



HS2 London to West Midlands Environmental Impact Assessment Scope and Methodology Report Consultation Statement

On 4 April 2012 HS2 Ltd undertook an eight week consultation on the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scope and Methodology Report (SMR), published on 4 September 2012.

The SMR is intended to establish the overall approaches that should be taken during the EIA of HS2, from London to the West Midlands. The scope and methodology defines the environmental topics that should be assessed as part of the EIA, the methods that are to be used and the geographic and temporal scope of the EIA.

Although HS2 Ltd is not statutorily required to consult on the draft EIA SMR, we specifically sought comments from relevant organisations and representatives, identified for their expertise in this area. However, the EIA SMR was also made available on the HS2 Ltd and DfT websites and Community Forums were informed so that other organisations or individuals could respond to the consultation.

The list of organisations that were directly informed about the consultation was informed by the Town and Country Planning EIA Regulations and IPC standards. We also included organisations who we believed to be interested in the consultation and are known to hold relevant technical expertise. The consultation was also published on our website to give everyone the opportunity to respond. We welcomed evidence-based technical comments relating to the draft EIA SMR from everyone.

At the time of the consultation Government guidance on full public consultations advised a 12 week consultation period. As this consultation was not targeted at those affected by the route, but those with expert technical views on how the environmental impacts should be assessed, 12 weeks was not considered appropriate. A six week consultation period was considered, however in recognition of the local election purdah period and the restrictions this may place on local authorities, an eight week consultation period was undertaken. This is longer than the 28 days required under the equivalent regulations for developments considered by the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC).

In total 166 responses to the consultation were received. Each response was reviewed by the technical environmental topic authors of the draft SMR and a summary of which has been produced - "HS2 London to West Midlands EIA

Scope and Methodology consultation summary report – A report to HS2 Ltd by Arup/URS”

While most consultation responses were focussed on the EIA SMR itself and have been addressed in the above mentioned Consultation Summary report, a number of responses commented on issues outside of the scope of this consultation.

Many of these comments relate to the next phase of design development and mitigation measures which will be the subject of consultation in 2013, or compensation which will be the subject of consultation later this year. These comments have, however, been forwarded on to the relevant teams within HS2 Ltd to inform ongoing design and policy development.

Other comments addressed issues that were the subject of the public consultation in 2011, including the business case for high speed rail or the case for alternative route corridors. HS2 Ltd’s advice to Government, and the Government’s decisions on high speed rail, was published in January 2012.

Throughout the EIA process, HS2 Ltd will listen to the concerns of those who are likely to be affected by the HS2 London to West Midlands route. Our local engagement, particularly through Community Forums, will allow us to review options and explore improvements with the community. We will then be able to develop the design proposals in a way which incorporates local concerns.

A consultation on the draft Environmental Statement (ES) is proposed for spring 2013. The draft ES will describe the scheme, setting out the likely significant effects the HS2 project may have on the environment, and proposals to avoid, reduce or remedy significant adverse effects that may be identified. The consultation will give the public and organisations the opportunity to comment on the draft ES.