

HS2

High Speed Rail (London – West Midlands)

Supplementary environmental information report

PRA Line Underpass Footpaths

August 2024



Department for Transport

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background to High Speed Two

1.1.1 The hybrid Bill for High Speed Rail between London and the West Midlands ('the Bill') was submitted to Parliament together with an Environmental Statement (ES) in November 2013 ('the main ES'). The Bill was amended a number of times following its submission resulting in five Additional Provisions (APs) which were each accompanied by Supplementary Environmental Statements (SES).

1.1.2 Any new or different significant effects that were likely to result from changes to the design which did not require amendments to the Bill; changes to construction assumptions, new environmental baseline information and corrections to the main ES were reported in Supplementary Environmental Statements (SEEs). These were deposited alongside the APs.

1.1.3 The Bill was enacted in February 2017 to become the High Speed Rail (London – West Midlands) Act 2017 ('the HS2 Act'). The HS2 Act confers the necessary powers required to construct, maintain and operate the HS2 railway from London to the West Midlands.

1.1.4 HS2 comprises the construction of a new railway approximately 230km (143 miles) in length between London and the West Midlands. Passenger services will be provided by new high speed trains from 2026, which will travel at speeds of up to 360kph (225 mph).

1.2 Introduction to this SEI and its purpose

1.2.1 This Supplementary Environmental Information (SEI) report describes new or different likely significant effects at Footpath SMA18 (within Community Forum Area 11) arising from changes to construction methodology and that exceed those reported in the ES (as amended) and that, despite the implementation of the controls set out in the Environmental Minimum Requirements (EMRs), are predicted to remain as new significant effects (NSE).

1.3 The Environmental Minimum Requirements

1.3.1 The HS2 EMRs set out the high-level environmental and sustainability commitments that the Government has entered into through the hybrid Bill process.

1.3.2 The EMRs consist of a suite of framework documents which: (i) define the mechanisms by which the nominated undertaker will engage with communities and other key stakeholders; and (ii) implement environmental and sustainability

management measures designed to protect communities and the environment during detailed design development and construction. The nominated undertaker is the body, appointed by the Secretary of State for Transport (SoS), responsible for delivering Phase One of HS2.

1.3.3 The nominated undertaker, taking forward the detailed design and implementation of Phase One of HS2, is required by the SoS to comply with the EMRs. The components of the EMRs are described in the EMR General Principles (CS755 02/17, February 2017).

1.3.4 The controls contained in the EMRs, along with powers contained in the HS2 Act and the Undertakings given by the Secretary of State, will ensure that impacts which have been assessed in the ES (as amended) will not be exceeded, unless any new impact or impacts in excess of those assessed in the ES:

- results from a change in circumstances which was not likely at the time of the ES¹;
- would not be likely to do be environmentally significant²;
- results from a change or extension to the project, where that change or extension does not itself require environmental impact assessment (EIA) under either (i) article 4(1) of and paragraph 24 of Annex 1 to the EIA Directive³ ; or (ii) article 4(2) of and paragraph 13 of Annex 2 to the EIA Directive⁴; or
- would be considered as part of a separate consent process (and therefore further EIA if required).

¹ In addition, Supplementary Environmental Statements and Additional Provision Environmental Statements were published and tabled by the Promoter in July 2015, September 2015, October 2015 and December 2015

² i.e. a situation that could not reasonably have been anticipated at the time of the Environmental Statement. This covers all effects (both positive and negative)

³ 2011 consolidated EIA Directive (2011/92/EU)

⁴ Broadly, this would not allow those changes or extensions to the project (once it has received Royal Assent) which would give rise to adverse environmental effects within the EIA

2 Scope

- 2.1.1 Section 63(3) of the High Speed Rail (London – West Midlands) Act 2017 Act (“the Act”) amends Regulation 9 (relating to subsequent applications) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations. In particular Regulation 9, paragraph (1)(b)(ii) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations is amended to specifically reference the Act.
- 2.1.2 Regulation 9(3) allows the relevant planning authority to request further environmental information (under Regulation 25) where they believe environmental information currently provided is deemed not adequate to assess the significant effects of the development on the environment.
- 2.1.3 This Supplementary Environmental Information Report (SEI) provides further environmental information to the ES (as amended) so as to satisfy any requests under paragraphs 9 and 25 of the EIA Regs by the relevant planning authority, Buckinghamshire Council, when considering any relevant subsequent applications.
- 2.1.4 Additionally, Paragraph 1.1.3 of the High Speed Rail (London – West Midlands) Environmental Minimum Requirements (EMR) General Principles states that:
- “The controls contained within the Environmental Minimum Requirements (EMRs) [...] will ensure that impacts which have been assessed in the ES will not be exceeded, unless any new impact in excess of those assessed in the ES results from a change in circumstances which was not likely at the time of the ES...”
- 2.1.5 Furthermore paragraph 3.1.8 states:
- “In the circumstances in the first bullet point of paragraph 1.1.3, if the significant adverse impacts identified in the ES are likely to be exceeded, the nominated undertaker will take all reasonable steps to minimise or eliminate those additional impacts. If despite these reasonable steps, significant impacts remain the nominated undertaker will report them.”
- 2.1.6 Consequently, this document also provides a report to meet the requirements of paragraph 3.1.8 of the EMR General Principles.

3 Site and works description

- 3.1.1 Footpath SMA/18, referred to as 'The Site,' is situated in Community Forum Area (CFA) 11, south of Aylesbury and west of Stoke Mandeville, approximately at chainage 59+600. This footpath serves as a connection between Footpath SMA/17 and SMA/16, facilitating access to the broader Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network around Aylesbury and Stoke Mandeville.
- 3.1.2 Footpath SMA/16 intersects the Princes Risborough to Aylesbury (PRA) Rail Line and has been closed across the rail line since July 2021 to accommodate the PRA realignment works. Footpath SMA/18 has remained open during the construction, incorporating a short local diversion. This open path links to Footpath SMA/16/3 and extends eastward towards Stoke Mandeville.
- 3.1.3 The site is presented in Figure 1 and Figure 2 below.

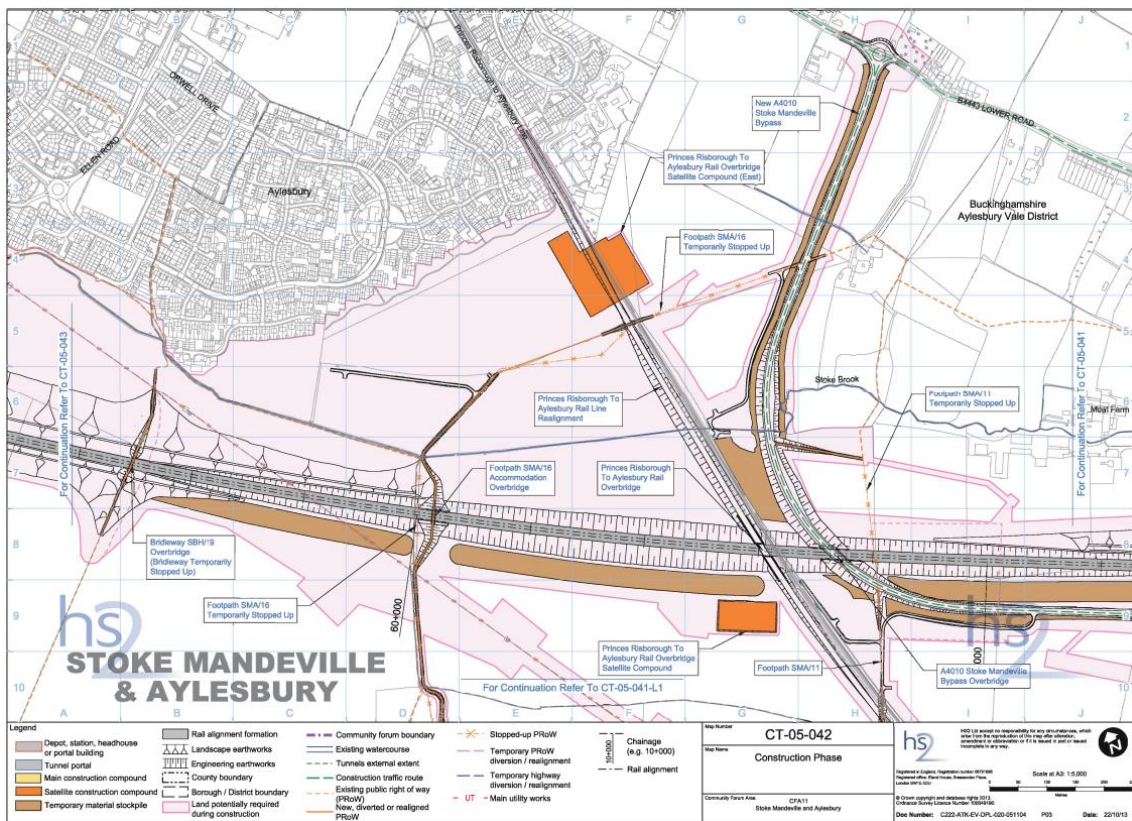


Figure 1. ES (as amended) CFA 11 Map

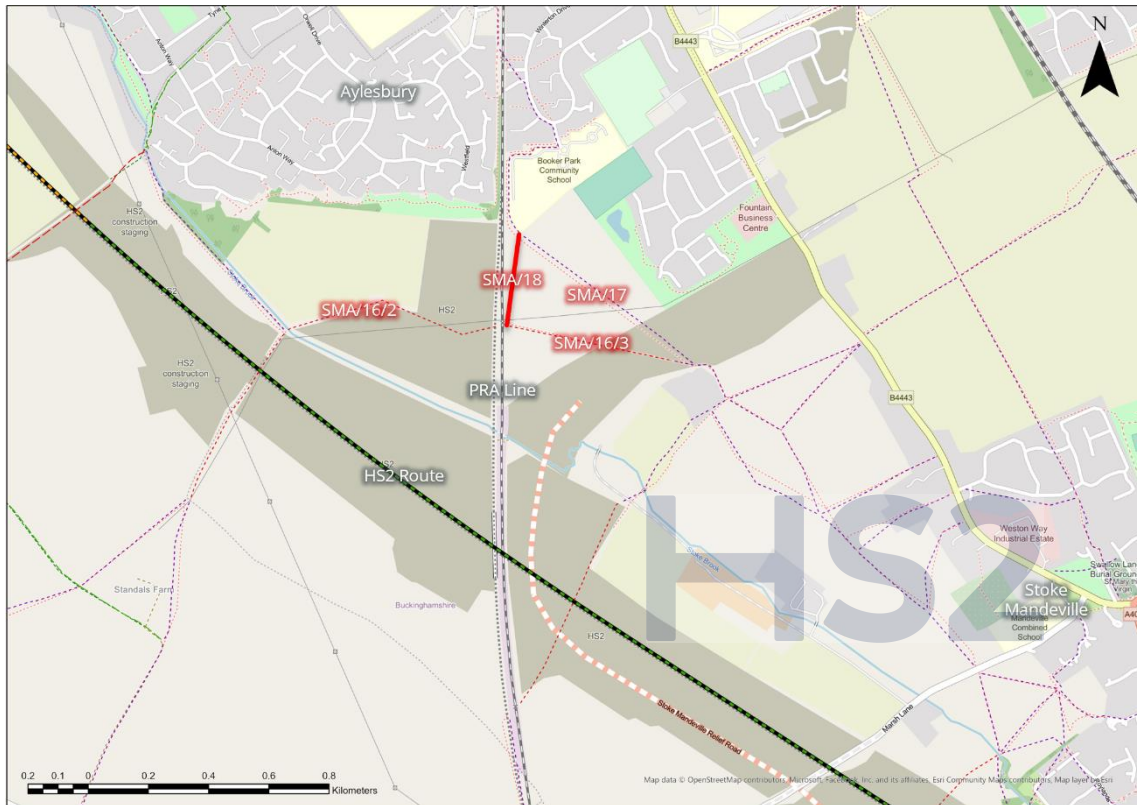


Figure 2. Area Overview - Footpath SMA/18

- 3.1.4 After the completion of the HS2 project, Footpath SMA/18 necessitates a permanent realignment to ensure connectivity across the PRA Line, facilitating the linkage of Stoke Mandeville with the broader Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network. This permanent realignment is required due to the presence of permanent features such as the PRA Underpass, PRA Line realignment, PRA Line embankment, and a drainage pond with utilities diversions.
- 3.1.5 In the course of construction, Footpath SMA/18 underwent a temporary realignment by an additional distance (less than 20 m) around a drainage pond, connecting to Footpath SMA/16/3. Concurrently, Footpath SMA/16/2 is closed during construction.
- 3.1.6 Upon the completion of the PRA Underpass construction, Footpath SMA/18 will undergo a permanent realignment beneath the underpass, resulting in an additional 207 m of distance. This realignment, in conjunction with Footpath SMA/16/2, takes place during the operational phase of HS2.
- 3.1.7 The permanent diversion of Footpath SMA/18 has received approval from Buckinghamshire Council and will be executed under Local Authority powers due to a small section of land being utilised outside of HS2 Act Limits.
- 3.1.8 The works assessed in this report include the following:

- The diversion of Footpath SMA/18 by 207m of additional distance during the operational phase of HS2.

4 Summary of changes from the ES (as amended)

4.1 Changes to the engineering design and construction methodology from the ES (as amended)

4.1.1 Since the submission of the ES (as amended), it has been necessary to make changes to engineering design and construction methodology for works including and surrounding the Princes Risborough to Aylesbury Rail realignment, PRA Underpass, and alignment of Public Rights of Way.

Engineered Design and Construction Methodology as described in the ES (as amended)

4.1.2 The scheme as assessed by the ES (as amended) assumed that Footpath SMA/18 would maintain its existing alignment throughout both the construction and operational phases of HS2. The level crossing facilitating Footpath SMA/16 over the PRA Line was anticipated to be closed during construction and subsequently reopened on its original alignment during the operational phase.

4.1.3 Since no alterations were assumed for Footpath SMA/18, no assessment was conducted regarding its impact. Additionally, there was no assessment considering SMA/18 as part of the broader network because no additional travel distance was anticipated for any footpath user from any direction.

4.1.4 Consequently, the ES did not address Footpath SMA/18, deeming it to have no impact within the context of the HS2 scheme.

Engineering and design changes since the time of the ES (as amended)

4.1.5 During the development of the design, a series of program, and constructability modifications have been implemented due to changes in scope, an Assurance agreement with Buckinghamshire Council, and requests from Network Rail.

4.1.6 The ES (as amended) originally considered the realignment of the PRA Line, a culvert beneath the line, and the introduction of a new level crossing for Footpath SMA/16. Subsequent to the ES, an Assurance agreement (U&A 1847) was established with Buckinghamshire Council in 2016. This agreement aimed to facilitate an underpass beneath the PRA realignment to accommodate a dual-carriageway road, a cycle lane, and a realigned Footpath SMA/16 – potentially part of a future scheme by Buckinghamshire Council.

4.1.7 Due to the implementation of the Underpass, the initially proposed level crossing in the ES is no longer viable and does not align with the terms of U&A 1847 with Buckinghamshire Council. Consequently, Footpath SMA/16 and SMA/18 needed to be permanently realigned. In compliance with U&A 1847, Footpath SMA/18 requires a diversion, adding 207 m to the travel distance.

4.1.8 This modification is directly linked to the PRA Underpass due to the Assurance agreement with Buckinghamshire Council, which was introduced in 2016 after the completion of the ES. The changes in embankment heights resulting from the PRA Line Underpass rendered a level crossing unfeasible, and any crossing of the PRA Line within the 100 m additional distance is not possible.

4.2 Topics impacted

4.2.1 Following a review of the combined changes in circumstances detailed in the preceding paragraphs new significant effects have been identified with respect to the following:

- traffic and transport.

4.2.2 Effects for other environmental topics assessed in the ES (as amended) because of the changes are not assessed to be significant and are not considered further in this report.

4.2.3 A review of the environmental topic identified above is reported in Section 5.

4.2.4 None of the other environmental topics reported in the ES (as amended) will experience additional environmental impacts as a consequence of these changes that result in new or different significant environmental effects when assessed in line with the methodologies specified in the Scope and Methodology Report (SMR) and Addendum.

5 Assessment of changes

5.1 Traffic and transport

Introduction

- 5.1.1 This section of the report describes the environmental baseline in relation traffic and transport that is relevant to the assessment. It then identifies any new or different likely significant environmental effects as a result of the changes introduced in Section 4, compared to the ES (as amended).

Scope, assumptions and limitations

Methodology

- 5.1.2 The assessment scope, key assumptions and limitations for traffic and transport are as set out in Volume 1, the SMR (Volume 5: Appendix CT-001-000/1) and the SMR Addendum (Volume 5: Appendix CT-001-000/2). This report follows the standard assessment methodology.
- 5.1.3 Definitions as defined in the Scope and Methodology Report Addendum (CT-001-000/2), Annex I, Section 3.

Assumptions and limitations

- 5.1.4 Local assumptions and limitations for traffic and transport are set out in the main ES (Volume 2, CFA11, Section 12).

Environmental baseline

- 5.1.5 The existing baseline for traffic and transport is as set out in Volume 2, CFA11, Section 12 of the main ES, updated by the additional traffic surveys.

Effects arising during construction

Avoidance and mitigation measures

- 5.1.6 The CoCP (see Volume 5: Appendix CT-003-000/1) will include measures which seek to reduce the impacts and effects of deliveries of construction materials and equipment, including construction lorry trips during peak background traffic periods. The CoCP includes HGV management and control measures.
- 5.1.7 Other measures in the CoCP include clear controls on vehicle types, hours of site operation, and routes for heavy goods vehicles, to reduce the impacts of road-based construction traffic. To achieve this, generic and site-specific management measures will be implemented during the construction of the works on or adjacent to public roads, bridleways, footpaths, and other PRow affected by the works as necessary.

Assessment of significant effects

Severance

Footpath SMA/18

- 5.1.8 The permanent diversion of Footpath SMA/18 to use the PRA Underpass will result in 207m of additional distance to connect with the wider PRow network. This diversion will result in approximately 2 minutes of additional travel time for people walking from east to west, across the PRA line.
- 5.1.9 As a result of the extended diversion distance the magnitude of effect is Minor and based on the number of users of Footpath SMA/18, will result in an adverse effect of Minor significance that was not identified in the ES (as amended) during the operational phase of HS2.

Other mitigation measures

- 5.1.10 The implementation of any mitigation for the new significant effect will result a non-compliance of U&A 1847 with Buckinghamshire Council. Consequently, no alternative options have been explored due to this constraint.
- 5.1.11 Considering the design established by the U&A, it is deemed impractical to pursue any alternative that would result in a diversion of less than the currently proposed 207m of additional distance.

6 Conclusions

Table 1 provides a summary of the new significant effects anticipated because of the changes described in Section 4.

Table 1. Summary of new significant effects

Environmental Disciple/Category	Effect
Traffic & Transport – Severance	The diversion of Footpath SMA/18 will cause a minor but significant adverse effect on the few non-motorised users of the Byway, primarily due to the impact of severance. This constitutes a newly identified significant effect that was not initially recognised in the ES (as amended) of Minor significance.

7 List of acronyms and abbreviations

Table 2: Acronyms and abbreviations

Acronym	Description
AP	Additional Provisions
BPM	Best Practical Means
CFA	Community Forum Area
CoCP	Code of Construction Practice (Annex 1 of the EMRs)
CoPA	Control of Pollution Act
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMR	Environmental Minimum Requirements
ES	Environmental Statement
SES	Supplementary Environmental Statement
SMR	Scope and Methodology Report
SoS	Secretary of State for Transport
PRoW	Public Right of Way

8 References

HS2 Environmental Statement, Volume 5: Appendix CT-001-000/1); Scope and Methodology Report (SMR).

HS2 Environmental Statement, Volume 5: Appendix CT-001-000/2); Scope and Methodology Report (SMR) Addendum.

HS2 Environmental Statement, Volume 2, Community Forum Area Report: CFA11 | Stoke Mandeville and Aylesbury

High Speed Rail (London West Midlands), Environmental Minimum Requirements General Principal