



Phase 2b Western Leg Information Paper

F7: Rail freight operations

This paper outlines the interfaces between rail freight operations and HS2 both during construction and after the Proposed Scheme is in operation.

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

This information paper highlights the interfaces between HS2 and rail freight operations as a result of the implementation of the Proposed Scheme. They can be categorised under three broad headings (recognising that there is scope for overlap):

- temporary impacts arising as a consequence of construction activities;
- changes to the classic rail infrastructure to facilitate the construction or operation of the Proposed Scheme; and
- the operation of HS2 services which are compatible with the existing rail network.

The paper also touches on freight operations on HS2 infrastructure.

3 Legislative framework

This information paper reflects the legislative framework for rail and freight in place at the time of Bill deposit. The Williams-Shapps plan for rail, published in May 2021, proposed new legislation and changes to industry processes and frameworks. Should the legislative framework change during or shortly after the passage of the Bill, the position of HS2 will be confirmed as part of that process.

4 Interfaces with freight

The current regulatory structure for the railway is set out in the Railways Act 1993 (as amended by the Railways Act 2005). The Network Code is a set of contractual rules incorporated into each track access agreement between Network Rail and all train operators. In respect of Network Code arrangements, the expectation is that once the Proposed Scheme is constructed, arrangements to regulate works on the existing network and track access processes will either replicate the existing system or follow changes to the wider railway.

It is recognised that there are likely to be a number of detailed matters which cannot be covered appropriately in this more general information paper. HS2 Ltd anticipates further detailed discussion with individual operators to understand their concerns and explore possible measures that could be considered by the wider rail industry.

HS2 Ltd expects to work with all relevant parties – including the Department for Transport (DfT), Network Rail, Great British Railways and Office of Rail and Road (ORR), as well as freight operators and infrastructure owners – to properly understand and address the freight industry's concerns, and to best take advantage of the industry's detailed knowledge and experience.

5 Temporary impacts as a consequence of construction activities for the Proposed Scheme

There are two related but distinct construction related activities that have the potential to cause impacts on rail freight operations:

- As a consequence of construction works, possession(s) of the railway may be required at discrete sites on the existing rail network. These works will vary in size and complexity.
- Rail systems equipment such as rails, aggregates, track support systems, overhead line equipment (OLE) components and cables, as well as some excavated material arising from construction works, are proposed to be transported via rail freight on the existing rail network.

The Proposed Scheme also includes temporary construction sidings Ardwick for spoil removal at Manchester North Tunnels and temporary construction sidings at the Crewe Rolling Stock Depot for spoil removal from the Crewe Tunnels.

Initial example pathing studies have been undertaken, which indicate that there is capacity on the existing rail network to support the required number of train movements at predicted levels. This analysis is based on the current network, timetable, and known freight movements. HS2 Ltd will keep pathing capacity under review and further work is planned to be undertaken in advance of construction work commencing.

A conservative approach has been taken to the assumptions about freight loads. As construction planning develops the nominated undertaker will work with the rail industry to understand whether there is an opportunity to increase loads, and hence decrease the number of train movements required.

HS2 Ltd will work with the rail freight industry and Network Rail/Great British Railways during the next stages of the Proposed Scheme to further develop the preliminary routing identified above.

The existing rail freight operating companies are well experienced in providing bulk freight movements in support of the construction and railway industries, and it is likely that Proposed Scheme's requirements will be seen as a significant commercial opportunity by the rail freight industry. HS2 Ltd anticipates working with the rail freight operators to establish appropriate detailed arrangements as the Proposed Scheme

progresses, such that construction of the Proposed Scheme is able to maximise the benefits offered by rail freight.

The Bill does not seek powers to secure rail freight paths to support the construction of the Proposed Scheme. However, the analysis above, and the Environmental Statement which supports the Bill submission, assumes that the necessary paths will be available.

6 Changes to the classic rail infrastructure

There will be a need to modify existing railway infrastructure to accommodate the Proposed Scheme, which has the potential to impact on existing and future rail freight operations. For the Proposed Scheme this includes alterations to conventional stations at Preston and Carlisle to accommodate 400m HS2 trains.

The Bill does not seek to disapply the Network Code, and hence HS2 Ltd anticipates that the standard railway industry processes of “network change” and “station change”, together with the standard railway industry compensation processes, will either replicate the existing system or follow changes to the wider railway.

However, the principle of the changes to the conventional rail network required to facilitate the Proposed Scheme is established by the Bill, and hence it would not be appropriate for the Network Code processes to be used to block necessary works.

HS2 Ltd recognises that both rail freight and passenger operators are likely to have aspirations to increase service levels, such that there is inevitable competition for any spare capacity.

7 The operation of HS2 classic-compatible services on the existing rail network

The Bill does not seek powers to provide track access rights for HS2 classic-compatible services to operate on the existing network. However, it is anticipated that such classic-compatible services will operate. The rail

freight industry will be consulted regarding HS2's use of paths on the classic railway in accordance with standard industry processes.

Once the Western Leg of Phase 2b is operational, it is anticipated that two HS2 classic-compatible trains per hour (TPH) in each direction would join (and leave) the conventional network at Crewe and one TPH would do so at Handsacre.

8 Freight operations on HS2 infrastructure

The HS2 infrastructure has not been designed to accommodate traditional slow/heavy rail freight services. As a high speed, high capacity service, HS2 could not accommodate such traditional rail freight services without unacceptable detriment to capacity. A single rail freight path would require the removal of five high speed paths, or up to 5,500 seats per rail freight path.

9 More information

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

References

Great British Railways: Williams-Shapps plan for rail:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/great-british-railways-williams-shapps-plan-for-rail>