

# HS2 railhead and maintenance base update



December 2017

High Speed Two (HS2) is the new national high speed railway which will increase capacity and reduce journey times on the rail network. HS2 Ltd is the organisation responsible for designing and building the new railway.

Phase 2a of HS2 is the planned 36 miles of new railway between Fradley and Crewe, running close to the M6 between Yarnfield and Stone.

In July this year the Government introduced in Parliament a hybrid Bill for Phase 2a of HS2 to secure the powers needed to build this section of the railway. The Bill includes plans for a construction 'railhead' and railway infrastructure maintenance base next to the M6 near Stone. This leaflet provides some key information about the scheme.

## About the proposed railhead and maintenance base

- HS2 Ltd plans to use land between Yarnfield and Stone next to the M6 as a 'railhead' for Phase 2a. A railhead is a temporary construction facility connected to the existing railway and the new railway.
- We then plan to use the same land as a permanent maintenance base (sometimes referred to as the Infrastructure Maintenance Base – Rail, or IMB-R) once the railway is operating.

## Why have we chosen the site between Yarnfield and Stone for the railhead?

- The site adjoins the M6, which would allow heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) to access it directly on new dedicated slip roads. This will reduce the impact of construction traffic on local roads.
- The site also has access to an existing operational railway – the Norton Bridge to Stone line. This will allow us to move large amounts of construction equipment and material by rail, reducing further the impact on local roads.
- The site is approximately halfway along the Phase 2a route. Building the railhead here, rather than at one end of the railway, would enable us to build in north and south directions at the same time. This will reduce the overall construction time.

## What is the IMB-R?

- Once the new railway is complete, the IMB-R is a base for maintenance trains which service the railway overnight (when passenger services are not running).
- During the day, operations at the IMB-R will include planning, management and preparation for maintenance activities, such as loading maintenance trains. Once the passenger service draws to a close in the evening, maintenance trains will leave the IMB-R and travel to wherever maintenance is needed. The majority of actual maintenance works will be carried out away from the IMB-R and along the railway overnight. These maintenance trains will then return to the IMB-R before passenger services start again in the morning.

## Why has HS2 Ltd chosen to use the same site for the IMB-R?

- The railhead will be located on what would become an isolated site between the M6 and the new HS2 line. If we also use this land for the IMB-R, we won't need to take any additional land elsewhere.
- It removes the need for additional rail sidings which we had planned for Pipe Ridware, reducing the overall amount of land needed and allowing us to lower the height of the railway in that area.
- It will allow even spacing of maintenance bases along the new railway between London and Manchester once the whole of HS2 is operational from 2033.

## Have you considered alternative sites?

Yes. We considered other options before deciding to locate the railhead and IMB-R near Stone. These are reported in the Environmental Statement published alongside the Phase 2a Bill in July. None of the alternative options offered comparable benefits to the site near Stone.

Since then, we have undertaken further assessment of a suggested alternative location at Aldersey's Rough, near Madeley, which was proposed by a local interest group. Our view remains that the site near Stone is the preferred option. The reasons for this include that Aldersey's Rough:

- does not have ready access to the M6;
- does not have ready access to the existing rail network;
- is not as centrally located on the Phase 2a route as the Stone site;
- is bounded by complex infrastructure (tunnels) which are technically challenging and could affect the overall construction timetable if they were delayed.

It is also worth noting that even without a railhead, work on the site near Stone would still affect local people because the new railway needs to go over the existing railway and M6 there, which would require considerable earthworks and associated HGV traffic. The Aldersey's Rough site would be unaffected if we use the site near Stone.

## How will you manage the traffic impacts in the local area during construction?

Construction related HGV traffic would primarily access the site from the M6 using new dedicated slip roads, reducing the impact on local roads. We expect the slip roads to take nine months to construct, and to be in place from about March 2022. Before the slip roads are built, we expect peak HGV numbers using Yarnfield Lane to be 436 a day (218 each way). After that, the impact on Yarnfield Lane will be significantly reduced, and we will work with the highway authorities to manage impacts of traffic on the road network throughout.

A number of measures will be in place to ensure that the impact of HS2 on the road network is reduced as far as reasonably practicable during construction. We are also working closely with both the local highway authority and Highways England to make sure our proposals for managing construction traffic are appropriate. Construction vehicles and their impact on road safety will also be managed, monitored and controlled throughout construction.

## Are you still planning to close Yarnfield Lane?

No. We plan to realign Yarnfield Lane with a new bridge to achieve the necessary clearance over the new railway. We intend to keep the road open during construction, other than for two weekends when we would connect the new bridge with the existing road. The local community will be informed of any closures well in advance.

## How will you manage the impacts during operation?

A number of measures will be in place to reduce the impacts of the IMB-R when it is in use.

The design of the lighting will be sympathetic to the local area. The height of lighting installations will be kept as low as reasonably practicable to reduce and control light emission. Automatic lighting control systems and time clocks will be used to operate all external lighting. The external lighting at the IMB-R will be designed to preserve the current levels of darkness in the area and reduce obtrusive light as much as possible.

Operational noise from the IMB-R will be controlled through measures to reduce so far as is reasonably practicable any adverse noise effects. The control measures may include the use of low noise machinery, the design and insulation of site buildings and any on site mitigation considered necessary, including barriers or landscape earthworks.

HS2 Phase 2a Information Paper F3 sets out how we will manage other impacts, such as dust, landscape and visual, and ecological impacts. It can be found here: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/operations-hs2-phase-2a-information-papers](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/operations-hs2-phase-2a-information-papers).

## Where can I find out more?

As well as the Information Paper mentioned above, further information is available in the Environmental Statement for Phase 2a, and in the draft Code of Construction Practice, both published in July 2017. These are all available on the Phase 2a pages of our website [www.gov.uk/hs2](http://www.gov.uk/hs2).

Following the introduction of the Bill in July, Parliament held a consultation on the Environmental Statement for Phase 2a. An independent assessor appointed by Parliament produced a report last month on the issues raised in the consultation. The report is available on Parliament's website, and includes issues raised in relation to the railhead and IMB-R.

## What happens next?

The next step in the Parliamentary process will be the Bill's Second Reading. That is when MPs debate the principle of the Bill, including the need for the scheme.

You can find more information about the Bill at [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk).

**If you have any questions or if you would like to find out more, you can get in touch:**

 **Write to:** HS2 Helpdesk, Two Snowhill, Snow Hill Queensway,  
Birmingham, B4 6GA

 **Email:** [hs2enquiries@hs2.org.uk](mailto:hs2enquiries@hs2.org.uk)

 **Telephone:** 08081 434 434

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