

February 2022

HS2

Ancient Woodland Summary Report



Department for Transport

High Speed Two (HS2) Limited has been tasked by the Department for Transport (DfT) with managing the delivery of a new national high speed rail network. It is a non-departmental public body wholly owned by the DfT.

High Speed Two (HS2) Limited,
Two Snowhill
Snow Hill Queensway
Birmingham B4 6GA

Telephone: 08081 434 434

General email enquiries: HS2enquiries@hs2.org.uk

Website: www.hs2.org.uk

High Speed Two (HS2) Limited has actively considered the needs of blind and partially sighted people in accessing this document. The text will be made available in full on the HS2 website. The text may be freely downloaded and translated by individuals or organisations for conversion into other accessible formats. If you have other needs in this regard please contact High Speed Two (HS2) Limited.

© High Speed Two (HS2) Limited, 2022, except where otherwise stated.

Copyright in the typographical arrangement rests with High Speed Two (HS2) Limited.

This information is licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3 **OGL** or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or e-mail: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk. Where we have identified any third-party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.



Printed in Great Britain on paper containing at least 100% recycled fibre.

Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Background to our ancient woodland reporting	4
3	Changes since the Phase One Environmental Statement	5
4	The HS2 Green Corridor and Ancient Woodland reporting	7
5	Consulting with our stakeholders	8
6	The HS2 Woodland Fund	9
	Appendix 1	10
	List of tables	
	Table 1: Summary of changes to the area of ancient woodland impacts on Phase One since 2017	5
	Table 2: Summary of schemes delivered as of 2021 through the HS2 Woodland Fund on Phase One	9
	Table 3: Detailed breakdown of changes to HS2's impact on Phase One ancient woodlands	10

1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This report provides information on how HS2 Ltd has reduced impacts to ancient woodlands on Phase One since publication of the Environmental Statement in 2017. The area of ancient woodlands that we originally reported would be lost has reduced by 5.7 hectares since the Environmental Statement was published, from 29.4 hectares to 23.7 hectares, representing a 19.25% reduction.
- 1.1.2 There are over 52,000 ancient woodland sites in England. Our new assessments mean that our Phase One work is now set to affect 25 ancient woodlands compared with 32 ancient woodlands previously forecast to be impacted in the Environmental Statement and the Phase One Ancient Woodland Strategy¹.
- 1.1.3 Where an ancient woodland is described as affected, in many cases this means a small section of an overall woodland is affected. On Phase One, 85% of the total area of the 25 ancient woodlands will remain intact and untouched by HS2.
- 1.1.4 This report provides more details on how we have achieved this reduction.
- 1.1.5 Ancient woodlands are areas that have been continuously wooded since at least 1600AD. They are complex ecosystems and take hundreds of years to establish. As such they are irreplaceable². Both ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) are afforded equal policy protection under the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 1.1.6 HS2 Ltd have incorporated avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures across all phases of the Project in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy. We have designed, where reasonably practicable, to avoid impacts on sensitive ecological receptors like ancient woodlands. However, given the scale of HS2, and a series of sometimes conflicting environmental constraints, there are locations where impacts to ancient woodlands cannot be reasonably avoided. In these instances, design development seeks to mitigate impacts and reduce the areas of ancient woodland loss where reasonably practicable.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-phase-one-ancient-woodland-strategy> (Last accessed 19/01/22)

² National Planning Policy Framework (2021) Glossary defines irreplaceable habitats as: 'Habitats which would be technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity. They include ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, blanket bog, limestone pavement, sand dunes, salt marsh and lowland fen.'

- 1.1.7 Where losses of ancient woodland are expected to occur, a range of compensatory measures have been proposed by HS2 Ltd, including:
- Translocation of ancient woodland soils;
 - Translocation of coppice stools, bulbs and deadwood;
 - New woodland creation; and
 - Enhancement of existing ancient and non-ancient woodlands.
- 1.1.8 A combination of the above measures will be employed, utilising professional ecological judgement, in order to provide an appropriate level of compensation for each ancient woodland loss that occurs as a result of HS2. The compensation requirements for individual impacts have been considered on a site-by-site basis, taking into account the scale of the impacts of the woodland affected, before consolidating this into a suitable compensation strategy for the wider local area.
- 1.1.9 The location and design of habitat creation areas, including woodland planting to compensate for the loss of ancient woodland, has sought (where possible) to adhere to the key Lawton Review³ principles of '*Bigger, Better, More and Joined*'. These principles aim to result in habitat creation areas which will also enhance and connect habitat parcels within the local area. These measures also support climate change adaptation by increasing the resilience of ecological networks.
- 1.1.10 HS2 Ltd launched the HS2 Green Corridor online mapping tool⁴ in 2020 to show how the Project is minimising and compensating for environmental impacts and the progress of environmental and community projects. The HS2 Green Corridor online mapping tool is an open source, interactive mapping tool. We intend to update the HS2 Green Corridor online mapping tool in 2022 to show HS2's impact on ancient woodlands and their associated compensation on Phase One. This information pertaining to ancient woodland impacts and associated compensation measures on the HS2 Green Corridor online mapping tool will be updated annually and will include other phases of HS2 once they start construction.
- 1.1.11 This summary report, which is required by the High Speed Rail (West Midlands – Crewe) Act 2021, looks at the background to our strategy and our work to date to reduce ancient woodland impacts. It provides information on how we have reduced impacts to ancient woodlands on Phase One since publication of the Environmental Statement to 2021. This report will be updated again in summer 2022 and then updated annually, in line with future publications of the HS2 Environmental

³ Lawton, J.H., Brotherton, P.N.M., Brown, V.K., Elphick, C., Fitter, A.H., Forshaw, J., Haddow, R.W., Hilborne, S., Leafe, R.N., Mace, G.M., Southgate, M.P., Sutherland, W.J., Tew, T.E., Varley, J., & Wynne, G.R. (2010) Making Space for Nature: a review of England's wildlife sites and ecological network. Report to Defra.

⁴ <https://www.hs2.org.uk/building-hs2/sustainability-and-environment/hs2-green-corridor> (Last accessed 19/01/22)

Sustainability Progress Report⁵, to include other phases of HS2 once they start construction and sufficient information is available to report on. It is recommended that this document is read in conjunction with the Phase One Ancient Woodland Strategy.

⁵ HS2 (2021) Environmental Sustainability Progress Report

2 Background to our ancient woodland reporting

- 2.1.1 The Phase One Ancient Woodland Strategy, published in 2017, set out our forecast for how building HS2 would affect ancient woodlands on the route between London and the West Midlands. It was followed by the Phase 2a Ancient Woodland Strategy⁶ in 2020 and the Phase 2b Western Leg Ancient Woodland Strategy will be published later in 2022. These documents look at the expected effects of our work on ancient woodlands from the West Midlands to Crewe and from Crewe to Manchester respectively.
- 2.1.2 This summary report builds on these strategies. It summarises the impact of HS2 on ancient woodlands and how this has evolved from 2017 to 2021.
- 2.1.3 As of 2021, we have only started building⁷ Phase One of HS2. For this reason, the information in this document is confined to this part of the HS2 network. We will update this document when we start early works on subsequent phases of the railway, starting with Phase 2a between the West Midlands and Crewe.

⁶https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/872799/CS_Phase2aAncientWoodlandStrategy_RD.pdf (Last accessed 19/01/22)

⁷ The construction phase is defined as the period once all pre-commencement conditions have been discharged and the main civils contractors commence work. Construction does not include enabling works such as ground investigation works.

3 Changes since the Phase One Environmental Statement

3.1.1 There have been reductions to our forecast in the areas of ancient woodlands that will be lost due to HS2 and our planned works based on the current design. These changes have happened since the Environmental Statement was published for Phase One.

3.1.2 A summary of the changes, based on our 2021 forecast as detailed in the HS2 Environmental Sustainability Progress Report, is shown in Table 1. A detailed breakdown of changes per ancient woodland on Phase One is shown in (Appendix 1).

Table 1: Summary of changes to the area of ancient woodland impacts on Phase One since 2017

Document reporting ancient woodland impacts	Year	Area of ancient woodland loss (ha)
Environmental Statement and Ancient Woodland Strategy	2017	29.4
Environmental Sustainability Progress Report	2021	23.7

3.1.3 The area of ancient woodlands that we originally reported would be lost has reduced by 5.7 hectares since the Environmental Statement was published.

3.1.4 As of 2021, we now forecast the total area of ancient woodlands that will be lost is approximately 23.7 hectares (including 4.6 hectares of PAWS) compared with 29.4 hectares (including 4.6 hectares of PAWS) as previously reported in the Environmental Statement and Phase One Ancient Woodland Strategy. To date, through design development, we have therefore reduced the area of ancient woodlands forecast to be impacted by approximately a fifth.

3.1.5 As of 2021, our work is now set to affect 25 ancient woodlands compared with 32 ancient woodlands previously forecast to be impacted in the Environmental Statement and the Phase One Ancient Woodland Strategy.

3.1.6 The reduction of 5.7 hectares includes two woodlands that have been declassified and removed from the ancient woodland inventory by Natural England since the Environmental Statement and Phase One Ancient Woodland Strategy.

3.1.7 As of 2021, approximately 16.1 hectares of ancient woodland has been felled.

3.1.8 The revised forecast in the areas of ancient woodland losses and associated compensation shown in Table 1 and Table 2 and the total area of ancient woodland felled as reported above are based on the 2021 design data. The measurements collected after the works have been completed at each woodland ('as-built' data) are being collated and will be used to inform updated figures in the summer 2022 report. This means the figures presented in this report are subject to change as design development and construction progresses. Any changes in impacts to ancient woodlands and associated compensation will also be published in the annual Environmental Sustainability Progress Report and will be annually updated onto the HS2 Green Corridor online mapping tool.

4 The HS2 Green Corridor and Ancient Woodland reporting

4.1.1 HS2 Ltd intends to include the data on ancient woodland impacts and associated compensation on the HS2 Green Corridor online mapping tool to give people a better picture of the work we are undertaking on the ground as we build the railway. It is anticipated that this data on Phase One will be included on the HS2 Green Corridor online mapping tool during 2022, alongside the next update of this report.

4.1.2 The HS2 Green Corridor online mapping tool will provide layers of detail to help people see and better understand the effects of constructing HS2 on ancient woodlands, and how we are compensating. It will show where we have:

- avoided ancient woodlands;
- impacts on ancient woodlands;
- reduced the impact of HS2 on ancient woodlands; and
- made best endeavours to compensate for our work when it affects ancient woodlands, including areas of compensatory planting, ancient woodland soil translocation, woodland enhancements and projects delivered under the HS2 Woodland Fund⁸.

4.1.3 The HS2 Green Corridor online mapping tool is available on our website and further information on this initiative is outlined within the accompanying prospectus: (<https://www.hs2.org.uk/building-hs2/sustainability-and-environment/hs2-green-corridor>).

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hs2-woodland-fund> (Last accessed: 19/01/22)

5 Consulting with our stakeholders

- 5.1.1 HS2 Ltd is working with the Woodland Trust to develop the format for presenting our ancient woodland data on the HS2 Green Corridor online mapping tool to make sure it provides an accurate picture of our work. We have consulted with Natural England, the Woodland Trust, the Forestry Commission and the Department for Transport about our method for reporting on ancient woodlands.
- 5.1.2 The structure of this summary report and the format for presenting our ancient woodland data on the HS2 Green Corridor online mapping tool have been agreed between HS2 Ltd the Woodland Trust.
- 5.1.3 We liaise with Natural England when it updates its Ancient Woodland Inventory, which identifies more than 52,000 ancient woodlands in England⁹. We will update this report, and the ancient woodland data on the HS2 Green Corridor online mapping tool, to align with the latest data later in 2022. This report and the HS2 Green Corridor online mapping tool will then be updated annually in line with the HS2 Environmental Sustainability Progress Report. We also have a Service Level Agreement with Natural England which means the communication on matters like updates to the Ancient Woodland Inventory is quick.
- 5.1.4 Two woodlands relevant to the Phase One route that were reported as being ancient woodlands have been removed from the Ancient Woodland Inventory¹⁰ by Natural England since we produced an Environment Statement to accompany the Phase One legislation in 2013. The two woodlands are included in this report for information. However, these two woodlands and any additional woodlands that Natural England remove from the Ancient Woodland Inventory will not be included in HS2's future reporting on ancient woodlands.
- 5.1.5 We will continue to work with Natural England to identify updates to the Ancient Woodland Inventory and reflect any updates in our reporting.

⁹ Natural England Open Data

<https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/a14064ca50e242c4a92d020764a6d9df/explore>

¹⁰ The woodlands declassified and removed from the ancient woodland inventory by Natural England are: 'Woodland along the bridleway adjacent to the landfill southeast of Calvert' and 'Woodland opposite Decoypond Wood'.

6 The HS2 Woodland Fund

- 6.1.1 HS2 Ltd have established a £5 million HS2 Woodland Fund on Phase One to support new woodland creation and PAWS restoration projects in the area 25 miles around the Phase One route on third party land. This fund provides additional compensation, beyond the mitigation measures outlined in the Environmental Statement and Ancient Woodland Strategy, for unavoidable impacts to ancient woodlands. A similar £2 million HS2 Woodland Fund on Phase 2a will be launched in 2022.
- 6.1.2 The HS2 Woodland Fund provides capital funding to restore and maintain PAWS sites, including restocking with native trees and shrubs, and associated items including fencing, gates and natural flood management items. It also provides capital funding for creating, protecting and maintaining new native woodland.
- 6.1.3 HS2 Ltd has a contract with Forestry Commission to design, deliver and manage the HS2 Woodland Fund on Phase One up to 2023. A further contract will be drawn up for the administration of the HS2 Woodland Fund on Phase 2a.
- 6.1.4 Table 2 provides a summary of the schemes delivered through the HS2 Woodland Fund on Phase One as of 2021.

Table 2: Summary of schemes delivered as of 2021 through the HS2 Woodland Fund on Phase One

Number of HS2 Woodland Fund schemes	Total value of HS2 Woodland Fund schemes	Area of woodland creation schemes (ha)	Area of PAWS restoration schemes (ha)	Total number of trees planted
25	c. £756k	92 (c. 156k trees)	52 (c. 57k trees)	c. 213

- 6.1.5 HS2 Ltd will continue to work with the Forestry Commission to deliver additional schemes through the HS2 Woodland Fund on Phase One to the value of £5 million.
- 6.1.6 The locations of the HS2 Woodland Fund schemes that have been delivered to date will be shown on the HS2 Green Corridor online mapping tool in summer 2022.
- 6.1.7 Further information about the HS2 Woodland Fund on Phase One can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hs2-woodland-fund>

Appendix 1

Table 3: Detailed breakdown of changes to HS2's impact on Phase One ancient woodlands

Ancient woodland	Area of ancient woodland (ha)	Area of anticipated direct loss of ancient woodland reported in Ancient Woodland Strategy (2017)	Updated anticipated direct loss of ancient woodland in 2021 (ha)	Change in anticipated direct loss of ancient woodland (ha)	Updated area of ancient woodland that will be retained within Act limits (ha)	Updated area of receptor site for ancient woodland soils (ha)	Updated area of new planting in response to loss of ancient woodland (excluding ancient woodland soils receptor site) (ha)	Updated area of enhancement and/or restoration of ancient woodland (ha)	Updated area of enhancement and/or restoration non-ancient woodland (ha)
Newyear's Green Covert	2.2	-	-	-	2.2	-	-	-	-
Pinnocks Wood	2.2	-	-	-	0.3	-	-	-	-
Ranston Covert and Battlesford Wood	2.3	0.1	-	-0.1	0.1	-	-	-	-
Jones' Hill Wood	1.8	0.7	0.7	-	-	0.7	4.1	-	-
Woodland along the bridleway adjacent to the landfill southeast of Calvert (Sheephouse Wood) ¹¹	N/A	1.4	-	-1.4	1.4	-	-	-	-
Woodland opposite Decoypond Wood ¹¹	N/A	0.9	-	-0.9	0.9	-	-	-	-
Decoypond Wood	8.6	1.1	1.1	-	-	1.1	-	-	-

¹¹ Woodlands have been declassified and removed from the Ancient Woodland Inventory by Natural England since the Environmental Statement

High Speed Two
Ancient Woodland Summary Report

Ancient woodland	Area of ancient woodland (ha)	Area of anticipated direct loss of ancient woodland reported in Ancient Woodland Strategy (2017)	Updated anticipated direct loss of ancient woodland in 2021 (ha)	Change in anticipated direct loss of ancient woodland (ha)	Updated area of ancient woodland that will be retained within Act limits (ha)	Updated area of receptor site for ancient woodland soils (ha)	Updated area of new planting in response to loss of ancient woodland (excluding ancient woodland soils receptor site) (ha)	Updated area of enhancement and/or restoration of ancient woodland (ha)	Updated area of enhancement and/or restoration non-ancient woodland (ha)
Woodland to the south of Calvert and west of the route	0.3	0.1	0.1	-	-	0.1	24.0 (combined provision)	-	-
Woodland to the south of Calvert and east of the route	0.8	0.5	0.5	-	-	0.5		-	-
Fox Covert (Whitfield)	0.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mossycorner Spinney	0.5	0.3	0.3	-	-	0.3	3.6	-	-
Halse Copse South	6.0	0.3	0.3	-	-	0.3	9.8	-	-
Fox Covert (Glyn Davies Wood)	3.3	1.3	0.3	-1.0	0.3	0.3	7.7	-	-
Burnt Firs	1.4	1.1	-	-1.1	1.1	-	-	-	-
South Cubbington	33.6	2.0 (all PAWS)	2.0 (all PAWS)	-	1.5	2.0	6.7	-	-
Unnamed Woodland south of the B4115 Ashow Road in Stoneleigh	1.1	0.2	0.2	-	-	0.2	0.2	-	-
Crackley Wood North, including Crackley Wood North Extension	5.6	1.0	1.0	-	-	1.0	0.9 (combined provision)	-	-

High Speed Two
Ancient Woodland Summary Report

Ancient woodland	Area of ancient woodland (ha)	Area of anticipated direct loss of ancient woodland reported in Ancient Woodland Strategy (2017)	Updated anticipated direct loss of ancient woodland in 2021 (ha)	Change in anticipated direct loss of ancient woodland (ha)	Updated area of ancient woodland that will be retained within Act limits (ha)	Updated area of receptor site for ancient woodland soils (ha)	Updated area of new planting in response to loss of ancient woodland (excluding ancient woodland soils receptor site) (ha)	Updated area of enhancement and/or restoration of ancient woodland (ha)	Updated area of enhancement and/or restoration non-ancient woodland (ha)
Birches Wood	0.6	0.6	0.6	-	-	0.6		-	-
Roughknowles Wood	5.0	0.4 (all PAWS)	0.4 (all PAWS)	-	-	0.4	0.6	-	-
Broadwells Wood	15.6	3.6 (including 0.4ha PAWS)	3.6 (including 0.4ha PAWS)	-	0.7	3.3	5.7	8.3 (combined provision)	-
Black Waste Wood	11.0	0.6	0.6	-	-	-	0.2		-
Little Poors Wood	1.4	0.2	0.2	-	-	-	-		-
Sych Wood	4.4	0.2	-	-0.2	0.2	-	-		-
North Wood	7.1	1.8 (including 0.3ha PAWS)	1.8 (including 0.3ha PAWS)	-	-	1.8	0.7	-	-
Walkers Spinney	1.2	0.1	0.1	-	-	0.1	-	-	-
Unnamed Copse off Drayton Lane	0.2	0.2	0.2	-	-	0.2	0.2	-	-
Roundhill Wood	4.2	1.3	1.3	-	-	1.3	10.9 (combined provision)	-	-
Rookery	7.4	1.4	1.4	-	0.1	1.7		-	-
Fulfen Wood	1.0	0.4	0.4	-	0.6	0.4	0.9	-	-
Little Lyntus Wood	1.4	1.4	1.4	-	0.8	2.2 (combined provision)	1.4	-	-
Big Lyntus Wood	5.3	0.8 (all PAWS)	0.8 (all PAWS)	-	-		0.4	-	-

High Speed Two
Ancient Woodland Summary Report

Ancient woodland	Area of ancient woodland (ha)	Area of anticipated direct loss of ancient woodland reported in Ancient Woodland Strategy (2017)	Updated anticipated direct loss of ancient woodland in 2021 (ha)	Change in anticipated direct loss of ancient woodland (ha)	Updated area of ancient woodland that will be retained within Act limits (ha)	Updated area of receptor site for ancient woodland soils (ha)	Updated area of new planting in response to loss of ancient woodland (excluding ancient woodland soils receptor site) (ha)	Updated area of enhancement and/or restoration of ancient woodland (ha)	Updated area of enhancement and/or restoration non-ancient woodland (ha)
Ravenshaw Wood	7.9	1.7 (including 0.7ha of PAWS)	1.7 (including 0.7ha of PAWS)	-	-	1.7	2.7	8.7 (combined provision)	13.0 (combined provision)
Slaish Wood	2.6	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Vicar's Coppice	7.7	0.6	-	-0.6	0.6	-	-	-	-
John's Gorse (including Hanch Wood)	3.4	2.7	2.7	-	<0.1	2.7	0.5	-	-
Park Hall Wood	3.0	0.4	-	-0.4	5.9	-	-	-	-
TOTALS		29.4 (including 4.6ha PAWS)	23.7 (including 4.6ha PAWS)	-5.7	16.7	22.9	81.2	17.0	13.0