

HS2 responds to questions from WCC : March 2010 to June 2010

[February 11, 2012](#) · by [WCC](#) · in [Warwickshire County Council](#) ·

WCC Question (31 March 2010)

Q1) Economic Benefits:

We need to understand how, in particular, the claimed benefit of HS2 of “deeper labour markets and wider pools of customers” (para 3.3, Command Paper) has been (or can be) measured in terms of economic benefits to Warwickshire and its Coventry Solihull Warwickshire (CSW) Sub-region. It has proved difficult to identify from the published material – the [HS2 Ltd Report to Government](#) and the [Government’s Command Paper](#) – what is the scale, nature and distribution of economic benefits likely to accrue to the West Midlands Region and, more particularly, CSW. So, we would be grateful if you could point us to the specific documents on which we can rely to explain the particular relevance of the overall conclusions to us here in Warwickshire of paragraphs. 3.3 and 3.37-3.42 of the Command [Paper](#).

HS2 Ltd Answer (22 April 2010)

It is difficult to identify with any certainty regionally specific potential economic benefits. The evidence base around ‘deeper labour markets’ etc (also called Wider Economic Impacts) refers to national macro-economic processes. It is very difficult to arrive at firm conclusions on potential local and regional economic impacts.

We believe that there may well be benefits to Warwickshire – reduced long distance traffic on local roads, the M6/M40 etc may well reduce congestion and boost local economic outcomes. One could also argue that the improved access to London (via either released capacity or via the proposed Birmingham Interchange station) may open up new markets for local businesses, or that HS2 by boosting the economy in Birmingham, this might open up job opportunities for people in Warwickshire. However there are a range of other local impacts which might work in either direction (e.g. Birmingham draws in activity from the surrounding region). Unfortunately we do not have definitive evidence one way or the other on this point.

May I refer you to Appendix 3 of the [HS2 Demand Model Analysis report](#) which provides an overview of the experience elsewhere but with a focus on areas that could have a station directly on the high speed line rather than those near to one. This indicates that high speed rail could open up economic opportunities, but it would have to be effectively integrated within the regional spatial plans and transport network.

WCC response (28 April 2010)

WCC’s response to the Autumn consultation will have to balance the overall economic and transport benefits of the proposed HS2 and its Preferred Route for Warwickshire as a whole against the environmental and potentially other adverse impacts. Therefore, unless HS2 Ltd is able to identify the scale, nature and distribution of economic benefits likely to accrue to the West Midlands Region and, more particularly, to Warwickshire and its Sub-region, then this

balancing exercise cannot be carried out properly. Whilst, in theory, we could hire consultants (at, no doubt, considerable expense) to do the work, we consider that it is for the promoters of a project to substantiate the benefits claimed for their project to the extent that they can be identified as applying or not to those whose views are to be sought in the consultation process. Without such information, the consultation could not be regarded as an ‘intelligent consultation’. We urge HS2 to carry out the further work that this requires and make it publicly available well in advance of commencement of the consultation.

WCC Question (31 March 2010)

Q2) Freight Transport:

There is considerable reliance in the documentation on the transport benefits of HS2 in releasing capacity for increased conventional rail services, particularly freight on the West Coast Mainline (WCML) (e.g. at paragraphs 8.22-8.25, [Command Paper](#)). We are especially interested in the prospect of lifting the current ‘brake’ on modal shift of long haul freight from road to rail, specifically at the major logistics locations in and adjacent to Warwickshire where there are currently under-used rail freight terminals (e.g. at DIRFT, Hams Hall). In this connection, we would be keen to see the notional distribution of the released capacity used to inform the HS2 business case. And whilst we note that the [Command Paper](#) says that “actual allocation of capacity would be carried out through industry processes” (para 8.25, [Command Paper](#)), I would expect that we will be looking for the claimed benefits of HS2 – including the WCML released capacity benefit – to be to some degree ring-fenced or otherwise linked to the broad locations bearing the brunt of its physical impact, including Warwickshire. I would appreciate your advice on how we might go about securing this through the Hybrid Bill process.

HS2 Ltd Answer (22 April 2010)

Our assessment indicates that the construction of a high speed line from London to Birmingham would release significant amounts of rail capacity on the southern section of the West Coast Main Line (WCML), south of the point where the new line would rejoin the WCML to the north of Lichfield. North of that point, the addition of high speed would mean the WCML becoming more intensively used than it is currently. Therefore, we believe that the released capacity for freight during the daytime could only really be used for services to/from the south or east of Warwickshire, for example DIRFT to Felixstowe, Hams Hall to Tilbury, or Birch Coppice to the Channel Tunnel (and onward to Europe).

You may wish to know that the idea of ring-fencing some of this new capacity for freight services has also been raised by the [Rail Freight Group](#). This would not be a simple exercise. In circumstances such as the construction of Crossrail, where the outcome was potentially a reduction of available capacity for freight on the Great Western Main Line, the parties followed the formal dispute process and an agreed level of paths and additional infrastructure for freight operations was the result. In HS2’s circumstances, where additional capacity is being released – in excess of the likely requirements of passenger operators on the route – it is difficult to envisage such a process being followed.

A better model might be the process used to develop the December 2008 WCML timetable, where an all-industry working group led by the DfT set the remit for the timetable development work. This involved the production of a “standard hour” timetable which

included long distance and local passenger and freight services. This ensured that a suitable level of freight paths was incorporated in the draft timetable.

Therefore, in due course Warwickshire Council (and other interested bodies such as the terminal operators) may wish to consider how they could co-ordinate their thoughts, possibly via the [Rail Freight Group](#), to propose a specification for the freight paths on the southern part of the WCML post HS2. Such a specification could possibly form the starting point of a remit for the timetable development process.

WCC response (28 April 2010)

This is a helpful response – at least as far as it goes. However, it is both unrealistic and unfair to put the onus on the County Council and other councils and bodies to take the initiative with a national body (DfT Rail) in these circumstances. We consider that it should be HS2 Ltd's responsibility to approach the all-industry working group led by DfT Rail with a specific request that it addresses the HS2 implications for releasing capacity for long distance and local passenger and long haul freight services on the WCML and consults on proposed arrangements for delivering the claimed HS2 rail transport benefits – in particular those appropriate for the West Midlands, Warwickshire and its Sub-region. This could usefully be part of the overall HS2 consultation proposed by Government starting in the Autumn.

WCC Question (31 March 2010)

Q3) Noise Impacts:

The collective experience of Warwickshire residents and businesses in high-speed rail travel is thought to be quite limited and that of living or working near high-speed rail lines (with train speeds in excess of 200mph) is likely to be extremely rare/non-existent. Given the proposed speeds, frequency and railway & train designs, we struggle to understand what noise is likely to be generated and its impact on people living and working in the 'locality'. I note in paragraph 5.49 of the [Command Paper](#) that HS2 Ltd's "careful analysis" of the Preferred Route concludes that about 350 dwellings could experience high noise levels with a much larger number experiencing a noticeable noise increase.

- It would be helpful to us to know what is meant by 'high noise levels' and 'a noticeable noise increase' and the locations and numbers of those dwellings likely to be affected in Warwickshire.
- We also note that Government has commissioned HS2 Ltd to do more detailed analysis of noise impacts on settlements and options for mitigation before the public consultation (presumably to comply with the [Transport & Works \(Assessment of Environmental Effects\) Regulations 2006](#)). Can you confirm that your further work on noise impact will cover other uses in addition to dwellings such as offices and schools (NB. as per British Standard 82233 & Building Bulletin 93).
- It would also be useful if you could give us an idea of the location and extent of dwellings in Warwickshire to which the Noise Insulation (Railways and other Guided Transport Systems) Regulations 1996 are likely to apply (i.e. re. secondary glazing/ alternative ventilation).

HS2 Ltd Answer (4 May 2010):

The HS2 adopted High noise levels are noise levels equal to or greater than 73 dB

L_{Aeq},18hr. HS2 has considered a noticeable noise increase of at least 3 dB L_{Aeq},18hr with a resultant noise level of greater than 50 dB L_{Aeq},18hr. Numbers of dwellings affected have not divided into regions.

Further studies have been commissioned to reflect the requirements of the Command Paper and will be published in the Autumn prior to consultation. In due course an Environmental Impact Assessment will be prepared in accordance with [Council Directives 85/337/EEC](#) and its [amendment 97/11/EC](#) and an Environmental Statement will be prepared to accompany the deposit of a draft hybrid Bill to be put before Parliament. That environmental impact assessment (EIA) will cover both residential, commercial and community effects of noise.

The NIRR is designed to offer noise insulation in certain prescribed qualifying circumstances. The actual location of eligible properties will not be known until more detailed predictions are undertaken.

- [Examples of decibel sounds](#)
- [Noise and sound definitions](#)
- [Glossary of the more technical terms \(pdf, 10kb\)](#)

WCC Response (5 May 2010):

It is helpful to know that HS2 Ltd considers noise levels equal to or greater than 73 dB L_{Aeq},18hr as ‘high’ but first we need to press you further on what has been done so far to assess noise impacts of the Preferred Route. It does not seem plausible to us for the [Command Paper](#) to say (at para. 5.49) that about 350 dwellings would experience high levels of noise without knowing where they are located. Either the [Command Paper](#) is making a wild guess or the locations have been identified to produce the estimate – which is it?

We also note HS2 Ltd’s definition of a ‘noticeable noise increase’. How does this relate to the 55/57 dBA noise level used in airport planning to identify the level at which ‘community annoyance’ begins to set in?

We are disappointed about the delay in delivery of noise contours for the Preferred Route through ‘further studies’. We hope to receive the results well in advance of the Autumn consultation. Your answer indicates that they will be released just prior to commencement of the consultation. This implies that we will not be able to identify those locations where we would wish to pursue noise mitigation measures with you – in the event that the project proceeds as proposed. Moreover, we will not be able to give you advice about focussing your consultation exercises on those locations likely to be most affected. Lack of noise contours in advance of the consultation will risk missing out those locations where there could well be a ‘noticeable’ increase in noise levels but little or no visual impact.

Whilst we welcome your confirmation that the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will cover residential, commercial and community effects of noise, again we are concerned about the timing of its availability. Your answer suggests that the EIA will not be available until after the consultation period has ended and the Environmental Statement is being prepared to accompany the deposit of a draft hybrid Bill. We consider that it is essential for the EIA to be available to inform the Consultation process (as well as the Parliamentary process) and will HS2 Ltd & DfT therefore reconsider the timing and confirm that this material will indeed be available to the public in the Autumn.

WCC Question (31 March 2010)

Q4) Familiarisation:

What proposals do HS2 (or DfT) have to help familiarise us (local authorities) with the experience of high-speed rail – to help us appreciate what it is like to live near an operational line in terms of its visual, noise, vibration and atmospheric impacts on local residents and businesses?

HS2 Ltd Answer (22 April 2010)

As I indicated at our meeting, we are beginning to shape our thoughts and plans for the proposed Autumn consultation and in particular ways to consult and what materials and documentation to produce to help people understand the consultation and contribute to it. One of the issues we will consider is what information might be beneficial to enhance residents understanding of high speed rail in general and the potential operational impacts of the London to Birmingham preferred route option.

WCC response (28 April 2010)

This general sentiment is welcome but, in particular, I hope you will appreciate that the Council's and the general public understanding of what it can be expected to be like living, working or taking recreation close to or in the vicinity of an operational HS2 line is crucial to obtaining an informed response to the consultation. This understanding needs to be developed well in advance of the consultation – rather than during it. Therefore, we look forward to some early initiatives by HS2 to begin the education process.

WCC Question (31 March 2010)

Q5) Environmental Impact Assessments:

How soon will HS2 be able to provide us with the details of the Environmental Impact Assessments relating to the impacts on the Warwickshire sections of the Preferred Route?

HS2 Ltd Answer (22 April 2010)

As part of the report to Ministers at the end of 2009, HS2 produced an Appraisal of Sustainability (AoS) report and published in March a non-technical summary of the AoS. The full AoS report has not yet been published as Ministers have asked HS2 to carry out some more work on potential mitigation. This work is underway and the results will be included in the full AoS which will be published in time for proposed Autumn consultation.

WCC response (28 April 2010)

It is most unhelpful that publication of the full 'Appraisal of Sustainability' will not be available well in advance of the commencement of consultation since we would look to the results of this work to steer us to those parts of the Preferred Route proposals where we would seek to understand early on the scope for mitigation. This, in turn, would inform our response to the subsequent consultation. We urge HS2 Ltd and DfT to advance the further work on mitigation ordered by Ministers and make it available to us for this purpose in 3 (rather than 6 months) time.

WCC Question (31 March 2010)

Q6) Re-alignment Modelling:

Does HS2 Ltd have a model (or the capacity) to simulate local re-alignments to the Preferred Route (both horizontal and vertical) and their likely impacts i.e. In the event that the output of the EIA indicates (to us) that re-alignment should be considered?

HS2 Ltd Answer (22 April 2010)

Our analysis of the preferred route is supported by plan and profile drawing of route section which include horizontal and vertical alignments, as well as showing where the route might be in tunnel and where potential viaducts might be needed. If as a result of further work or as a result of the consultation the route was to deviate from the existing alignment HS2 would need to assess the impacts.

WCC response (28 April 2010)

This is not as helpful as we expected following the discussions on 25 March. We would wish to explore the scope for and implications of re-alignment with you during the next 6 months in those locations that the environmental impact assessment identifies serious negative effects (assuming that this environmental information is forthcoming within a reasonable time-frame – see our response to your answer to question 5 above). HS2 Ltd is requested to review its position on this issue as a matter of some urgency.

WCC Question (31 March 2010)

Q7) Acquisition Schedules:

Do schedules of different types of land & property acquisition for the Preferred Route exist and when can we have access to them?

HS2 Ltd Answer (22 April 2010)

The HS2 Appraisal of Sustainability work carried out a broad assessment of property impacts along the route broken down into route sections. As you may know, Lord Adonis has asked HS2 to carry out some further work on the AoS for instance around mitigation of the potential impact on Stoneleigh Abbey Park and Gardens. The intention is to publish the AoS with the further assessment included in time for the proposed Autumn consultation.

WCC response (28 April 2010)

Our question related to the simple facts of the land and property that would need to be acquired to in order to construct and operate the HS2 on the Preferred Route. We assumed that this basic information would be collated and easily available. The question has not been answered.

The answer provided is nonetheless informative in that it suggests that the delay in publication of the full 'Appraisal of Sustainability' has specifically been prompted by Lord Adonis's request for further work on mitigation in relation to Stoneleigh Park. We have no doubt that there are other locations along the Preferred Route in Warwickshire that will have a prima facie claim to such special treatment and delay in publication of the 'Assessment of Sustainability' will hinder identification of such cases. (See our response to your answer to question 5 above).

WCC Question (31 March 2010)

Q8) Local Land Search:

The Local Land Search Form 'CON29' has a specific question about railways with a requirement to declare for properties with 200m of the centre-line. How should we deal with this question in relation to the current HS2 Preferred Route?

HS2 Ltd Answer (22 April 2010)

I am afraid HS2 is unable to answer this question. I suspect it is not a unique situation as there must be other proposals for development which are not yet at the planning stage but which may be relevant to Local Land Searches. May I suggest that you take advice from your own planning/ legal experts or you may want to consult the Department for Communities and Local Government which could offer more definitive advice on this issue.

WCC response (28 April 2010)

This answer should have anticipated that the question would not have been asked had clear guidance been forthcoming from the usual sources. Currently, different practices are being adopted and, in the absence of a steer from DfT, we shall seek to achieve some degree of local consistency in Warwickshire.

WCC Question (31 March 2010)

Q9) Parish Meetings:

Is HS2 prepared to send representatives to local parish meetings to explain the Preferred Route proposal as it affects particular localities and answer related questions?

HS2 Ltd Answer (22 April 2010)

At this stage and during the election purdah period HS2 is not engaging in any activity which could be seen to promote Government policy or discuss areas of sensitive Government policy. As indicated in our meeting we want to continue engagement of practical matters around the proposed consultation plans and expect to continue discussion with Warwickshire officials soon. Discussions with local representative groups about the consultation would follow. In the meantime we are happy to take questions about high speed rail and we have set up an enquiry unit to do this.

WCC response (28 April 2010)

This is understood and accepted as inevitable for the next 2 weeks.

WCC Question (07 June 2010)

Q10) Exception Hardship Scheme Decision:

Are you in a position to advise us of the date when the Government will announce its decision on the Exception Hardship Scheme (EHS)? Will it be in two or three months? Obviously, we wish to avoid further uncertainty in the communities directly affected by the HS2 Preferred Route through Warwickshire and your prompt response would therefore be appreciated.

HS2 Ltd Answer (16 June 2010)

As you know, a number of people responded to the consultation on the EHS arguing that ten

weeks was not enough time to allow all interested people to comment. In response to their concerns, the Secretary of State for Transport decided to extend the deadline by a month to the 17 June.

This extension will allow more people to comment but could also mean that those people needing to move urgently and wishing to use the Scheme could face a month's delay as these further responses are considered.

In order to minimise any delay for property owners looking to move urgently, the Secretary of State has asked the Department for Transport to have interim arrangements in place by the time a decision on the EHS is announced. So, without prejudging the outcome of the consultation, the Department will be in position to accept and start processing applications immediately a decision is taken. This should help minimise uncertainty for those affected and ensure that, if the decision is taken to proceed with the scheme, any payments can be made as quickly as possible wherever appropriate.

We expect an announcement on the EHS to be made in the summer.