

HS2 Briefing Note by Head of Planning for the Economic Development and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3rd December 2014

In January 2013 the Secretary of State announced the initial preferred route for Phase 2 of the proposed High Speed Two (HS2) railway, from the West Midlands to Manchester and Leeds. The Western route of this initial preferred route from Fradley to Crewe cuts through the Borough from Whitmore to Wrinehill. The Borough Council in response to a consultation that closed on the 31st January 2014 objected to that route – the Council joining with Staffordshire County Council and Lichfield to make a joint response. Stoke City Council, having also objected to the initial preferred route, launched their **Business case** for the 'Stoke Route' on the 16th October

To access the business case you need to go to the following HS2 page on the HS2 part of the City Council's website and you will find the business case available to download, together with other material and links

<http://www.stoke.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/regeneration/hs2---high-speed-rail/>

It is in excess of 200 pages long. It has not been reviewed by your officers.

The City Council have described the case, for the Stoke Route, as follows

*"The Stoke Route meets the **technical, cost and environmental challenges** of HS2 by:*

- *reducing the total length of the route*
- *reducing the number and length of highly expensive tunnels, deep rural cuttings and bridges over the M6*
- *using existing urban brownfield railway corridors and development land to cut environmental impacts and costs*
- *reducing the impacts on local communities, houses, farms, greenfields, ancient woodlands and environmentally sensitive wildlife sites*
- *using urban mitigation technologies proven in continental high speed applications to ensure the new line will be whisper quiet, much quieter than existing rail and road impacts*
- *avoiding the complexity and cost of remodelling the Crewe rail junction – one of the most complex in Europe*
- *bringing HS2 direct into the heart of a major urban conurbation of approximately 470,000 population, around seven times the size of Crewe (c. 70,000), where the Consultation Route would tunnel under that much smaller town in the heart of rural Cheshire*
- *reducing climate change impacts through lower life-cycle carbon emissions*
- *maximising public health benefits - benefits of infrastructure investments are greater in urban areas, multiplying the value not only to the public purse but also to people's lives*
- *promoting health and independence, dramatically improving quality of life.*

*And it meets the **economic challenge** of HS2 because it delivers the maximum possible economic impact, far in excess of the other options by:*

- *connecting the additional, established, truly strategic Stoke-on-Trent market (twice the size of Milton Keynes) - a city already enjoying an economic renaissance*

- *bringing full, dedicated HS2 services to a station in the heart of an established and fast-growing city, as opposed to the Crewe 'parkway-style' urban-fringe location on the outskirts of the town*
- *adding the significant extra HS2 stimulated, development-ready, brownfield investment opportunities only a city can provide*
- *establishing a supercharged economic growth corridor between Birmingham and Manchester connected through Stoke-on-Trent, the UK's 13th largest city*
- *using the existing main line railway from Stoke-on-Trent to Manchester to provide the economic uplift of HS2 to Manchester seven years early - prior to the delivery of the full HS2 service as planned by 2033*
- *connecting, in addition, HS2 to a further market of eight million passengers, through Macclesfield, Stockport and on to Huddersfield and West Yorkshire."*

On the 28th October the Chairman of HS2 Sir David Higgins published his report "Rebalancing Britain". One of his four main proposals is the need to take forward both legs of the HS2 Y- network, his conclusion being that the alternatives will not bring the same capacity, connectivity and economic benefits. In addition to his four main proposals the report set out a series of recommendations from his review of the proposals for Phase 2 of HS2. These include that the line should be extended to Crewe by 2027 – six years earlier than originally planned. The report has been submitted to Government and any final decision on the recommendations will be made by Ministers. The report is available to view as a download via the following link <http://www.hs2.org.uk/news-resources/chairmans-reports>

On the 4th November the Secretary of State announced that he proposes to safeguard a section of the HS2 route – the section between Fradley and Crewe. It is indicated that *"no decision has yet been made on the route for Phase 2 of HS2...however evidence to date suggests that the route via Crewe is the best performing option. The Secretary of State is therefore consulting on issuing safeguarding directions for this route."*

The announcement states

"Safeguarding is an established part of the planning system, designed to ensure that land which has been identified for major infrastructure is protected from conflicting development. If a planning application could affect this land, the Local Planning Authority, must inform HS2 Ltd. Safeguarding is not intended to prevent development, but to ensure that new developments do not lead to excessive costs, or affect our ability to build or operate HS2 in the future.

*"If , after the consultation (**which closes on Tuesday 6th January 2015**), the Secretary of State decides to issue safeguarding directions on Phase Two, he will issue these to relevant local planning authorities (LPAs) on the route. LPAs will then need to consult HS2Ltd on all planning applications to which the directions relate in the safeguarded area before granting consent. As a final route decision has yet to be made on Phase Two, we will review any safeguarding directions made on Phase Two at the time of a route decision to ensure that the correct land is safeguarded, and if necessary, reissue directions"*

The consultation is available to view via the following link

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/hs2-phase-two-fradley-to-crewe-safeguarding-consultation>