

November 2023

HS2

Ancient Woodland Summary Report

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1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This report provides information on how HS2 Ltd has reduced impacts to ancient woodlands on Phase One since publication of the Environmental Statement in 2017. The area of ancient woodlands that we originally reported would be lost has reduced by 8.4 hectares since the Environmental Statement was published, from 29.0¹ hectares to 20.6 hectares, representing a 29% reduction. These figures have not changed since the November 2022 version of this report as no further works have been carried out.
- 1.1.2 In England, ancient woodlands are areas that have been continuously wooded since at least 1600AD. They are complex ecosystems and take hundreds of years to establish. As such they are irreplaceable². Both ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) are afforded equal policy protection under the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 1.1.3 There are over 52,000 ancient woodland sites in England. Our new assessments mean that our Phase One work is now set to affect 25 ancient woodlands compared with 32 ancient woodlands previously forecast to be impacted in the Environmental Statement and the Phase One Ancient Woodland Strategy³.
- 1.1.4 Where an ancient woodland is described as affected, in many cases this means a small section of an overall woodland is affected. On Phase One, 88% of the total area of the 25 ancient woodlands will remain intact and untouched by HS2.
- 1.1.5 This report provides more details on how we have achieved this reduction.
- 1.1.6 HS2 Ltd have incorporated avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures across all phases of the Project in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy. We have designed, where reasonably practicable, to avoid impacts on sensitive ecological receptors like ancient woodlands. However, given the scale of HS2, and a series of sometimes conflicting environmental constraints, there are locations where impacts to ancient woodlands cannot be reasonably avoided. In these instances, design development seeks to mitigate impacts and reduce the areas of ancient woodland loss where reasonably practicable.

¹ The original area of loss within the Phase One Ancient Woodland Strategy contained an error in the total area of ancient woodland that was forecast to be lost at Broadwells Wood. This error included a 0.4ha area of non-ancient woodland and grassland in the total area of Broadwells Wood to be lost. This figure has been corrected in this report.

² National Planning Policy Framework (2021) Glossary defines irreplaceable habitats as: 'Habitats which would be technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity. They include ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, blanket bog, limestone pavement, sand dunes, salt marsh and lowland fen.'

³https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1070370/hs2_phase_one_ancient_woodland_strategy.pdf (Last accessed 17/08/22)

- 1.1.7 Where losses of ancient woodland are expected to occur, a range of compensatory measures have been proposed by HS2 Ltd, including:
- Translocation of ancient woodland soils;
 - Salvage of ancient woodland soils;
 - Translocation of coppice stools, bulbs and deadwood;
 - Salvage of coppice stools, bulbs and deadwood;
 - New woodland creation; and
 - Enhancement of existing ancient and non-ancient woodlands.
- 1.1.8 A combination of the above measures will be employed, utilising professional ecological judgement, in order to provide an appropriate level of compensation for each area of ancient woodland loss that occurs as a result of HS2. The compensation requirements for individual impacts have been considered on a site-by-site basis, taking into account the scale of the impacts of the woodland affected, before consolidating this into a suitable compensation strategy for the wider local area.
- 1.1.9 Ancient woodland soil translocation is a technique that follows established best practice (including timing and movement methods) and provides the soils the best opportunity for re-establishing within the donor site. Ancient woodland soil salvage is a technique that will follow as closely as possible what is described above by ancient woodland soil translocation whilst acknowledging that certain elements will not be conformed with (for example the timing or the works). Soil salvage will also involve provision of additional compensation measures (such as planting) to address the additional compensation needs of the site in question (determined on a site by site basis). Using the soil salvage approach provides a better use of these important soil resources that have developed over many hundreds of years compared to, for example, approaches such as the disposal of this material to landfill when soil translocation is not possible.
- 1.1.10 The location and design of habitat creation areas, including woodland planting to compensate for the loss of ancient woodland, has sought (where possible) to adhere to the key Lawton Review⁴ principles of 'Bigger, Better, More and Joined'. These principles aim to result in habitat creation areas which will also enhance and connect habitat parcels within the local area. These measures also support climate change adaptation by increasing the resilience of ecological networks.

⁴ Lawton, J.H., Brotherton, P.N.M., Brown, V.K., Elphick, C., Fitter, A.H., Forshaw, J., Haddow, R.W., Hilborne, S., Leafe, R.N., Mace, G.M., Southgate, M.P., Sutherland, W.J., Tew, T.E., Varley, J., & Wynne, G.R. (2010) Making Space for Nature: a review of England's wildlife sites and ecological network. Report to Defra.

- 1.1.11 We have published a new webpage on the HS2 website solely dedicated to HS2 and ancient woodlands⁵. This new webpage contains an online mapping tool that contains the latest data we have on ancient woodlands, including our compensation measures delivered to date. The data shown on this new mapping tool uses the data that was previously hosted on the HS2 Green Corridor online mapping tool. The information pertaining to ancient woodland impacts and associated compensation measures on this mapping tool will be updated annually, in line with the publication of the annual Ancient Woodland Summary Report, where there is updated information available.
- 1.1.12 This report also provides progress on the HS2 Woodland Fund, which funds new woodland creation and the restoration of Plantations of Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) within a 25-mile radius of HS2. The locations of schemes funded by the Phase One Woodland Fund are shown on the new mapping tool on the HS2 website.
- 1.1.13 This summary report, which is required by the High Speed Rail (West Midlands – Crewe) Act 2021, looks at the background to our strategy and our work to date to reduce ancient woodland impacts. It provides information on how we have reduced impacts to ancient woodlands on Phase One since publication of the Environmental Statement to the financial year 2022/23. This report will continue to be updated annually, in line with future publications of the HS2 Environmental Sustainability Progress Report⁶. It is recommended that this document is read in conjunction with the Phase One Ancient Woodland Strategy and previous versions of this Ancient Woodland Summary Report.

⁵ <https://www.hs2.org.uk/building-hs2/environmental-sustainability/ancient-woodland/> (Last accessed: 19/06/23)

⁶ High Speed Two Ltd (2021) *Environmental Sustainability Progress Report*

2 Background to our ancient woodland reporting

- 2.1.1 The Phase One Ancient Woodland Strategy was published in 2017. It set out our forecast for how building HS2 would affect ancient woodlands on the route between London and the West Midlands based on the design at the time of submission of the hybrid Bill..
- 2.1.2 This summary report sets out the impact of HS2 on ancient woodlands and how this has evolved from 2017 to 2023 as the designs have developed.
- 2.1.3 Further information on HS2 Ltd's approach to managing Ancient Woodland impacts can be found here www.gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-ancient-woodland-reports

3 Changes since the Phase One Environmental Statement

- 3.1.1 The figures originally presented within the Phase One Environmental Statement were based on the design of the Project at the time of hybrid Bill submission in 2017. The design has developed significantly since then which has resulted in changes to areas required for construction and operation.
- 3.1.2 Based on the current design in 2023, there have been reductions to our forecast in the areas of ancient woodlands that will be lost due to HS2 planned works based on the current design. These changes have happened since Royal Assent was granted on Phase One.
- 3.1.3 A summary of the changes, based on our 2023 forecast as detailed in the HS2 Environmental Sustainability Progress Report, is shown in Table 1. A detailed breakdown of changes per ancient woodland is shown in Appendix 1.

Table 1: Summary of changes to the area of ancient woodland impacts on Phase One since 2017

Document reporting ancient woodland impacts	Year	Area of ancient woodland loss (ha)
Environmental Statement and Ancient Woodland Strategy	2017	29.0 ¹
Environmental Sustainability Progress Report and Ancient Woodland Summary Report (February 2022)	2022	23.7
Ancient Woodland Summary Report (November 2022)	2022	20.6
Ancient Woodland Summary Report (September 2023)	2023	20.6

- 3.1.4 The area of ancient woodlands that we originally reported would be lost has reduced by 8.4 hectares since Phase One received Royal Assent in 2017.
- 3.1.5 As of 2022, we now forecast the total area of ancient woodlands that will be lost is approximately 20.6 hectares (including 4.6 hectares of Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS)) compared with 29.0 hectares (including 4.6 hectares of PAWS) as previously reported in the Environmental Statement and Phase One Ancient Woodland Strategy¹. To date, through design development, we have therefore reduced the area of ancient woodlands forecast to be impacted by nearly a third. The extent of impacts and mitigation have not changed in 2023.

- 3.1.6 As of 2022, our work is now set to affect 25 ancient woodlands compared with 32 ancient woodlands previously forecast to be impacted in the Environmental Statement and the Phase One Ancient Woodland Strategy. This figure has not changed in 2023.
- 3.1.7 The reduction of 8.4 hectares includes two woodlands (totalling 2.3ha) that have been declassified and removed from the ancient woodland inventory by Natural England since the Environmental Statement and Phase One Ancient Woodland Strategy was published.
- 3.1.8 As of 2022, approximately 20.4 hectares of ancient woodland has been felled and an addition 0.2 hectares of ancient woodland is still forecast to be felled during construction. The extent of impacts has not changed in 2023.
- 3.1.9 Since 2017, HS2 Ltd have completed the necessary site surveys (such as soil and hydrogeological surveys) to inform the detailed design of the ancient woodland compensation. The design of our ancient woodland compensation has also considered HS2 Ltd's commitments made during passage of the Bill to petitioners and Parliament concerning the implementation of Phase One. These considerations resulted in changes to design and/or location of ancient woodland compensation compared to what was outlined in the Phase One Environmental Statement and Phase One Ancient Woodland Strategy.
- 3.1.10 As of 2022, the total area of new planting in response to the loss of ancient woodland that has been delivered (excluding ancient woodland soils receptor sites) is 64.1 hectares. This means 68% of the total area of compensatory planting for ancient woodland impacts has been completed to date. There is further work to be completed by our main works contractors to design and deliver the remaining areas of new planting in response to the loss of ancient woodland (excluding ancient woodland soils receptor sites), as proposed in the Phase One Environmental Statement and the Phase One Ancient Woodland Strategy. The extent of mitigation has not changed in 2023.
- 3.1.11 Where impacts have been removed from an ancient woodland, the compensation measures previously outlined in the Phase One Environmental Statement and the Phase One Ancient Woodland Strategy are no longer required.
- 3.1.12 Based on the current design on Phase One, all proposed ancient woodland soils translocation and soil salvage work has been completed. Best efforts were made to relocate all ancient woodland soils where impacts occurred. However, there were instances where it was not possible to move areas of ancient woodland soils to ancient woodland soils receptor sites. Some areas of ancient woodland soils that were forecast to be translocated were deemed unsuitable for translocation on site due to factors such as waterlogging, over-compaction (footpaths), presence of non-

native plant species and topography (slope steepness). We have published a paper on the number of best practice and lessons learnt from the work carried out to date on ancient woodland soil translocation and salvage on HS2⁷.

- 3.1.13 The Phase One Environment Statement did not report any enhancement of ancient and non-ancient woodland at Ravenshaw Wood or Slaish Wood as part of our ancient woodland compensation measures. The Phase One Ancient Woodland Strategy however incorrectly reported areas of ancient and non-ancient woodland enhancement at Ravenshaw Wood and Slaish Wood (8.7 hectares of ancient woodland enhancement and 13.0 hectares of non-ancient woodland enhancement). These errors have been corrected in this document as HS2 Ltd does not have the legal powers to undertake these enhancement works as these areas of enhancement are outside of the Act limits. However, a greater area of compensatory planting is being provided in addition to the areas originally proposed within the Phase One Environmental Statement and the Phase One Ancient Woodland Strategy for the ancient woodlands where impacts remain.
- 3.1.14 The Phase One Ancient Woodland Strategy contained an error when reporting the extent of ancient woodland at Broadwells Wood. The figures and plans incorrectly showed an area of non-ancient woodland to the west of Broadwells Wood as ancient woodland, as well as showing an area of grassland south of Broadwells Wood as an area of retained ancient woodland within the Act limits. These two errors totalled 0.4 hectares. The figures provided in this report correct these issues and align with the area of Broadwells Wood denoted as ancient woodland as per Natural England's Ancient Woodland Inventory.
- 3.1.15 The revised forecast in the areas of ancient woodland losses and associated compensation shown in Table 1 and Table 2 and the total area of ancient woodland felled as reported above are based on the 2022 'as-built' data (the measurements collected after the works have been completed at each woodland) as no additional as-built data is available in 2023. Any further changes in impacts to ancient woodlands and associated compensation will also be published in the annual Environmental Sustainability Progress Report and will be annually updated onto the HS2 Green Corridor online mapping tool.
- 3.1.16 A revised breakdown of compensation figures for each ancient woodland on Phase One is shown in Appendix 1.

⁷ [Ancient woodland soils translocation - HS2 Learning Legacy](#)

4 Ancient Woodland mapping

- 4.1.1 HS2 Ltd has included the data on ancient woodland impacts and associated compensation on a new ancient woodland webpage on the HS2 website. This webpage can be found here: <https://www.hs2.org.uk/building-hs2/environmental-sustainability/ancient-woodland/>
- 4.1.2 The HS2 ancient woodland webpage contains a newly developed interactive online mapping tool which allows visitors to access our latest data on ancient woodlands. It also provides visitors with key figures on our works to date, enabling visitors to visualise the measures we have put in place to reduce the railway's impacts on ancient woodland.
- 4.1.3 The ancient woodland online mapping tool provides layers of detail to help stakeholders and members of the public see and better understand the effects of constructing HS2 on ancient woodlands, and how we are compensating. It shows where we have:
- impacts on ancient woodlands;
 - reduced the impact of HS2 on ancient woodlands;
 - made best endeavours to compensate for our work when it affects ancient woodlands, including areas of compensatory planting delivered to date, ancient woodland soil translocation and woodland enhancements; and
 - funded the delivery of schemes under the HS2 Woodland Fund^{8,9}.
- 4.1.4 The areas of compensatory planting will be updated on the ancient woodland online mapping tool as further areas of compensatory planting are designed and delivered by our main works contractors.

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hs2-woodland-fund> (Last accessed: 15/08/22)

⁹ The HS2 Woodland Fund data shown on the mapping portal includes the total working area for some funded schemes and should be used for indicative purposes to show the locations and general area of schemes delivered to date. The figures provided in Table 2 of this report provide an accurate summary of schemes delivered to date through the HS2 Woodland Fund.

5 Consulting with our stakeholders

- 5.1.1 HS2 Ltd has worked with the Woodland Trust to develop the format for presenting our ancient woodland data to make sure it provides an accurate picture of our work. We have consulted with Natural England, the Woodland Trust, the Forestry Commission and the Department for Transport about our method for reporting on ancient woodlands.
- 5.1.2 The structure of this summary report and how the development of the online mapping tool have been agreed between HS2 Ltd the Woodland Trust through a series of bilateral meetings.
- 5.1.3 We work with Natural England to identify updates to the Ancient Woodland Inventory¹⁰ and reflect any updates in our reporting. This report and the online mapping tool are updated annually in line with the HS2 Environmental Sustainability Progress Report. We also have a Service Level Agreement with Natural England which means the communication on matters like updates to the Ancient Woodland Inventory is quick.
- 5.1.4 Two woodlands relevant to the Phase One route have been removed from the Ancient Woodland Inventory¹¹ by Natural England since Phase One received Royal Assent in 2017. The two woodlands are included in this report for information. However, these two woodlands and any additional woodlands that Natural England remove from the Ancient Woodland Inventory will not be included in HS2's future reporting on ancient woodlands.

¹⁰ Natural England Open Data

<https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/a14064ca50e242c4a92d020764a6d9df/explore>

¹¹ The woodlands declassified and removed from the ancient woodland inventory by Natural England are: 'Woodland along the bridleway adjacent to the landfill southeast of Calvert' and 'Woodland opposite Decoypond Wood'.

6 The HS2 Woodland Fund

- 6.1.1 HS2 Ltd have established a £5 million HS2 Woodland Fund on Phase One to support new woodland creation and PAWS restoration projects in the area 25 miles around the Phase One route on third party land. This fund provides additional compensation, beyond the mitigation measures outlined in the Environmental Statement and Ancient Woodland Strategy, for unavoidable impacts to ancient woodlands.
- 6.1.2 The HS2 Woodland Fund provides capital funding to restore and maintain PAWS sites, including restocking with native trees and shrubs, and associated items including fencing, gates and natural flood management items. It also provides capital funding for creating, protecting and maintaining new native woodland through the England Woodland Creation Offer¹².
- 6.1.3 HS2 Ltd has a contract with Forestry Commission to design, deliver and manage the HS2 Woodland Fund on Phase One.
- 6.1.4 Table 2 provides a summary of the schemes delivered through the HS2 Woodland Fund on Phase One as of 2022.

Table 2: Summary of schemes delivered as of the end of the financial year 2022/23 through the HS2 Woodland Fund on Phase One

Number of HS2 Woodland Fund schemes completed	Total value of HS2 Woodland Fund schemes	Area of woodland creation schemes (ha)	Area of PAWS restoration schemes (ha)	Total number of trees planted
35	c. £1.42million	131.22 (c. 220k trees)	66.18 (c. 110k trees)	c. 330k

- 6.1.5 HS2 Ltd will continue to work with the Forestry Commission to deliver additional schemes through the HS2 Woodland Fund on Phase One to the value of £5 million.
- 6.1.6 The locations of the HS2 Woodland Fund schemes that have been delivered to date are shown on the ancient woodland online mapping tool.
- 6.1.7 Further information about the HS2 Woodland Fund on Phase One can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hs2-woodland-fund>.

¹² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/england-woodland-creation-offer> Last accessed: 97/06/2023

Appendix 1

Table 3: Detailed breakdown of changes to HS2’s impact on Phase One ancient woodlands

Ancient woodland	Area of ancient woodland (ha)	Area of anticipated direct loss of ancient woodland reported in Ancient Woodland Strategy (2017)	Updated anticipated direct loss of ancient woodland in Oct 2022 (ha)	Change in anticipated direct loss of ancient woodland (ha)	Updated area of ancient woodland that will be retained within Act limits (ha)	Updated area of receptor site for ancient woodland soils (ha)	Total area of new planting to be delivered in response to loss of ancient woodland (excluding ancient woodland soils receptor site) (ha)	Total area of new planting delivered to date in response to loss of ancient woodland (excluding ancient woodland soils receptor sites) (ha)	Area of enhancement and/or restoration of ancient woodland (ha)	Area of enhancement and/or restoration non-ancient woodland (ha)
Newyear’s Green Covert	2.2	-	-	-	2.2	-	-	-	-	-
Pinnocks Wood	2.2	-	-	-	0.3	-	-	-	-	-
Ranston Covert and Battlesford Wood	2.3	0.1	-	-0.1	0.1	-	-	-	-	-
Jones' Hill Wood	1.8	0.7	0.7	-	-	0.7	4.1	3.3	-	-
Woodland along the bridleway adjacent to the landfill southeast of Calvert (Sheephouse Wood) ¹³	N/A	1.4	-	-1.4	1.4	-	-	-	-	-
Woodland opposite Decoypond Wood ¹³	N/A	0.9	-	-0.9	0.9	-	-	-	-	-
Decoypond Wood	8.6	1.1	1.1	-	-	1.2 (combined provision)	33.4 (combined provision)	33.4 (combined provision)	-	-
Woodland to the south of Calvert and west of the route	0.3	0.1	0.1	-	-				-	-
Woodland to the south of Calvert and east of the route	0.8	0.5	0.5	-	-				-	-
Fox Covert (Whitfield)	0.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mossycorner Spinney	0.5	0.3	0.3	-	-	0.3	3.6	0.0	-	-
Halse Copse South	6.0	0.3	0.3	-	-	0.3	9.8	2.0	-	-
Fox Covert (Glyn Davies Wood)	3.3	1.3	0.3	-1.0	1.0	0.2	7.7	<0.1 (0.01)	-	-
Burnt Firs	1.4	1.1	-	-1.1	1.1	-	-	-	-	-
South Cubbington	33.6	2.0 (all PAWS)	2.2 (all PAWS)	+0.2	1.0	2.1	6.7	5.3	-	-
Unnamed Woodland south of the B4115 Ashow Road in Stoneleigh	1.1	0.2	0.1	-0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.0	-	-
Crackley Wood North, including Crackley Wood North Extension	5.6	1.0	0.7	-0.3	0.3	0.7 (combined provision)	1.5 (combined provision)	0.5 (combined provision)	-	-
Birches Wood	0.6	0.6	0.4	-0.2	0.2				-	-

¹³ Woodlands have been declassified and removed from the Ancient Woodland Inventory by Natural England since the Environmental Statement

Ancient woodland	Area of ancient woodland (ha)	Area of anticipated direct loss of ancient woodland reported in Ancient Woodland Strategy (2017)	Updated anticipated direct loss of ancient woodland in Oct 2022 (ha)	Change in anticipated direct loss of ancient woodland (ha)	Updated area of ancient woodland that will be retained within Act limits (ha)	Updated area of receptor site for ancient woodland soils (ha)	Total area of new planting to be delivered in response to loss of ancient woodland (excluding ancient woodland soils receptor site) (ha)	Total area of new planting delivered to date in response to loss of ancient woodland (excluding ancient woodland soils receptor sites (ha)	Area of enhancement and/or restoration of ancient woodland (ha)	Area of enhancement and/or restoration non-ancient woodland (ha)
Roughknowles Wood	5.0	0.4 (all PAWS)	0.3 (all PAWS)	-0.1	0.1				-	-
Broadwells Wood	15.6	3.2 ¹⁴ (including 0.4ha PAWS)	2.9 (including 0.4ha PAWS)	-0.3	0.9	2.3	5.7	2.9	8.3 (enhancements proposed at Black Waste Wood as combined provision for impacts at Broadwells Wood, Little Poors Wood and Black Waste Wood)	-
Black Waste Wood	11.0	0.6	0.7	+0.1	-	-	0.2	0.0		-
Little Poors Wood	1.4	0.2	0.2	-<0.1 (0.04)	<0.1 (0.04)	-	-	-		-
Sych Wood	4.4	0.2	-	-0.2	0.2	-	-	-	-	-
North Wood	7.1	1.8 (including 0.3ha PAWS)	1.4 (including 0.3ha PAWS)	-0.4	0.4	1.4	2.8	2.8	-	-
Walkers Spinney	1.2	0.1	0.1	-	-	0.1	<0.1	<0.1	-	-
Unnamed Copse off Drayton Lane	0.2	0.2	0.1	-0.1	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.3	-	-
Roundhill Wood	4.2	1.3	1.1	-0.2	0.2	1.1 (combined provision)	10.9 (combined provision)	9.9 (combined provision)	-	-
Rookery	7.4	1.4	0.4	-1.0	1.0				-	-
Fulfen Wood	1.0	0.4	0.4	-	0.6	0.4	0.9	0.2	-	-
Little Lyntus Wood	1.4	1.4	1.3	-0.1	0.1	1.7 (combined provision)	1.8 (combined provision)	0.2 (combined provision)	-	-
Big Lyntus Wood	5.3	0.8 (all PAWS)	0.7 (all PAWS)	-0.1	0.1				-	-
Ravenshaw Wood	7.9	1.7 (including 0.7ha of PAWS)	1.7 (including 0.7ha of PAWS)	-	-	1.7	2.7	1.0	-	-
Slaish Wood	2.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vicar's Coppice	7.7	0.6	-	-0.6	0.6	-	-	-	-	-
John's Gorse (including Hanch Wood)	3.4	2.7	2.6	-0.1	0.1	1.1	2.3	2.3	-	-
Park Hall Wood	9.2 ¹⁵	0.4	-	-0.4	5.9 ¹⁵	-	-	-	-	-
Totals		29.0 (including 4.6ha PAWS)	20.6 (including 4.6ha PAWS)	-8.4	18.9	15.5	94.6	64.1	8.3	0.0

¹⁴Broadwells Wood extent corrected to match Natural England’s Ancient Woodland Inventory.

¹⁵Areas include Langley Hill Wood and Parkhill Wood which are unaffected by HS2.