

Coleorton Parish Council

Response to HS2 Phase 2B – Design Refinement Consultation

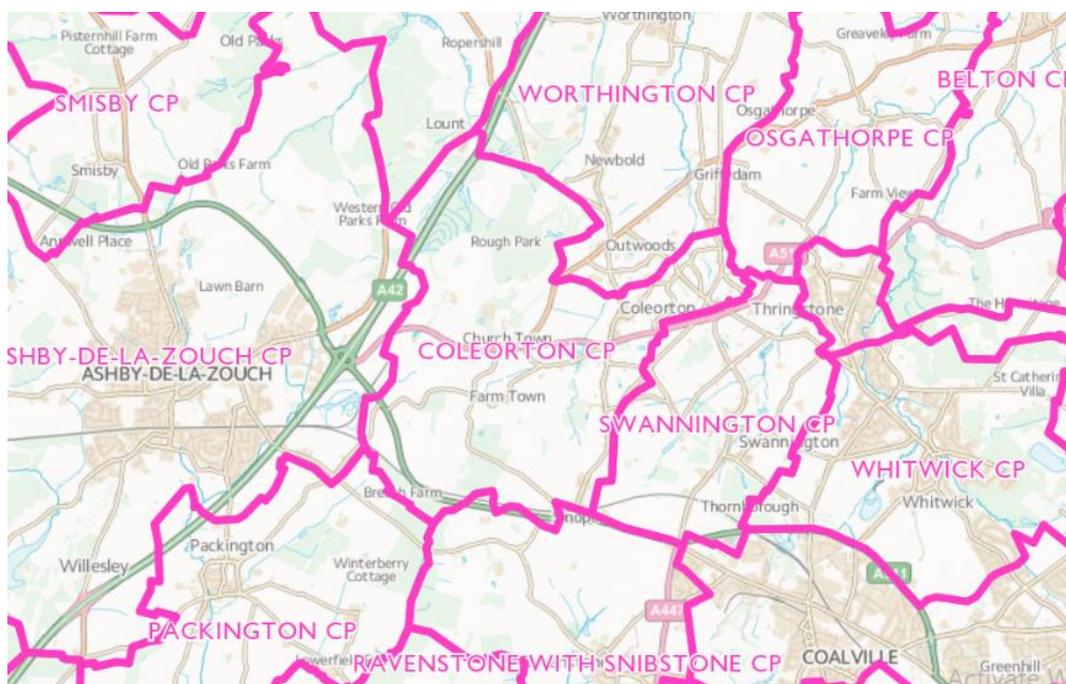
Non-Railhead Concerns

1. Introduction

Coleorton Parish Council wish to put forward this response to the Phase 2B Design Refinement Consultation June 2019 to be considered by HS2. The current route was announced in June 2019 and is much nearer the village than the previous designs of July 2017 and 2013. In addition, the railhead proposals announced in June 2019 are significant and will have a considerable impact on residents of the parish. While we are not in the direct path of the railway, we will still be subject to some significant impacts. Our comments on the temporary railhead are included in a separate submission. Our priorities are:

- To ensure that traffic disruption is minimised during the construction period, particularly when the A512 is realigned
- To secure appropriate mitigation for the visual impacts on Coleorton Hall
- To understand the extent of the land take required near the village and to ensure that there is appropriate stewardship of the new landscape after construction works are completed.

We are aware that although the final route of Phase 2b is not officially confirmed, it is unlikely that there will be any significant changes made now, and it is safest to assume that the published route will stand. We have compiled the following using our local community knowledge and the information that has already been provided about the HS2 project.



2. Agricultural, forestry and soils

Our parish is mostly agricultural land, and because of this our principal concern is the large amount of land take required, particularly near Rough Park and Birch Coppice. We are aware that a large amount of replanting and habitat creation will be undertaken by HS2 after construction, and that compulsorily purchased land will be offered back to the original landowner in the first instance. It appears Flagstaff Farm will be impacted, in particular.

We therefore require clarification on the following:

- How the re-landscaped areas will be protected from further disturbance; will these land parcels be covenanted?
- Who will be responsible for the upkeep of the re-landscaped areas? This needs clear definition and further discussion
- That there will be no impact on New Lount Nature Reserve

3. Air quality

It is unlikely that Coleorton will be affected by air quality issues, as we are situated far enough from the A42 to not be at risk from large concentrations of Nitrous Oxide (NOX).

We are pleased to note that HS2 Ltd are expecting high speed rail travel to improve air quality resulting from fewer cars on major roads. However, our major concern is from a significant increase in HGV traffic on major roads which will not be affected by a decrease in car travel.

4. Climate change

We are aware that HS2 are aiming to be the “greenest major infrastructure project ever” and will be delighted if there are beneficial effects in the future. The Parish Council works hard to find ways of reducing the community’s carbon footprint and we take a positive view on organisations which strive to improve our environment, for us and for future generations.

5. Community

Although we are set back from the route of the railway, we will be significantly affected by the necessary roadworks which will help to enable the project. The village is in a relatively isolated area, comprising a number of small settlements and is surrounded by other small villages and hamlets. Accessing shops, schools and medical care requires good access to Ashby-de-la-Zouch and the

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construction works will disrupt our main route into the town. It is essential that villagers are still able to travel there easily.

See also the Roads and Traffic section for further information on effects to our Parish.

6. Ecology

The extensive land take on the west side of the parish is concerning. We are aware that Leicestershire suffers from a lack of wildlife diversity and we feel it is important that the new landscaped areas near HS2 provides opportunities for environmental enrichment. There should be a good balance of habitats, such as grassland and meadow.

We are pleased to note that there will be extensive tree planting, but we are disappointed at the lack of footpath access through these areas, as they could become an attractive local amenity for walkers and ramblers.

We will be consulting with the County's Ecologist to ascertain whether there are any statutory or non-statutory sites within our boundaries, and the status of any protected species.

A major concern of residents throughout the Parish of Coleorton and in particular in Farm Town and Church Town is the use of lanes as "rat runs" during the construction phase. Many of these lanes are very minor roads. Increased use by passenger vehicles and especially by light and heavy commercial vehicles is likely to impact the roadside ecological environment. Strict traffic limits, measures and monitoring will need to be put in place to ensure there is no significant disruption to the local community.

7. Electromagnetic interference

We are aware that electric railways can produce electromagnetic interference but feel that we are sufficiently distant from the line to be affected.

8. Health

Our main concern in this section is access to GPs surgeries during the construction period, particularly when roads are being rebuilt. Coleorton does not have a doctor's surgery and many villagers will travel to Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

9. Historic environment

Coleorton's most significant historic asset is Coleorton Hall, which lies to the west of the village and St Mary's, the Parish Church. Coleorton Hall is a Grade II* listed building within an historic park and gardens. The current iteration of the hall was built in about 1804. In 1997 the house was sold for redevelopment and was converted into 12 apartments. In addition, there are 28 houses in the kitchen gardeners and other dwelling at the Brew House, Top Lodge and gardeners' cottages. There is a total of 49 residences on the site.

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Residents have raised concerns that HS2 may be visible from parts of the estate, particularly with the move of the line eastwards and would welcome confirmation from HS2 that viewpoints have been thoroughly checked.

The parkland would be affected by the construction of Ashby-de-le-Zouch cutting number 2 and Lount embankment. This has been assessed as having a low magnitude of impact and moderate significance of effect. No mitigation measures are offered, which is disappointing.

Hall Farm also lies within the parish and is a grade II listed farmhouse which will be sited some 200m from the route of HS2. The farmland is within the land take and this represents a significant effect on the setting of the building. This is listed by HS2 as a moderate adverse effect. No mitigation is offered, but we do note that the railway is in cutting at this point, which may help mitigate the setting post-construction.

We note that Coleorton wagon way and Smoile Farm and the associated outbuildings will be impacted and request that any impact is minimal and that these are restored to their original condition.

In addition to the open cast mines at Coleorton (Lounge), there are deep mines dating back to Tudor times. Therefore, there may be greater ground instability than currently assessed and we would request that these areas are thoroughly surveyed.

10. Land quality

Coleorton Pottery Works is a historical land use with the potential to have caused contamination. The remains of the site are 150m west of the land required for the construction of HS2, and we are aware that this land is designated as very low to moderate risk. However, should there be unexpected contamination during construction works, we would expect appropriate action to be taken under the Constructors' Code of Practice. See also comments in Section 9 above about mine workings.

11. Landscape

HS2 passes through the parish in deep cutting past Hall Farm, then rises on to an embankment alongside Rough Park and Birch Coppice, both of which are designated as areas to be landscaped after construction.

However, the construction processes will create a large scar on the landscape until trees have grown sufficiently; this could take 20 years before the landscape recovers. We therefore request HS2 to consider this area for early replanting.

12. Accidents/disasters

We will expect HS2 to share disaster plans with all local authorities.

13. Socio-economics

Regrettably, we find it difficult to identify socio-economics benefits from HS2. There is no direct link to Toton from anywhere in the Parish, so any benefit from HS2's additional speed would be lost, and

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there may be less services to London on the Midland Main Line than there are currently. In short, the residents of Coleorton will not obtain any speedier transportation links resulting from development of the line.

Many residents are still mystified as to why the East Midlands Interchange was not placed at East Midlands Parkway station, alongside the Midland Main Line. The Midlands is the largest economy outside London, but we do not have easy access to HS2. This is a bitter pill to swallow in the context of the amount of land take from the parish.

It is also clear at this stage that the location of the East Midlands Interchange will not change from Toton.

Therefore, at the very least, we feel there needs to be improved access to Toton and public transport to East Midlands Parkway. We are aware that there have been some discussions about a fixed link between Toton, East Midlands Airport and East Midlands Parkway, but this solution, like HS2, may be some time off. Executives at East Midlands Airport have already stated publicly that getting the right links to Toton are crucial. Good links to Toton from either East Midlands Airport or East Midlands Parkway would be particularly beneficial to our villages because of our proximity to the airport.

14. Sound, noise and vibration

We have examined the noise maps relating to our parish (SV-01-360) and note that the embankment passing Rough Park and Birch Coppice is a high noise area (more than 60dB). This renders the woodland planting particularly important as it will be needed to buffer this level of sound, which will be a cumulative effect with the A42.

It is shown on the map that train speed is 400kph to just after Ashby (northbound) reducing to 275 kph. This means that the section of track by Ashby will be an acceleration/deceleration zone. For reasons of noise and air pollution (smell of brakes), the speed change needs to be moved to an area of open country where fewer residential properties will be affected. Therefore, the cut between 400 & 275 kph zones should be moved to be the country area between Measham and Ravenstone – i.e, approximately at the centre of the Gilwiskaw viaduct.

We note that following the close of the consultation on 6 September 2019 the Secretary of State will make a decision on each proposed refinement following consideration of the consultation feedback and advice from HS2 Ltd. Should the realignment of the route between Ashby-de-la-Zouch and Diseworth be included in the hybrid Bill scheme, a full environmental assessment, including a noise assessment, will be undertaken. Findings from this assessment, as well as any proposed mitigation, will be detailed in our formal Environmental Statement (ES) which is deposited alongside the hybrid Bill.

We request that the route for HS2 follows the A42 as closely as possible and not up to 150 meters to the east of the A42 with the associated noise and vibration associated with a high-speed rail line.

15. Traffic and transport

One of our principal concerns is traffic disruption during the construction period. The roads which will affect us are:

- The realignment of the A512 from Ashby. This is the main road from Ashby to Coleorton and is an important link. We must be sure that during construction of the new road, the old road remains fully open and access is not affected. The A512 is a busy road and an accident blackspot, particularly the right-angled turn in and out of the Coleorton Hall estate.

The A512 is already a dangerous road. Total closures for several hours are not uncommon. At these times small local roads are essential; specifically, Corkscrew Lane which is proposed to be closed for the temporary railhead (comments on this are included in the response to the railhead). The proposed increased curve of the redirected A512 is likely to make this section of road even more dangerous and accident prone.

- The realignment of Melbourne Road, which is another route into Coleorton. The works on this section of road extend west and will cross over HS2. We are aware that building this road could be a lengthy process and it is important that, if this road is closed for any period of time, access to Ashby Road is not restricted at the same time or the village will become cut off
- The trackways starting at approximately where the new road starts are a vital access to the woodland in the area. At least 3 local sports clubs use these woods (Harlequin Bowhunters, Black Arrow Field Archery Club and Merlin Archers use these woods. All clubs organise large events which can require access for significant numbers of cars. Any obstruction of access will be a major problem for these clubs. The alternate access via Hall Farm would mean a very long distance to being travelled on poor quality tracks and would not be an acceptable solution.
- The use of Melbourne Road for construction traffic. There is a high risk that contractors will use roads within the Parish. Contractors must be aware that Coleorton is not to be used as a rat run outside the normal construction traffic routes.
- B587 Nottingham Road in Lount, between A511 Ashby Road and Melbourne Road
- B5324 Rempstone Road from A511 to Top Brand
- Melbourne Road in Coleorton
- Ashby Rd South and Leicester Road over-bridges. At the consultation event, it was explained that these roads would be closed for 18 months. These are vital links which if closed will mean that the only route to Ashby for many people will be via the already massively over-congested A511 – M42 island route. It may be acceptable to close one of these routes at a time FOR NO MORE THAN 5 DAYS, but a long closure is completely unacceptable.

A major concern of residents throughout the Parish of Coleorton and, in particular in Farm Town and Church Town, is the use of lanes as “rat runs” during the construction phase. Strict traffic limits, measures and monitoring will need to be put in place to ensure there is no significant disruption to the local community.

16. Waste and material resources

We are pleased to note that HS2 Ltd's policy will be to move spoil for minimum distances. We will require information as to the likely solutions for movement of spoil and other construction waste, particularly where spoil must be transported by road to a rail depot.

17. Water resources and flood risk

Coleorton Brook runs through the railhead site. This is a tributary of the River Mease, which is a SAC. It is therefore extremely important that the Brook is not contaminated during the construction process, either from particulates or runoff.

18. Wildlife

There are several wood land areas within the parish for instance adjacent to Corkscrew lane and running alongside the A42 in the north west part of the parish. It is likely these woodlands will be the home to badger sets which require investigation and appropriate treatment.