interference with the highway under Schedule 4,
 - Permanent changes to the layout of the highway under Schedule 4, and
 - Other environment impact applications affecting for example drainage, landscaping and lighting for the new highway assets.
 - Providing support to the Planning Department who will be considering a range of applications under Schedule 17 of the Act.
- 3.5 In Solihull there will be two main work packages; firstly “**Enabling Works**” which are being designed and delivered by the Laing Murphy partnership. This contract is for much of the early ground investigation work to help inform the detailed design processes, overseeing service provision and diversions, together with reshaping the existing highway layout to create space for the HS2 line to be constructed.
- 3.6 The “**Main Works**” contract is being delivered by the Balfour Beatty Vinci partnership and they will be constructing both the main railway works; new station and other less time-critical changes to the layout of the public highway.
- 3.7 **Traffic Modelling** – Underpinning the proposed highway improvements is one of the largest Vissim traffic models ever used in Solihull to help inform the highway design and travel demand process. Based on the West Midlands’ PRISM regional traffic model, the original piece of work, dating back to the Bill stage in 2013, has been used to inform the preliminary design process.
- 3.8 The traffic demand model has been developed to take into account changes to the highway network carried out since the Bill was approved and other permitted developments to create a 2016 base year view of how the network performs, which can then be used to help inform the detailed highway design process aimed at

maintaining resilience across the regional network, by considering HS2's additional traffic demand, both in 2026 when the new service is due to be operational, and again in 2041.

- 3.9 This has been a challenging and time-consuming piece of work for the officers involved. It is fundamentally important to get this to an acceptable standard from which to base the detailed design of the road layouts on around the new Station. This is where the biggest impact on traffic movements is expected to occur in the future, on what already is a busy local and strategic road network. The traffic model will also help to inform the Council's Urban Growth Company's future economic growth proposals for the area around the Station site, which will be the subject of a separate planning application process.
- 3.10 **On-going works** – Since the last report in July 2018, HS2 continue with extensive ground investigation work; developing the designs for the various highway work packages and more recently have started to remove trees and hedgerows to facilitate the works. They have taken possession of some of the land required for HS2, and security fencing and site compounds are being brought into operation along the whole route.
- 3.11 There are two significant utility projects underway that will see the overhead power lines to the north of the Station site raised and moved off the line of HS2. To the south of Balsall Common one of the main underground pipelines is in the process of being diverted. Neither project will have a significant impact on the public highway but they will both generate additional HGV movements on the local road network.
- 3.12 The HS2 design teams are shortly due to submit schedule 4 applications for the Council's approval to carry out the following works:
- **A452 Kenilworth Road / Park Lane, Balsall Common** – Construct a new large roundabout junction to provide safe access to one of the main HS2 construction compounds.
 - **A446 / A452 realignment** – Realign sections of the A446 and A452 to create new accesses to Birmingham Business Park, the N.E.C. and the proposed HS2 Station. As part of this work package 4 new large bridges will be constructed, with significant earthworks to create the embankments necessary to raise the new station access junction by approximately 8m.
 - **A446 / A45 Stonebridge junction** – Capacity improvements are planned for this critical junction which will be fully signalised to deal with a significant increase in the volume of traffic generated by HS2.
- 3.13 Whilst the scheme in principle has been approved as part of the Parliamentary Bill making process, HS2 are still required to seek approval to the proposed detailed changes to the highway layout from the Council, as the appropriate local highway authority. For approval purposes, the associated Schedule 4 application process has been broken down into two categories; those with minor or temporary interference implications and those with permanent and/or major highway implications. Both types need to be determined within 28 days from the date received.

3.14 At the decision making session in July 2018, a scheme of delegated powers for Schedule 4 applications was approved. Those Schedule 4 applications with temporary or minor highway interference were delegated for approval by the Head of Highway Services, of which the Council has now processed and determined 104 applications, and these are summarised in Appendix A. Full details of the applications are published on the council's website at: <http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Resident/Parking-travel-roads/HS2> .

3.15 HS2's first major interference applications under Schedule 4 of the Act are now expected to be submitted in late March/April 2019. The Bill provides clear advice to the Council, who may only raise an objection to HS2's proposals where it considers that other works are required to prevent or reduce:

(a) injury to local amenity, or

(b) prejudicial effects on road safety or on the free flow of traffic in the local area,

3.16 Any such alternative proposals made by the Council must be subject to being reasonably capable of being carried out within the defined limits of the scheme. As the requirements and implications of the major elements of the HS2 project have become clearer, a review of the approval process has been undertaken and suggests that a change may be appropriate for major Schedule 4 applications.

4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

4.1 **Demand Management** - To help manage the high and varied demand created by the need to respond to HS2 Schedule 4 applications within the statutory 28 day period, and taking into account HS2's flexible delivery programme, recruiting additional employees was not considered to be the best approach. On this occasion, the most flexible option will be to use additional staff resources available through the Atkins/Watermans Professional Services contract. This process is currently working well and there are two consultant members of staff supporting our teams who are working on applications from the HS2 project.

4.2 The number of staff required is expected to rise in the coming months as the HS2 project progresses through the various work packages and work begins in earnest on site later this year. This increased demand for additional highway staff resources could continue for the next 4 to 5 years depending on how well the project progresses.

4.3 **Schedule 4 application approval process** – The minor and temporary interference Schedule 4 applications are progressing well and being responded to within the statutory 28 day period. As a result, it is not proposed to make any changes to the Head of Highway Services delegated power to approve such applications.

4.4 However, having now seen some of the draft HS2 major scheme applications, it has become clearer that these will have greater cross-cutting economic and environmental implications and challenges for the Council to consider than associated with a standard highway improvement scheme. On that basis, it may be more appropriate to

refer such applications to the Council's full Cabinet meeting.

5. Reasons for recommending preferred option

- 5.1 The information provided on the HS2 project and its progress to date, as set out in Section 3, is for information only at this stage. This information is intended to provide an overview on progress to the end of February 2019. If there are any further developments or changes to the project then these will be shared at the meeting.
- 5.2 HS2 Schedule 4 applications seeking approval to carry out temporary interference works or implement minor changes to the highway are progressing well. All applications have been responded to within 28 days, with no issues arising. It is recommended therefore that no changes are required to this part of the associated scheme of delegated approval powers available to the Head of Highway Services.
- 5.3 In respect of Schedule 4 permanent/major highway improvement applications it is recommended that, due to the greater economic and environmental implications together with some reputational risks for the authority, that future HS2 Schedule 4 applications proposing major changes to the highway network should be determined by the Council's full cabinet.

6. Implications and Considerations

6.1 Delivery of key themes in the Council Plan:

The HS2 project has strong links to all four of the Council's key themes and when complete is predicted to support strategic economic growth both in Solihull and the wider West Midlands Region.

- Improve Health and Wellbeing** – HS2 has an objective of improving modes of sustainable travel linking it the local public transport, cycling and walking infrastructure.
- Managed Growth** – HS2 are working closely with the Council's Urban Growth Company to help maximise the employment and residential opportunities, particularly around the Station site
- Build Stronger Communities** – HS2 will bring access to temporary jobs and employment opportunities both during the construction phase and when the new services are operational.
- Deliver Value** – HS2 will reconstruct extensive sections of the road network in the vicinity of the HS2 line that will have an economic benefit for Solihull, and in particular future maintenance costs of the assets they will be replacing.

6.2 Implications for children and young people, vulnerable groups and particular communities:

- 6.2.1 None as a result of the recommendations contained in this report.

6.3 Consultation and Scrutiny:

- 6.3.1 The HS2 project is being overseen by the Council's HS2 Implementation Group and through this forum the project has liaised closely with local community groups and parish councils affected by HS2 project.

6.4 Financial implications:

- 6.4.1 None as a result of the recommendations of this report.
- 6.4.2 The Council does have in place a Service Level Agreement with HS2 Limited which covers all reasonable costs incurred by the Council when responding to HS2 applications and notifications.

6.5 Legal implications:

- 6.5.1 The High Speed Rail (London-West Midlands) Act 2017 contains various provisions within the associated schedules that support the construction of the project. In relation to the Council's function as the local Highway Authority, the Act provides means to either temporarily or permanently interfere with the public highway within the limits of the Act.

6.6 Risk implications:

- 6.6.1 None

6.7 Statutory Equality Duty:

- 6.7.1 No applicable

7. List of appendices referred to

- 7.1 None

8. Background papers used to compile this report

- 8.1 The High Speed Rail (London-West Midlands) Act 2017

9. List of other relevant documents

- 9.1 Transport & Highways Cabinet report July 2017