

NW Leics District Council

HS2 Strategy



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1. Introduction

HS2 is coming.

The District Council have spent some considerable time examining the impact of HS2 upon the area, our residents and local businesses. Since the proposed route changes were published in November 2016, we have reopened our investigations, and we put forward this strategy as a management plan to ensure the best outcomes for our residents, and to offer a measured response to the route amendments.

We have spent time consulting with planning experts, local councillors, action groups and the public about the route changes and have carefully considered the impacts upon our community, businesses and the environment. We are indebted to their views and the work of local action groups, whose contributions have been invaluable in assembling this strategy. It has been some time since the original route was published and the proposed changes have therefore brought HS2 into sharp focus again. Our studies and discussions have led us to the following conclusions:

1. We can see the logic behind the **East Midlands Airport/Kegworth amendment**, as there are clear financial benefits for HS2 Ltd for not constructing a 3km tunnel underneath the airport. The course of the railway will also follow the A42, which is in line with HS2's basic principle of following existing transport corridors where this is feasible. However, there is a need to mitigate and compensate for the loss of amenity space and playing fields as a result of losing planning permissions to the west of Kegworth and to take account of new bridges needed to ensure the delivery of the Kegworth by-pass is not jeopardised.
2. **Siting of Toton interchange** – our clear preferences would have been for either a station at East Midlands Airport (similar to the one at Manchester Airport), or failing that, one alongside the existing station at East Midlands Parkway. However, we recognise that HS2 Ltd have made their decision on Toton to place the new station equidistant from Derby, Nottingham and Leicester to give fair access from each of the East Midlands cities. We also note this is a decision that is supported by the respective transport authorities in those areas. It is now our priority to ensure the best possible connectivity between Toton and the district, and to this end we shall expect HS2 to support this aim and to work closely with local councils to achieve this.
3. **We are unable to support the proposed amendment to move the railway east of Measham**, and we have identified the following significant disadvantages:
 - **Cutting off rural communities:** the proposed route will enclose Measham, Appleby Parva and Appleby Magna, and will also move much closer to Packington than was originally envisaged. One of HS2's design principles elsewhere has been to avoid this sort of enclosure and it is difficult to understand why it has not been applied in this case. Cutting off rural communities will cause a raft of different issues in this area and these are explained in detail below.

- **Engineering:** the revised route now includes many sections of embankment and large viaducts, to accommodate passing the line through an undulating area of countryside. These will greatly increase the visual impact of HS2 in a rural area and create more noise, both during the construction period and afterwards when the service is operating. The amended route also affects many more minor roads and as details of disruption to these are as yet unknown, there is a large amount of disquiet about village-to-village access while the line is being built
- **Noise:** we have received many communications from residents who are anxious about the impact of noise, from construction operations and from passing trains. A significant number (more than 20) affected properties are listed and will not be able to employ noise reduction measures such as double or triple glazing. There are concerns about the effects of construction and train noise upon education, as World Health Organisation recommendations are for sound levels to be less than 35dB. There are detailed notes within this consultation response about the Sir John Moore’s Foundation, one of the few Grade 1 secular heritage buildings in the county.
- **Ecology:** the original route through the Measham industrial estate and next to the A42 was recommended by HS2 to enable the shortest possible traverse of the River Mease Special Area of Conservation. The new route involves a longer, potentially more deleterious crossing over this highly sensitive ecological area. It is therefore a worse option in terms of environmental impact
- **Employment:** the original route would run through the Plastic Omnium factory. A route to avoid the factory is possible and could be explored, or if necessary the Council would proactively work with the company to assist relocation nearby, which could be achieved with the compensation due and gives a period of several years for this to be achieved. However, moving the route east of Measham also has an adverse effect on a number of small businesses and the Champney Springs Spa, which employs 200 people
- **Housing:** the original route affects an unbuilt housing estate. The applicants for this site were fully aware of the proposed HS2 route and the Council has made alternative plans for housing provision in Measham through its Local Plan. Arrangements can therefore be made for housing relocation on an alternative site, but other housing areas will be severely affected by the proposed amendment
- **Heritage:** The proposed re-route will have a significant impact on the Grade 1 listed building St John Moore Foundation School.
- **Road:** A42 realignment can be addressed through appropriate measures, but there are likely to be significant effects on minor roads during the construction period
- **Utilities:** the new route has a direct impact on the Packington water treatment works (WWTW), which would require substantial investment to mitigate, especially given the issues with the River Mease SAC and the fact that the WWTW would either have to be replaced before the railway is built, or would need to remain fully operational while improvement works were carried out to mitigate the impact of the railway.

This strategy document is accompanied at Appendix 1 by the impact assessment matrix.

2. Summary

The construction of HS2 and the introduction of high speed rail services running through the area will be a pivotal time for North West Leicestershire. To this end, the District Council commissioned SLC Rail to identify the risks and opportunities arising with the project, and suggest how we can work with HS2 to achieve the best results for our residents. This strategy document outlines the benefits and impacts of HS2 and also discusses a number of generic issues that we will have to be aware of.

It will be many years before HS2 is up and running in the area, but it is important that we get on board with this as early as possible, so that we can help to minimise the anxiety and disruption to our residents. The original proposal for HS2 through the area indicated that following the construction phase, the impacts of the system would be low, but since the proposed route amendments were issued in November 2016, NWLDC has had to return to this subject to consider the impacts once again. For much of its course through the area, the line will run very close to the M42/A42, except for the proposed diversion to the east of Measham.

We do recognise that the construction phase may cause considerable difficulties for some of our residents, and we want to be able to manage that proactively.

The HS1 project demonstrated that there are important lessons which can be learnt and applied to HS2, and we are going to use these experiences to get the best outcomes for the people of North West Leicestershire. Compensation for those who will be affected financially is the single most important factor, and we will ensure that information is available and that residents are directed towards the advice that they need.

We will ensure that we do our best for our residents and that HS2 brings positive outcomes to the area.

3. Overview of HS2

We are acutely aware that the public have very mixed views about HS2 and opinion polls consistently demonstrate a wide range of views, including that some people have not yet made up their minds whether they think it is a good idea or not. In some areas there is still widespread opposition to the project and we need to be sensitive to this.

The first phase of HS2 will run from London Euston to Birmingham and divide into two arms northeast of Birmingham, as shown in the map. The main East Midlands interchange is likely to be at Toton, and studies are already in progress for improved transport links from Toton to Derby, Nottingham and Leicester

HS2 will transform the UK railway network. All express trains previously running on the West Coast, Midland and East Coast Main Lines will transfer on to the new lines, creating more space on the old, “classic” network. As a result of this, there is likely to be significant restructuring of railway timetables. This will mean that other towns and cities can win out through improved train services, and there are likely to be more stopping services serving smaller towns. This will also include destinations in the district such as East Midlands Airport, which is scheduled to expand over the next decade.

HS2 – Proposed Route



Source: HS2 Limited

HS2 services into the East Midlands are expected to start in 2033, but the company will look at accelerating construction if there is a good case for this.

When HS2 begins operations, it is expected that there will be nine trains per hour running in each direction.

4. Benefits

HS2 will bring a number of major benefits to the district:

- **Better journey times to London and the North of England:** Projections show that there may be time savings from District towns like Coalville and Ashby of up to 40 minutes on journeys to London, Leeds, Newcastle or Manchester. This is significant and will allow for much improved business links between these cities

Example journey time:

Coalville to London by car = approx. 2 hrs 11 mins

Coalville to London by car + conventional rail = approx. 1hr 52 mins

Coalville to London by car + HS2 = approx. **1hr 31mins**

- **Opportunities for more economic development around the East Midlands Airport site:** Construction work on the East Midlands Gateway project started in early 2017 and is due for completion in 2023. This new enterprise will bring up to 7,000 new jobs, a bus interchange and associated road improvements
- **Improved bus services:** It may be possible to develop express bus services to link Coalville and Ashby with the East Midlands Gateway and HS2. This will benefit workers on the East Midlands Airport site and also HS2 passengers
- **Compensation from HS2 for landowners, businesses and the National Forest:** Compensation will be payable to all those materially or financially affected by the construction of HS2. This will include appropriate replanting of the National Forest where it is affected by HS2 construction works. The Government have already published details of their [Compensation Scheme](#) and we will ensure that affected residents are given information about how to access legal advice

5. Impacts

The previous study work undertaken by SLC Rail divided the district into three areas:

1. Appleby Parva to Ashby de-la Zouch
2. Ashby de-la Zouch to Charnock Hill
3. Charnock Hill to Lockington

The analysis identified a number of location-specific impacts which will need to be carefully managed. These are:

- Conservation of the River Mease
- Measham Canal restoration scheme

- The proposed route amendment east of Measham, also affecting Appleby Parva, Appleby Magna and Packington
- Major road works northeast of Junction 13 of the M42
- Major flood plain north of Castle Donington and Kegworth

A detailed document setting out the impacts that were assessed for each area is available in Appendix 1.

6. Generic Issues

The impact analysis has identified a number of generic issues which may affect wider parts of the district. These will be addressed by working with HS2 Ltd to ensure that a “best-fit” approach is used which will minimise disruption to local residents and businesses.

CONSTRUCTION

The construction phase of HS2 will span more than a decade; this will ensure that proper public consultation takes place, the design and planning phases are appropriate and also to spread costs. There will be disruption to nearby roads; this will include closures, temporary re-routing and some permanent roadworks. With the proposed route amendment east of Measham, this could cause the rerouting of a number of minor roads from Measham, the Appleby villages and Packington

We will ensure that the environmental and ecological impacts are carefully controlled. In places, the new line will pass close to areas of Special Scientific Interest and/or Conservation Areas and we will work with HS2 Ltd to ensure that these are protected.

There is a possibility that archaeological works will be required when construction starts, as important finds may be uncovered during digging works. HS2 Ltd will engage experts to ensure that local heritage is not lost.

Spoil (ie soil, sand, clay and rock) from a project of this size will be considerable and will need to be removed in a sustainable manner. It is likely that the Leicester-Burton freight line will be used to remove spoil by rail. There may be ongoing benefits to the area from upgrading this piece of infrastructure.

NOISE

Noise is a highly contentious issue and residents will be anxious about the sound levels generated by trains using the HS2 line. However, calculations have shown that this will be much less than expected.

How do we calculate train noise?

- Sound is logarithmic; an 80dB sound is ten times louder than a 70dB sound, which is ten times louder than a 60dB sound
- Noise is generated by the interaction of the train's wheels and the track, and the aerodynamic effect of the train moving through the air
- A high speed train will emit a sound level of around 95dB at around 50m away (equivalent to someone playing a piano loudly about 1 metre from the listener's ear)
- A train travelling at 400km/hr will be audible for 1km (approaching and passing). This is 1/400 of an hour, or 9 seconds
- If HS2 runs the projected 9 trains per hour, this will be additional noise for around 2 mins 42 secs per hour

Understanding the impact of train noise

- Noise is subjective and may affect one person more than another
- Intermittent noise (eg from trains and aircraft) may be perceived to be more troublesome than a constant, but lower level noise, but individuals' opinions may differ on this
- Being inside a building will reduce a sound level by around 10dB, even if a window is open
- Double or triple glazing will reduce noise levels further
- Earth ramparts, picket fences or trees can help reduce noise, but the first two measures can have a significant visual impact

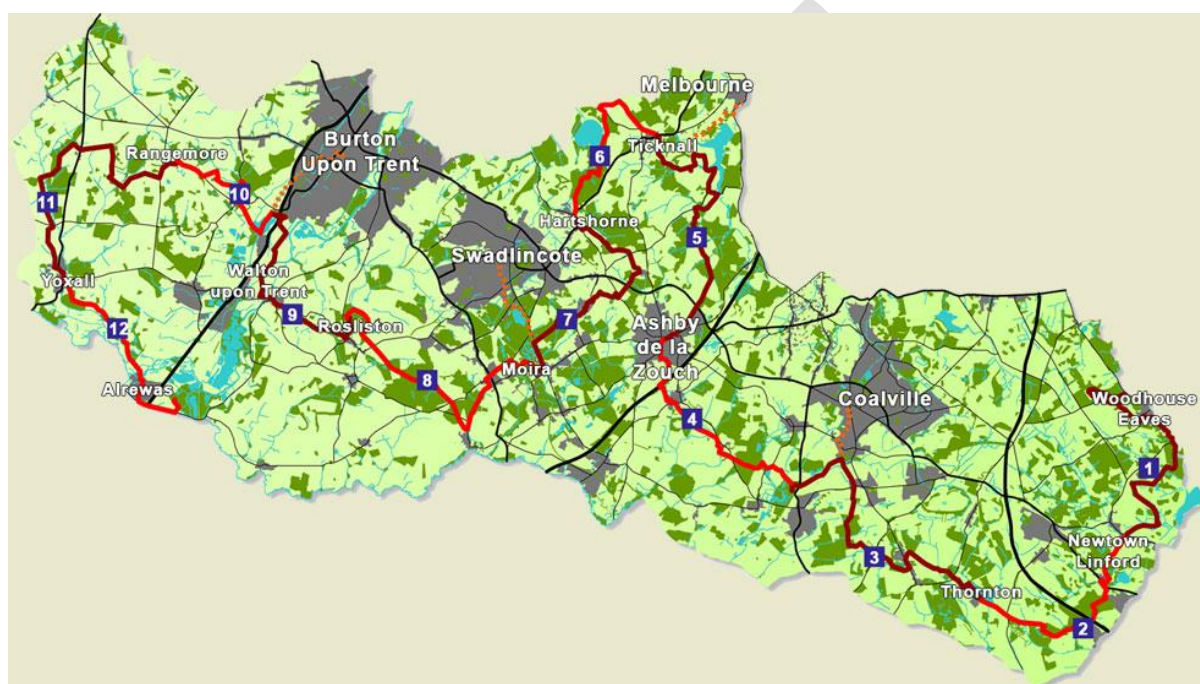
It has already been identified that trains entering and leaving tunnels can make a noise similar to a sonic boom. There will be small areas of tunnel along the proposed route, but in any case, noise mitigation devices are available for tunnel portals and HS2 Ltd are already planning to use these at all relevant points along the route. Tree plantings may also be used to act as a noise buffer in some places.

Noise is less likely to be an issue from the railway than either the A42, which emits constant noise except late at night, or East Midlands Airport, where aircraft noise is intermittent, except late at night. However, the proposed route amendment hems in Measham, Appleby Parva and Appleby Magna, and moves the railway substantially closer to Packington. This is likely to cause issues with noise, both from the railway alone and from the combination of road and rail.

Construction noise must be viewed differently, as it is likely to be for a set number of hours per day and for a specified construction period. However, noise is only one aspect of the disruption likely to occur when the railway is being built.

NATIONAL FOREST

We have identified that National Forest plantings lie within section 1 and 2 of the proposed route. Measham is also within the National Forest and there have been significant tree planting operations along the A42 in recent years.



HS2 Ltd have already agreed that where tree plantings are disrupted along the route, they will be replaced. There may also be opportunities for new plantings to help diffuse noise from the railway.

However, vegetation management is a major issue for Network Rail. Unchecked trees can cover signals, causing safety issues and may make it difficult for lineside workers to be able to shelter from passing trains while they are working. There is also the perennial issue of leaf drop and “leaves on the line”, which can cause train delays in the Autumn.

Network Rail have a detailed vegetation management strategy which sets out the distances from a track which must be clear of trees, and which species may be planted. On the classic network, this is 5m, but this figure may be adjusted for HS2 as the greater speed means that trains will pull in a large vortex of air behind them, affecting a wider than usual area.

PUBLIC OPINION AND EXPECTATIONS

Public opinion polls vary, but the majority show a marked opposition to HS2. There are still many people who are undecided about it.



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There are many reasons for public opposition, but the most commonly stated are:

- Money should be spent on improving the existing rail network
- Money should be spent on other public services instead, such as the NHS or education
- HS2 will destroy greenfield environments, and cause pollution, noise and traffic disruption
- “Not in my back yard”

We want to provide a balanced view on HS2 for our residents, and have prepared a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) sheet which is available to download or collect from council offices.

ROAD CAPACITY: M42 AND A42

It is very likely that there will be an increase in road traffic during the construction phase of HS2, and possibly additional traffic on to these routes as a result of road closures and diversions elsewhere along the construction path.

Work will be starting soon to remodel Junction 13 of the A42 as it is already over capacity. It is possible that further work will need to take place later, as the planned route of the railway is very close to this junction.

It is also possible that traffic will increase on the A/M42 with more people travelling to Toton and Birmingham International. We have consulted Highways England, but they do not have any work planned at the moment.

However, Highways England are planning works to improve access to the Toton and Birmingham International sites, as follows:

- Rework of Junction 6 of the M42 to improve access to Birmingham International Station
- Opening the hard shoulder of the M1 between Junctions 23a (Donington Park) and 25 (Sandiacre) to improve access to the new Toton Interchange station

Roxhill Developments will be funding major improvements to Junctions 24 and 24a of the M1, to improve bottlenecks and give better access to the new East Midlands Gateway site.

7. Engagement with HS2 and Highways England

Our consultants, SLC Rail, have already engaged with HS2 Ltd and Highways England. A summary of these engagements appears below:

HS2 LTD

- HS2 report “surprise” at the number of responses they have already received to the 2016 consultation, and participants in the public consultation meetings held in the area
- All consultation responses will be collated and reported on by a third-party organisation (Dialogue by Design) before being passed to HS2
- The Secretary of State will make a formal response towards the end of 2017
- HS2’s impact assessments will also be subject to public consultation and will be undertaken by large working teams
- They have acknowledged that there is no “perfect” solution for the Measham amendment
- HS2 are keen to set up community forums to help work through the processes involved
- Traffic and Transport Liaison Groups are already being established for Phase 1. These will be HS2-led and are likely to be put into place for Phases 2a and 2b in the relatively near future. These groups will be focussed on the impacts of construction, road changes, HGV movements etc. Local authorities will be key stakeholders

HIGHWAYS ENGLAND

- Their principal concerns lie with HS2’s interface with the road network, and disruption from construction traffic
- HS2 and Highways England have already signed a Memorandum of Understanding as both are Secretary of State bodies. They are looking to jointly reduce the impact on the environment and align road and rail schemes to reduce disruption. This will include sharing roadworks and construction compounds where possible
- They are also both looking for commitment to future-proof the network. Road structures which interface with HS2 will be wide enough to accommodate extra lanes without further major disruption to the railway
- Any temporary road changes to accommodate the construction of HS2 will be built to a **permanent** standard and local authorities will have the opportunity to decide later if they want to retain these as permanent changes
- Highways England have a 2040 Vision and are already thinking in a multimodal way; it is not just about roads, but about how to maximise the transport modes there are available
- They have already noted that Junction 13 of the A42 could be heavily impacted by the construction of HS2
- Midlands Connect’s future strategy is already mindful of the effect of increased traffic on the already-busy M42 and A42. Solutions for this are likely to be considered again

8. Summary of Risks and Opportunities

Risks	Opportunities
Major public opposition	Better public transport connectivity locally and nationally – better access to jobs
Environmental damage to National Forest and SSSI areas	Compensation to landowners, businesses and National Forest
Long term traffic disruption if road improvements not co-ordinated with HS2	Improved travel times to London and the North
	Development of East Midlands Gateway and associated economic benefits
Disruption during construction phase	More jobs during construction phase and afterwards

9. Next Steps

We have already engaged with East Midlands Airport, and intend to work with HS2 Ltd throughout so that we are able to influence the best outcomes for our residents and businesses.

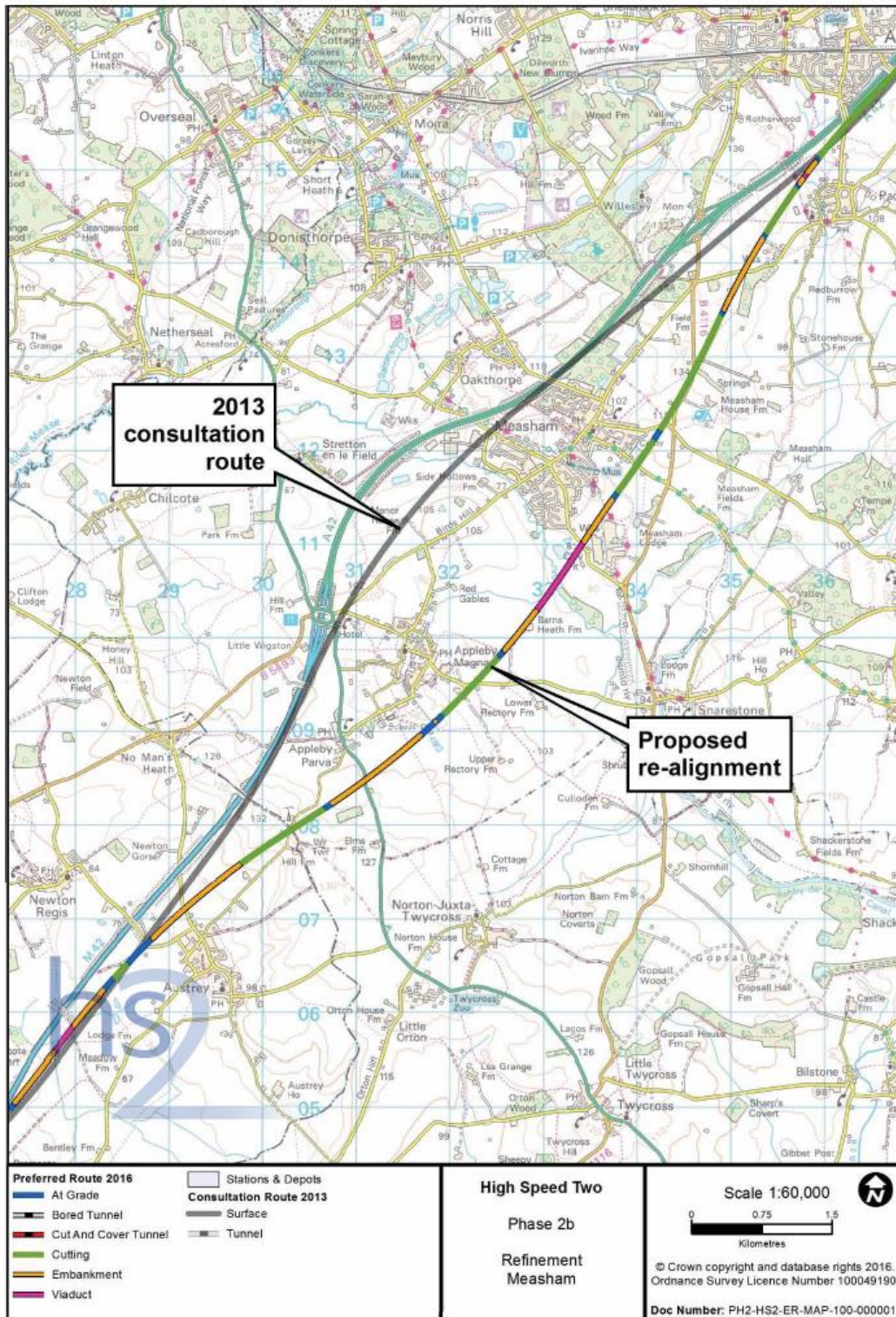
Therefore our strategy going forward is to:

- Actively engage with HS2 and other local/regional stakeholders
- Respond to the latest consultation document by 9th March 2017 (See Appendix 2)
- Ensure we present a balanced position on HS2
- Support our residents, particularly those who will need to claim compensation
- Ensure we engage with HS2 Ltd, Highways England, Network Rail and bus operators to optimise local connectivity benefits from HS2
- Engage directly with action groups through one point of contact who is able to liaise with them and act as an advocate for their views, and ensure that these are carried to the council and communicated with HS2 and other stakeholders.

SLC Rail on behalf of NW Leicestershire District Council

14th February 2017

a. Route amendment east of Measham



b. A42 and East Midlands Airport

