

LAND TO EAST OF CONEYGREAVE LANE, WHITMORE
HIGH SPEED TWO (HS2) LIMITED

22/00153/SCH17

This application seeks approval of the plans and specifications under Schedule 17 of the High Speed Rail (West Midlands – Crewe) Act 2021 for the creation of two ecological mitigation ponds, two associated bunds and the installation of a permanent vehicular access gate on land to the east of Coneygreave Lane.

The site lies within the open countryside, which is designated as being within the Green Belt and an Area of Landscape Restoration, as indicated on the Local Development Framework Proposals Map.

The 8 week determination of this application is 7th May 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Schedule 17 application be granted subject to conditions relating to the following:

- 1. Carried out in accordance with the approved plans.**
- 2. Any conditions as recommended by consultees which relate to the grounds set out in the legislation**

Reason for Recommendation

Subject to confirmation from the Landscape Development Section that the works can be carried out without loss of, or harm to, the hedgerow and trees surrounding the site or that any loss can be suitably mitigated through replacement planting, the proposed works preserve the local environment and local amenity. In addition the works do not result in any prejudicial effect on road safety or on the free flow of traffic in the local area and would not adversely affect a site of archaeological or historic interest or nature conservation value. As such there are no design and appearance reasons to refuse to approve the application or grounds to argue that the development ought to, and could reasonably be carried out on, other land.

KEY ISSUES

Consideration of Schedule 17 Applications

Section 17 of the Act grants deemed planning permission under Part 3 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for HS2 Phase 2a and associated works (“the Works”) between West Midlands and Crewe, but some of the detailed design and construction are subject to further approval. Schedule 17 to the Act puts in place a process for the approval of certain matters relating to the design and construction of the railway which requires that the nominated undertaker (the organisation on whom the powers to carry out the works are conferred) must seek approval of these matters from the relevant planning authority. As deemed planning permission has been granted by the Act, requests for approval under Schedule 17 are not planning applications.

In passing the Act, Parliament has judged such impacts to be acceptable when set against the benefits to be achieved by the Phase 2a scheme.

The purpose of Schedule 17 is not therefore to eliminate all prejudicial impacts on, or to secure the complete preservation of, any sites within the various categories identified in the schedule (set out below). On the contrary, the operation of Schedule 17 is such that there will be cases where a submission must be approved notwithstanding an identified negative impact, unless there are modifications that are reasonably capable of being made.

Accordingly, it is not open to the planning authorities under Schedule 17 to refuse in principle works or development which is covered by the Environmental Statement and approved by Parliament. The impacts have been assessed and planning permission has been granted on that basis. Instead,

Schedule 17 offers planning authorities an opportunity to seek modifications to the details submitted that they consider reduce the impacts of a submission if such modifications can be justified.

The Schedule sets out that the Council can only refuse to approve the application, or impose conditions, in the following circumstances:

- (a) The design or external appearance of the works ought to be modified
 - (i) To preserve the local environment or local amenity;
 - (ii) To prevent or reduce prejudicial effects on road safety or on the free flow of traffic in the local area; or
 - (iii) To preserve a site of archaeological or historic interest or nature conservation value; and is reasonably capable of being so modified; or
- (b) Where the Council consider that the development ought to, and could reasonably, be carried out elsewhere on land within the Act limits.

(a) Consideration of the Design and External Appearance of the Proposal

This Schedule 17 application seeks approval for two ecological mitigation ponds, two associated bunds and the installation of a permanent vehicular access gate on land to the east of Coneygreave Lane.

Impact on the local environment and local amenity

The proposal involves the formation of two ecological mitigation ponds (maximum depth of 1.5m) in a position close to the boundary of the site, a field, with Coneygreave Lane. The ponds are to provide replacement habitat for reptiles and amphibians, within an area of grassland habitat creation. The scale and setting of the ponds have been designed with advice from ecology specialists.

The soil obtained from the pond excavations would be used to create 2 bunds which would be designed with an asymmetric profile and be planted with the same proposed habitat planting as for the adjacent areas. They would be a maximum height of 1m.

To secure the site a permanent vehicle access gate is required in the northern part of the site.

The existing hedgerows and hedgerow trees are to be retained and protected. The submission sets out that where excavation is required within root protection areas it will be undertaken manually with existing ground levels retained to avoid causing root damage.

Subject to confirmation from the Landscape Development Section that the works can be carried out without loss of, or harm to, the hedgerow and trees surrounding the site or that any loss can be suitably mitigated through replacement planting it is considered that the proposals will not have an adverse impact on the local environment and local amenity.

Environmental management arrangements during construction do not form part of the request for approval of plans and specification under Schedule 17. As such consideration cannot be given to any impact on the local environment arising during construction of the ponds and bund.

Road safety and the free flow of traffic in the local area

No new permanent access or other highway elements are proposed. As such the works would not have any detrimental impact on road safety or the free flow of traffic in the local area.

Measures to control road safety and traffic impacts arising from the construction of the ponds are separately covered and do not fall to be considered with this application.

Impact on archaeological or historic interest or nature conservation value

The site is not within, or close to, a known site of archaeological or historic interest or nature conservation value. Notwithstanding this a Location Specific Written Scheme of Investigation has

been drawn up in consultation with the County Archaeologist which details the methodology for archaeological surveys and investigations to be implemented prior to construction. Should any heritage assets of such significant be identified during construction that warrant preservation in situ there is a commitment to redesign the submission to avoid impacting the assets leading to a revised Schedule 17 approval request.

(b) Ought the development, and could it reasonably, be carried out elsewhere on land within the Act limits.

As there are no design and appearance reasons to refuse to approve the application, there are no grounds to argue that the development ought to, and could reasonably be carried out on, other land.

Reducing Inequalities

The Equality Act 2010 says public authorities must comply with the public sector equality duty in addition to the duty not to discriminate. The public sector equality duty requires public authorities to consider or think about how their policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act. If a public authority hasn't properly considered its public sector equality duty it can be challenged in the courts.

The duty aims to make sure public authorities think about things like discrimination and the needs of people who are disadvantaged or suffer inequality, when they make decisions.

People are protected under the Act if they have protected characteristics. The characteristics that are protected in relation to the public sector equality duty are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

When public authorities carry out their functions the Equality Act says they must have due regard or think about the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't
- Foster or encourage good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't

With regard to this proposal and the matters that can be addressed, it is considered that it will not have a differential impact on those with protected characteristics.

APPENDIX

Policies and Proposals in the approved development plan relevant to this decision:-

[Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy \(CSS\) 2006-2026](#)

Policy ASP6: Rural Area Spatial Policy
Policy CSP1: Design Quality

[Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan \(NLP\) 2011](#)

Policy S3: Development in the Green Belt
Policy N3: Development and Nature Conservation – Protection and Enhancement Measures
Policy N12: Development and the Protection of Trees
Policy N17: Landscape Character – General Considerations
Policy N21: Area of Landscape Restoration

[Chapel and Hill Chorlton, Maer and Aston, and Whitmore Neighbourhood Development Plan \(CHCMAWNDP\) Made October 2021](#)

Policy NE1: Natural Environment
Policy DC2: Sustainable Design

Other Material Considerations include:

[National Planning Policy](#)

[National Planning Policy Framework \(2021\)](#)

[Planning Practice Guidance \(2014 as updated\)](#)

[High Speed Rail \(West Midlands – Crewe\) Act 2021](#)

[High Speed Rail \(West Midlands – Crewe\) Act 2021 Schedule 17 Statutory Guidance \(May 2021\)](#)

[Equality Act 2010](#)

[Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents](#)

[Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Urban Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document \(2010\)](#)

Relevant Planning History

21/00634/SCH17 Approval of plans and specifications under condition imposed by Schedule 17 to the High Speed Rail (West Midlands - Crewe) Act 2021 - Withdrawn

Views of Consultees

Whitmore Parish Council has no objection providing that all necessary steps are taken by HS2 and its contractors to ensure that the A53 is kept clean and free of mud and soil at all times.

Cadent has no objection to the proposal.

The views of the **Landscape Development Section** have been sought and if received will be reported.

No comments have been received from the **Environmental Health Division**, the **Highway Authority**, **County Ecologist** and the **Environment Agency** and given that the period for comment has ended, it must be assumed that they have no observations on the application.

Representations

None

Applicant/agent's submission

The applicant has submitted, in addition to plans, the following:

- Submission Letter
- Proforma
- Written Statement

All of the application documents can be viewed on the Council's website using the following link:
<http://publicaccess.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/online-applications/PLAN/22/00153/SCH17>

Background Papers

Planning File referred to
Planning Documents referred to

Date report prepared

13th April 2022