



Phase 2b Western Leg Information Paper

D7: Construction timetable for the Phase 2b Western Leg

This paper outlines the construction timetable for the Proposed Scheme, including an overview of the key stages and a timeline to the commencement of services.

It will be of particular interest to those potentially affected by the Government's proposals for high speed rail.

This paper was prepared in relation to the promotion of the High Speed Rail (Crewe - Manchester) Bill. Content will be maintained and updated as considered appropriate during the passage of the Bill.

If you have any queries about this paper or about how it might apply to you, please contact the HS2 Helpdesk in the first instance.

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 High Speed Two (HS2) is the Government's scheme for a new, high speed north-south railway, which is being taken forward in a number of phases. Phase One will connect London with Birmingham and the West Midlands. Phase 2a will extend the route from the West Midlands to Crewe. The Phase 2b Western Leg will connect Crewe to Manchester. As set out in the Integrated Rail Plan, published in November 2021, HS2 East is proposed to deliver a new high speed line from the West Midlands to East Midlands Parkway.
- 1.2 HS2 Ltd is the non-departmental public body responsible for developing and promoting these proposals. The company works under the terms of a Development Agreement entered into with the Secretary of State for Transport.
- 1.3 The construction and operation of Phase One of HS2 is authorised by the High Speed Rail (London – West Midlands) Act 2017 and Phase 2a by the High Speed Rail (West Midlands – Crewe) Act 2021.
- 1.4 In January 2022, the Government introduced a hybrid Bill to Parliament (hereafter referred to as 'the Bill'), to seek powers for the construction and operation of the Phase 2b Western Leg (the Proposed Scheme), which is called the High Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester) Bill. The Proposed Scheme comprises the Phase 2b Western Leg from Crewe to Manchester and several off-route works. It also facilitates the delivery of Northern Powerhouse Rail by providing the Crewe Northern Connection and junctions and other infrastructure to be used in future schemes.
- 1.5 The work to produce the Bill includes an Equalities Impact Assessment and an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), the results of which are reported in an Environmental Statement (ES) submitted alongside the Bill. The Secretary of State has also published draft Environmental Minimum Requirements (EMRs), which set out the environmental and sustainability commitments that will be observed in the construction of the Proposed

Scheme. For more information on the EMRs please see Information Paper E1: Control of environmental impacts.

- 1.6 The Secretary of State for Transport is the Promoter of the Bill through Parliament. The Promoter will also appoint a body responsible for delivering the Proposed Scheme under the powers granted by the Bill. This body is known as the 'nominated undertaker'. There may 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 EMRs and any commitments provided in the information papers.
- 1.7 These information papers have been produced to explain the commitments made in the Bill and the EMRs and how they will be applied to the design and construction of the Proposed Scheme. They also provide information about the Proposed Scheme itself, the powers contained in the Bill and how particular decisions about the Proposed Scheme have been reached.

2 Overview

- 2.1 This paper outlines the construction timetable for the Proposed Scheme, including an overview of the key stages and a timeline to the commencement of services.
- 2.2 The construction and commissioning of the Proposed Scheme is expected to take place in stages between 2024 and 2035. The programme and planning assumptions for the construction are set out in Section 2 of each Environmental Statement Community Area Report. The duration, intensity and scale of works along the route will vary over this period.

3 Timetable for construction of the Proposed Scheme

- 3.1 Following site clearance work, the main construction works for the Proposed Scheme will approximately start in early 2027 and complete in late 2033, ending with completion of railway systems installation. This will be followed by a period of testing and commissioning before

commencing trial operations from 2035-2036 from Manchester to Birmingham and London Stations.

3.2 Once the main engineering works have been completed, the installation of all equipment necessary to operate the railway will begin. The railway will then be handed over to the team responsible for operational testing and commissioning.

3.3 Indicative construction timetabling is available for each construction compound in the Community Area reports of the Environmental Statement.

4 Key stages in the construction of the Proposed Scheme

4.1 An overview of the key stages involved in the construction of the Proposed Scheme is set out below.

Environmental Mitigation

4.2 Prior to any major civil engineering works commencing, appropriate environmental mitigation works will have been undertaken. These will include species translocation where necessary, ground investigation surveys and archaeological surveys.

Site clearance

4.3 During this stage, the nominated undertaker will take possession of the land required for construction purposes, set up construction compounds and clear the site ready for construction. Site clearance includes enabling works and activities such as utility diversions and demolition of buildings.

Earthworks

4.4 Once the site is prepared, the nominated undertaker will start earthworks. These will include excavating cuttings, building embankments and the start of tunnel construction.

Civil engineering works

- 4.5 With the general line of the railway established, the nominated undertaker will build the structures to support the railway. These will include bridges (over or under the railway), tunnels, viaducts and retaining walls.

Railway installation

- 4.6 Following completion of the track bed, the nominated undertaker will install the railway systems, including ballast, slab, tracks, signalling and the power supply.

5 System testing and commissioning

- 5.1 The railway will be fully tested to ensure it can operate safely and reliably. Testing and commissioning will allow operational procedures to be tested and refined alongside the training of staff.
- 5.2 Testing will start at the southern end of the route. This will allow the testing of train operating systems at the earliest opportunity. The period of testing and commissioning is expected to extend over two years, commencing in 2033 and completing in 2035.

6 Commencement of services

- 6.1 On current plans, passenger services for the Crewe – Manchester section of HS2 are expected to commence at some point between 2036 to 2041, interfacing with the existing live passenger services from London to Birmingham & Crewe (Phase One and Phase 2a).

7 More information

- 7.1 More detail on the Bill and related documents can be found at www.gov.uk/hs2-phase2b-crewe-manchester.