

## HS2 Phase 2a Q&A – Further information

### Swynnerton Protestor camp

The protesters trespassing in Cash's Pit were there for over a year and more recently also set up in Closepit Plantation. These protests at times disrupted HS2 works and caused criminal damage.

Under powers set out in the High Speed Rail (West Midlands-Crewe) Act 2021 and a writ of possession issued by the High Court, HS2 Ltd took possession of Cash's Pit on 10 May 2022 and started removing those who are illegally occupying the land. At the same time and also under powers set out in the Act, HS2 Ltd took possession of the land that adjoins Closepit Plantation, which includes the roadside verge between the A51 and Closepit Plantation to protect the safety of pedestrians and road users.

HS2 have used the High Court Enforcement Group to carry out this removal operation. The number of security staff at the sites directly reflected the number of protesters and the level of violence being experienced. Police Officers were on site every day to ensure that there were no breaches' of the peace. We have now secured the land under their possession at both locations, preventing protestors from entering both woodlands.

The security members on site can all be identified as needed by a numbered badge on their arm. Some do choose to wear face coverings either due to concerns around Covid 19 or to protect their personal privacy and security due to protestors taking photos or videos and sharing across social channels without their consent.

### Whitmore tunnelling power supply details

In order to construct the tunnels at Whitmore and Madeley we will be using the power supply from Western Power Distributions' existing infrastructure at Meaford. Connection works are due to commence in the summer of 2023. We have a preliminary programme that we are looking to refine and should be in a position to share this with communities in early Autumn.

### Supporting local business involvement

HS2 wants to involve local businesses in the Project wherever we can, however we are unable to prioritise them over any other business, as we also committed to running a fair, open and transparent tender process. It is our responsibility to ensure that we get the best product / services, at the best price for the tax payer. That said, local businesses are well placed to deliver a number of goods and services, and their local knowledge and proximity to our worksites can be a useful advantage.

We have a dedicated local business team who work closely with our key contractors to promote the offer of local business communities within the supply chain. They also work with Chambers of Commerce, LEP's and other business groups to promote opportunities associated to the Project, and raise awareness of how local businesses can get involved. Since January 2020, our business engagement team have spoken to almost 4000 local business holding joint events up and down the country. Since Royal Assent on Phase 2a of the Project, we have placed a focus on engaging with businesses across Staffordshire and Cheshire. In May and June alone we have already delivered four events with Staffordshire and Cheshire business organisations.

To find out more about our work and how businesses can get involved you can visit our [local business pages](#).

### **Local jobs and skills activity**

HS2 will support over 34,000 jobs across Phase One and Phase 2a at its peak construction. Phase 2a alone is expected to support around 6,500 jobs.

To drive benefits for jobs and skills across our supply chain there are requirement set by HS2 for contractors to deliver in this space, Contractors choosing from a menu of activities set out in the contracts.

Activities include school engagement – such as STEM, career support and work experience and placements. They also focus on supporting apprenticeships and getting those out of work back into the employment.

We also work in partnership with key local stakeholders to maximise the local benefits and opportunities. And the key platform launched last year to support this is the Job Brokerage platform. The HS2 Job Brokerage model is based on working with Job Brokerage Partners who will be responsible for identifying suitable local candidates for HS2 roles, particularly people from disadvantaged and under-represented groups. Staffordshire County Council is an affiliate Job Brokerage Partner, attending the Regional Steering Group meetings for the West Midlands

You can find out more about the work we are doing and the opportunities for local people at [www.hs2.org.uk/jobs-and-skills/](http://www.hs2.org.uk/jobs-and-skills/)

### **Connectivity and services**

As a brand new line, HS2 will take pressure off the existing network and adding extra capacity where it is needed most. The Phase 2a Indicative Train Service Specification now includes the requirement to provide 1train per hour each direction from London to Macclesfield, via Stoke-on-Trent.

The services from south to north will use the junction at Handsacre near Lichfield to connect to the West Coast Mainline (WCML) to service Macclesfield via Stone-on-Trent and Stafford. HS2 trains will be 'classic compatible' allowing them to run on both a high speed line and the existing rail network. This service pattern will commence operation upon completion of Phase One and Phase 2a.

HS2 will free up a huge amount of space on the existing railway by placing long distance services on their own pair of tracks and once HS2 is operating, services can run much closer together, meaning there can be more rush hour trains, helping to relieve overcrowding at local and regional levels. For Example, For Staffordshire and Cheshire HS2 could more than double evening peak seats from Manchester Piccadilly on the Crewe and Stoke-on-Trent corridor. Phase 2a could free up capacity to see services rise from hourly to half-hourly or better between Crewe and Stoke-on-Trent to Nuneaton, Tamworth, Lichfield and Rugeley.

The service patterns of these local trains are outside of the scope HS2 and is the responsibility of the Department for Transport and the local transport service provider.

### **Community input into the design of HS2**

A number of formal public consultations were undertaken from 2016- 2019 on the railways design ahead of the scheme being approved by Parliament. The public consultations were a valuable exercise in obtaining important information on such areas as the geography, environment, traffic, and heritage of the various locations on the proposed route. During this parliamentary process we have also negotiated specific terms with landowners or stakeholder through the Parliamentary process committing to legally binding agreements – an Undertaking and Assurance (U&A).

As we continue to develop the detailed design we will continue to engage closely with landowners and communities to understand concerns and minimise the impact of our work through design development where we can.

Once designs are finalised these will be shared with the community before construction starts, and the contractors will be able to explain what will be happening, when and how. This is expected to be 2025 onwards.

There will also be engagement on Key Design Elements – known as KDEs. These are specific key structures that have been identified through the parliamentary process as key and visual structures for Phase 2a. Across Phase 2a 9 KDEs have been identified including the Whitmore and Madeley Tunnel Portals. Details can be found in the information paper at [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/960666/D1\\_Design\\_v1.1.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/960666/D1_Design_v1.1.pdf)

### **HS2 impacts on ancient woodlands**

There are 52,000 ancient woodland sites in the England and thanks to careful route planning and the boring of 32 miles of tunnel, just 43 of these 52,000 will be affected along the route between Crewe and London (Phase One and Phase 2a). 80% of these 43 ancient woodland sites will remain intact. This means that just 0.005% of the country's ancient woodland will be lost, a fraction of comparable road projects.

Across phase 2a 11 ancient woodland sites are affected. Where an ancient woodland is described as affected, in many cases this means a small section of an overall woodland is affected.

We have committed to a no net loss in biodiversity in building HS2. We will be planting 11 new habitats sites across Newcastle borough as part of our early environmental works. This accounts for just 20% of the green infrastructure we will be creating and as our designs are progressed we will look at ways to further minimise any impacts on the local environment.

### **Community engagement**

The engagement team is made up of HS2 and contractor staff. We share notices of work taking place with local communities at least 14 days in advance. We also continue to reach out into the communities through both our digital and in-person offers – such as webinars, newsletters, 121 appointments and information events and this will continue to grow as more information on our designs and activity is available. Our engagement events are open to all members of the community. As well as posting out information on our events to local residents we also share with parish councils and encourage people interested in HS2 and our events to sign up to our local area mailing lists at <https://engagement.hs2.org.uk/join-mailing-list/>

The HS2 helpdesk is also available all day everyday (24/7) for anyone who has any questions or concerns.