

# Coleorton Parish Council

## Response to HS2 Phase 2B – Design Refinement Consultation

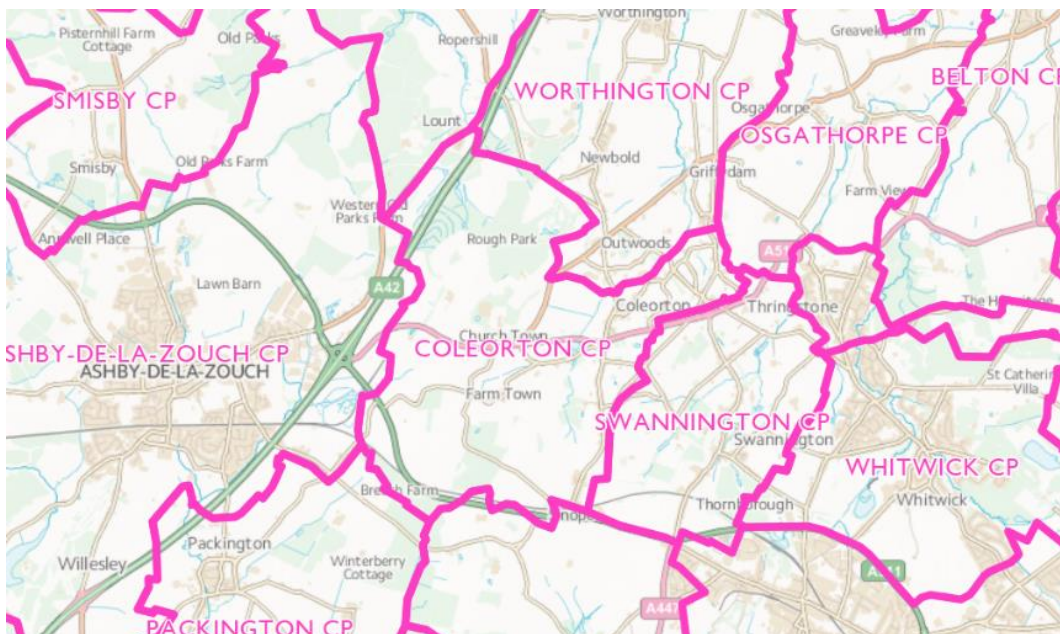
### Railhead Concerns

#### 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 priorities in this response are:

- To ensure that traffic disruption is minimised during the construction period, particularly when the A512 is realigned
- To seek confirmation that the railhead planned within the parish adjacent to Junction 13 of the M42 will be temporary, i.e. it will not exist after the construction phase has completed beyond the scheduled operational date for HS2 of 2033, and to request that the size of this railhead is reduced to reduce the impact on the village.

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.

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

The inevitable pollution and destruction of farmland as a result of the railhead will make the current land marginal for future agriculture. The railhead therefore looks like a Trojan horse for the development of that parcel of land for non-agricultural use – a large warehouse and distribution centre is already planned adjacent to the A42.

It would not be acceptable for that area of green land to be converted to industrial / out of town shopping use as a result of the damage caused by HS2. Absolute cast iron legally binding guarantees that the land will be returned to agricultural use, or alternatively a community facility for the community such as a country park, with no planning permission for alternative uses must be given before the rail head is acceptable.

## **3. Ecology**

The inevitable pollution and destruction of farmland as a result of the railhead will make the current land marginal for future agriculture. The agricultural land will be out of commission for a long period including a “normalisation” period which will enable it to be fully functional. Although the railhead is stated to exist for 7 years, in reality the land could be out of action for 10 years. In view of this, would there be a better use for the land afterwards, such as part of it being turned over for a country park?

It was also noted that the site of the railhead includes reclaimed coal land. Much of this land is just starting to return to a more natural state. The temporary railhead will put this recovery back, from an ecological perspective. When the use of the railhead is completed, the replacement topsoil should be suitable for indigenous vegetation.

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

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monitoring will need to be put in place to ensure there is no significant disruption to the local community.

### 4. Traffic and transport

One of our principal concerns is traffic disruption as a result of the temporary railhead. The roads which will affect us are:

Corkscrew Lane – due to be closed by railhead, this is a vital local route used as a cut through during rush hour to avoid the long queues and for when the A512 is closed due to accidents. This road cannot be closed, and alternative access must be provided to mitigate for this. The other alternative routes from Farm Town are poor.

- 1) Farm Town to A511 passing alongside the area chosen for the railhead. This is a very narrow twisting single-track road. It is completely unsuitable for access to the huge car park indicated on the rail head plan. It is also a poor alternative to Corkscrew Lane for getting across the A511 because it delivers you to the back of the A511 queue. Furthermore, it can take a very long time to enter the A511 eastbound or cross it westbound at the Moorlands road junction.
- 2) Farm Town to A512 (direct route) This is single track with blind corners. Unsuitable as an access route for the railhead traffic.
- 3) Farm Town to A512 via Coleorton war memorial. In addition to an extremely tight blind corner, this road can be impassable in winter due to ice on a very steep hill.

The main roads will carry a lot more HGV traffic, from the railhead and from the construction works at Junction 13 of the A42, i.e. two substantial construction compounds in the immediate area. However, it's possible that the railhead will be constructed later in the process, as its function will be to help in the construction of the line itself, rather than the other infrastructure such as embankments and cuttings. Please can you clarify the intention.

The parish includes a number of roads with weight restrictions. We require clarity which access routes will be used for construction related traffic and clarity as to how the use of routes with a weight limit will be prevented by HGVs and policed during the construction phase.

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.

A mitigant is that the proposals show that there is an intention to use the Leicester to Burton-on-Trent line to bring supplies to the railhead. This will impact to residents in the parish, some residents have requested that the line is re-instated as a passenger line. The impact of environmental concerns could be mitigated by the use of Battery/Super capacitor trains to operate on the line that will only need charging infrastructure at the stops along the line, removing the need for full electrification and still allowing freight to run on this line. Indeed CRIL (Campaign to Reinstatethe Ivanhoe Line), are advocating the use of “green” trains for sustainability. We understand the

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district Council, NWLDC, are quite keen on the Ivanhoe Line being reused as it would represent a legacy for the area.

The use of the Leicester to Burton- on- Trent line will cause a significant impact to residents in the parish. The volume of trains using this line is likely to increase dramatically resulting in additional noise pollution and disruption to residents in the parish.

There is no proposal for how the temporary railhead will be accessed on the drawings. The proposal does mention via the A511 if this is the case the increased traffic on the A511 will significantly increase making the junction with the Moorlands even more difficult to come out of.

### **5. 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 and precisely where this ballast will be located.

However, we are concerned about the large quantity of spoil which will be generated by the construction of the railhead. The site is quite hilly and so considerable excavations will be required. We need to understand how HS2 will manage the spoil, and if spoil heaps will be required, where these will be positioned and how they will be screened.

### **6. Hours of Work**

The site is likely to be in use 24 hours a day and up to 7 days per week , including trains at night. This appears to contradict the Working Hours policy published as part of the consultation pack that states working will be 08:00 to 18:00 Mon-Fri and 08:00 - 13:00 Saturdays except for where tunnelling is being performed. We do note that most deliveries are likely to occur during the day.

Trains could come from both south and north. The latter requiring reversal on the section of line behind houses in the parish and thus creating double the disruption.

We note that residents adjacent to the proposed temporary railhead have now been proactively communicated with and have an extension to the deadline for their comments.

The potential use of the existing Leicester to Burton railway line would have a dramatically adverse effect upon 6 detached family-size houses just off The Moorlands in Birchwood Close. Each is only between 25 and 60 metres away from that rail track. Currently, on average, only one train a day uses it and always during daytime. By contrast, the line would potentially be in use 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The likelihood of any of the current owners being able to sell their properties from now onwards, if they wished to or had to, at valuations similar to those prior to the June 2019 announcement of the Railhead proposal, is remote. That will continue to be the position until either the proposal is abandoned, or until the work is completed at the Railhead and its subsequent removal,

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by 2032 onwards. Unless the proposal is dropped, the houses are effectively blighted for at least 13 years and longer in the event that the project overruns.

### **7. Use of Railhead**

#### **7a) Overnight Accommodation**

We have noted that it is expected that each railhead would consist of a range of buildings to suit the required construction that the railhead would support. It is likely that buildings would include welfare facilities and offices, and that car parking would also be provided. We seek confirmation that there would be no overnight accommodation for workers within the temporary railhead.

#### **7b) Impact on Services**

There will be a considerable increase in the level of economic activity and demand for local services as a result of the increase in workers in the railhead. This could result in delays and a degradation in service levels to the parishioners of Coleorton.

### **8. 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. There are also bats in the area for the proposed temporary railhead and tawny owls in the vicinity of Birchwood Close. Appropriate wildlife surveys should be undertaken at appropriate time of the day, for example any bat surveys should be undertaken during hours of darkness.

### **9. Properties Impacted**

It would appear as though the building known as Gamekeepers Cottage near to the junction of Corkscrew Lane and the A511 may require demolition given the current plans for temporary railhead.

### **10. Historic environment**

Coleorton is rich in history. It is likely the proposed temporary railhead will impact on land, which is of historic interest, particularly historical industrial sites.