



Phase 2b Western Leg Information Paper

A2: Strategic case for the Phase 2b Western Leg

This paper outlines the strategic case for the Proposed Scheme, including improvements to capacity, connectivity and economic growth.

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 The Strategic Case

2.1 The Proposed Scheme is the High Speed Rail Crewe – Manchester Scheme. This is the western part of the Phase 2b route. It runs from Crewe to Manchester and is also known as the HS2 Phase 2b Western Leg. It has new stations at Manchester Piccadilly and Manchester Airport. It also has some works away from the main route, including a depot for train storage and maintenance at Annandale in Scotland.

2.2 The Proposed Scheme is the third phase of the HS2 programme. It will fulfil the ambition set out in 2010 to deliver a UK rail network for the 21st century. It will improve transport connections between towns and cities. It will increase rail capacity for trains, people and goods . And it will help services to run more reliably on schedule. The scheme is at the heart of the Government’s objectives to “build back better”, “level up” and support the UK’s commitment to net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

2.3 Over the last 20 years, the UK's average investment in its infrastructure, such as rail and bridges, has been low compared to other major economies. This has contributed to the UK being less productive than other major economies across the world like France, Germany, the US, and Japan. This means that the UK produces fewer goods and services with same amount of work and resources. A strong investment in infrastructure now would support the UK economy's recovery after the pandemic. It would enable the strong economic growth that Britain needs.

2.4 The main objectives of the Proposed Scheme are to:

- Connect the largest economic regions and cities across the UK
- Enable improvements to the rail network
- Improve places and prosperity across the North-West
- Build back better by investing in the development of technical skills
- Provide a sustainable long-term transport solution

2.5 Alternative rail plans for this part of the route have been considered. For example, upgrading the existing line instead of building a new one. However, such plans do not improve transport connections as much as the Proposed Scheme. This increased connectivity is needed to deliver transformational change to the North-West. Alternative plans also do not provide as much capacity and flexibility to increase the number of train journeys. And they do not support the development of the Metrolink system or the Northern Powerhouse Rail network.

3 Connecting the largest economic regions and cities across the UK

3.1 The gap in economic performance between the South-East and the North has been growing. Many of the UK's major cities produce fewer goods and services than they potentially could. Britain's major cities are significantly

less productive when compared to London than cities in many European countries are to their capitals.

- 3.2 The Proposed Scheme will better connect the UK's three largest economic centres: London, Manchester and Birmingham. This will allow for much faster and more frequent connections, which removes the need for businesses to concentrate in the south. This allows them to take financial advantage of moving to the Midlands and the North. It also allows them to provide more opportunities for jobs and workers across the regions. This will much improve the UK's ability to produce goods and services.
- 3.3 As well as connecting our biggest cities, the HS2 Crewe - Manchester Scheme will enable better high speed connectivity to Preston, and Carlisle by allowing 400m HS2 trains to call at the stations.

4 Enabling improvements to the rail network

Reducing crowding on the regular, non high speed rail network

- 4.1 The West Coast Main Line is the UK's most important strategic rail corridor. It connects the UK's biggest economic regions. It is also one of the busiest railway lines in Europe. It can no longer cope with demand, especially as it is constrained by a network built in the Victorian age. It suffers from overcrowded trains and poor reliability, which affect the journeys made by people each day for work, business and leisure. This further impacts productivity and economic growth.
- 4.2 The HS2 Crewe - Manchester scheme will build on the benefits generated by Phases One and 2a of HS2 and provide high speed infrastructure between Manchester and Crewe. Manchester Piccadilly High Speed station would be served by three HS2 services per hour from London and two HS2 services per hour from Birmingham via Crewe.
- 4.3 This means that many long-distance journeys are transferred onto HS2, which allows for more trains, goods, and passengers on the conventional rail network. This increased capacity will benefit the wider region and generate a positive change in the passenger experience.

Providing infrastructure for Northern Powerhouse Rail

- 4.4 The Proposed Scheme will deliver the infrastructure needed for possible connections with the Northern Powerhouse Rail network. Such infrastructure will be built at Manchester, Crewe, and Hoo Green. This will support the Northern Powerhouse strategy to deliver economic growth across the North.
- 4.5 The Government is also looking to give Scotland the transport connections it deserves. Sir Peter Hendy's Union Connectivity Review questioned the originally proposed connection between the HS2 route and the West Coast Main Line, known as the Golborne Link. The Review recommended that the Government review alternative options. Therefore the Government is committed to exploring alternatives that deliver similar benefits to the Golborne Link, within the £96bn envelope of the Integrated Rail Plan.

5 Improving places and prosperity across the North-west

Developing Greater Manchester and the North-West

- 5.1 Manchester City Centre has an economy with many highly trained professionals, and it has gone through a period of regrowth in the last 30 years. However, it remains comparatively small. The Proposed Scheme will grow the city centre economy and improve access to Manchester Airport.
- 5.2 The Proposed Scheme includes two new HS2 stations. One will be in the centre of Manchester at Manchester Piccadilly, and one will be close to Manchester Airport (subject to third party funding) that will be easy to reach from a range of destinations. For further details on these stations please refer to Information Paper F1: Manchester Piccadilly Station and Information Paper F2: Manchester Airport High Speed Station.

- 5.3 These stations will deliver substantial opportunities to improve people's opportunities, the places they live and work, and prosperity in the North-West. They will also help to attract investments from the private sector. They will support the creation of new businesses, jobs and housing in the Greater Manchester area and help secure Manchester's role as a global city, with those benefits felt across the region.
- 5.4 The benefits of the HS2 Crewe - Manchester scheme will extend far beyond Manchester. Local authorities across the North-West have developed plans based on the delivery of HS2. The Department for Transport is working with these local authorities to ensure they can make the most of the opportunity provided by HS2. For example, in Carlisle, a station Gateway Plan has been developed to make the station a transport hub to grow the local economy.

Increasing travel for leisure and tourism

- 5.5 The HS2 Crewe – Manchester scheme will make leisure journeys to the North-West even more attractive than they already are. It will provide faster journeys and an improved passenger experience. After London and Edinburgh, Manchester is the UK's top city visitor destination. The Proposed scheme will allow the Manchester tourism industry to blossom further and support other towns and cities in the region.

6 Building back better by investing in the development of technical skills

- 6.1 The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Skills for Jobs database (2019) reveals that the UK has shortages of technical skills in technology, engineering and science. By the age of 25, 33% percent of young people get a degree, but only 4% get a higher technical qualification. Since the 2000s, the number in higher technical education has decreased.
- 6.2 The Government's Plan for Jobs set out clear priorities to build back better, create and sustain jobs, and address skills gaps. HS2 is a key part of this. HS2 Ltd has engaged with over 3,500 businesses across the UK.

Around 60% of contracts within the supply chain are expected to be awarded to small and medium businesses.

- 6.3 Firms competing to get contracts to work for HS2 are required to demonstrate how their proposals will contribute to the improvement of the UK rail industry knowhow, employment and skills.
- 6.4 The National College for Advanced Transport & Infrastructure is supported by HS2 Ltd. It was created to address directly the shortage of high-level, technical expertise. The College has the potential to transform the future of the rail industry and of skills-based vocational training in the United Kingdom. This will benefit the country as well as the Doncaster and Birmingham communities of which it is part.
- 6.5 There will be 2,000 new apprenticeships as a result of the HS2 programme. 34,000 private sector jobs will be created to build HS2, and a further 3,000 jobs to operate HS2. HS2 will leave a lasting legacy of skills and knowhow amongst UK workers and businesses. This will support future UK work and the ability of UK businesses to compete.
- 6.6 HS2 is building on good practice adopted in major infrastructure programmes, such as Crossrail. For example, when deciding which firms should be awarded contracts to work for HS2, HS2 takes into account the potential impact on small businesses, the processes of making and selling goods within the UK, skills and apprenticeships.

7 Providing a sustainable transport solution

A drive towards better technologies and innovation

- 7.1 HS2 is the UK's most ambitious transport infrastructure project. It presents a big opportunity to drive new ideas and technologies for the railway industry. HS2 strives to enable such innovation, for example, by pursuing new and better technologies. This includes 'in-cab digital signalling', which allows signalling to happen in the train, rather than on the side of the tracks.

A transport solution that supports the UK's Net Zero carbon target

- 7.2 As a sector, transport currently represents the single greatest contributor to national greenhouse gas emissions. It accounted for 27% of Britain's total greenhouse gas emissions in 2019. Other industries, such as the power sector, have taken substantial steps in reducing their carbon emissions over recent years. Transport has been unable to make the same level of progress.
- 7.3 The HS2 Crewe – Manchester Scheme will be a sustainable form of transport. It offers significantly lower carbon emissions per passenger per kilometre travelled than cars (including electric ones) and air travel. The Scheme reduces journey times and increases train capacity between city centre locations across the UK. This has the potential to reduce carbon emissions by encouraging passengers to travel by train within the UK.

A net increase in biodiversity

- 7.4 The HS2 Crewe – Manchester Scheme is committed to provide more biodiversity than it removes. This commitment to increasing the volume and variety of species and ecosystems is part of HS2's environmental vision. This is in addition to existing work to reduce the negative effects of the Scheme on the natural homes of plants and animals. It is also in addition to compensation schemes designed to reduce the impact of the construction of the railway on local ecosystems.

8 More Information

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