

Appendix 2:

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – RESPONSE TO HS2 CONSULTATION

The District Council have considered the proposed route changes which were published in November 2016 and wish to put forward the following as a measured response.

NWLDC STANCE

We have spent time consulting with Council employees, local councillors, action groups and the public about the route changes and have carefully considered the impacts upon our community, businesses and the environment. 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 Ltd 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 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.

PRIORITIES

The Council priorities for our residents and businesses are:

- To minimise noise, access and travel disruption during the construction period
- To maximise benefits, both during the construction period and when HS2 is operational

- To ensure that our heritage buildings and conservation areas are protected as far as is reasonably practicable
- To ensure that our environment and wildlife are sheltered from adverse effects
- To work with HS2 and railway operators to ensure that Leicestershire has good outcomes in terms of access to rail travel
- To ensure that anyone who suffers blight is appropriately compensated.

BENEFITS

We are broadly in support of the concept of HS2 as a means of bringing the railways into the twenty-first century, and we have studied the benefits that this project will bring to the district in the long term. We have identified the following benefits:

- **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
- **Opportunities for more economic development around the East Midlands Airport site:** Construction work on the East Midlands Gateway project commenced in early in 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. This could develop further as a result of business expansions encouraged by HS2
- **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 we will ensure that affected residents are given information about how to access legal advice.

Leicestershire is expected to grow by some 117,000 additional homes over the next twenty years, a significant expansion. The associated larger population will require employment and access to travel. Using current patterns of population movement for both work and leisure indicate that there will be a need to continue to encourage our residents to make the best use possible of public transport to relieve pressure on the road systems. It is recognised that the openings that HS2 will release on the classic rail network will give increased opportunities for both local and longer distance travel from the district and the wider county. There is potential for the increased population to tap into the improved journey times that HS2 will offer, provided that suitable public transport position is made along the M42/A42 corridor between the two interchange stations, with stops within the District to service Ashby, Coalville and the airport.

IMPACTS

The Council commissioned an impact assessment on the original route alignment and this has been updated since the route amendments were announced in November 2016. The following factors were used in the assessment:

- Landscape and Visual
- Ecology and Wildlife
- Noise
- Roads and Traffic
- Development
- Heritage
- Public Amenities
- Water and flooding

The assessment matrix is attached as an Appendix to the Council's overall HS2 Strategy, and shows a comparison of the impacts between the original route and the proposed amendments.

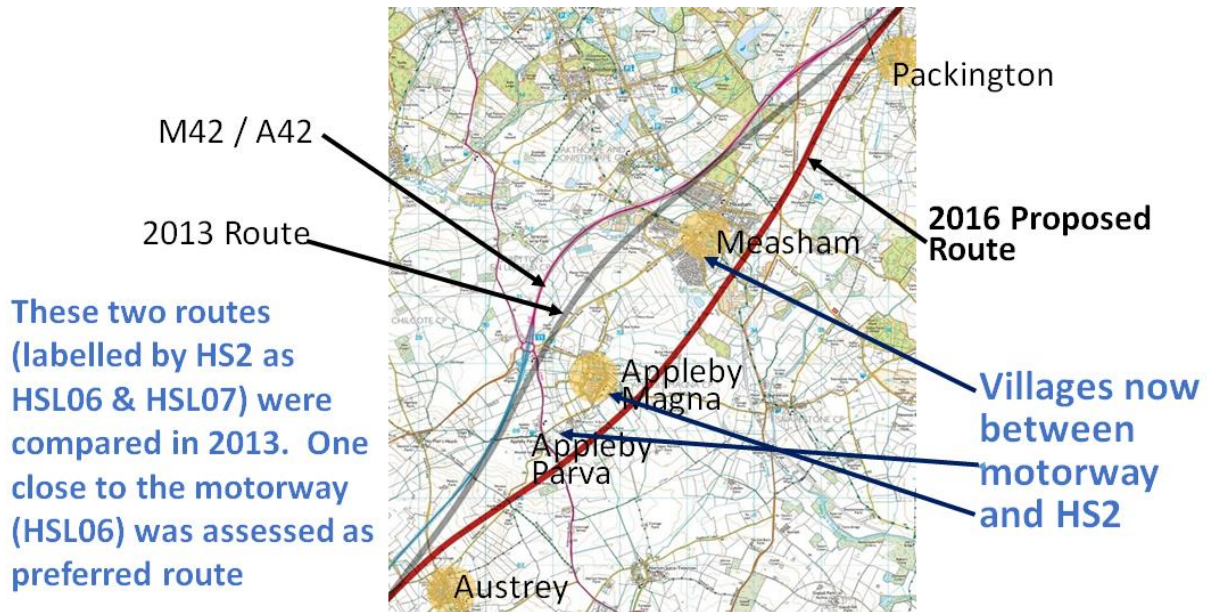
Since the impact assessment was carried out, HS2 have proposed two amendments which will affect the district and these are:

1. Moving the route to the east of Measham and away from the course of the M42/A42 transport corridor.
2. Taking the route out of tunnel underneath East Midlands Airport and moving the route to closely follow the A42.

It has become obvious that the impact assessment alone would not provide enough evidence to adequately respond to HS2's consultation document, so further information has been collated overleaf which considers a wider range of impacts upon our community.

ROUTE AMENDMENT 1 – EAST OF MEASHAM

- The current proposed route was originally considered in 2012/13 but was rejected in favour of the path west of Measham and with the A42
- There is still a need to cross the River Mease with either option.



Headline impacts

- Two villages, Austrey* and Packington will be subject to more noise, visual intrusion, impact on facilities and listed buildings than 2013 route as the railway has moved closer. No positives can be seen from this change
- The villages of Appleby Parva, Appleby Magna and Measham become trapped between the M42/A42 and HS2, severing the link to countryside on both sides, creating a potential restriction to future outwards development
- The realignment is contrary to HS2's principle of building in existing transport corridors where possible. Going against this principle is destructive to the character of these attractive rural villages, by the presence of a physical barrier and the concomitant psychological effects. All locations will be subject to noise from both sides (see note on noise one page 1 above)
- The route runs very close to a cemetery in Measham, primary schools in Appleby Magna and Packington (one of which is a significant Grade 1 listed building) and Packington churchyard
- The River Mease Special Area of Conservation will be crossed on a longer route than previously envisaged, involving a long, high viaduct in open countryside
- Measham, Appleby Parva, Appleby Magna and Packington are already affected by noise from the M42/A42. This is a constant background noise for most of the day, and can vary with prevailing winds and weight of traffic.

- Hemming in this area will create an “island” of noise for residents. Villagers in Appleby Magna, Appleby Parva and Packington all report noise as an ever-present issue and are understandably apprehensive about the additional noise which HS2 could create, both in the construction phase and afterwards. Moving the railway increases the potential for cumulative noise from road and rail

*Austrey is outside NWLDC area, but is included here for completeness

Place by place - Appleby Parva

- Major changes to A444 taking it over HS2 on a **10m high bridge** (previously this crossing would have occurred close to motorway island)
- The village will be hemmed in between M42 and HS2
- High visual intrusion and noise impact
- Effects on access to the village during the construction period are unknown; the line crosses a minor road eastwards out of the village and it is inevitable that this will be disrupted
- HS2’s own Sustainability Assessment (Appendix C1 Landscape) refers to “moderate visual impacts where the route is on embankment near Appleby Parva (300m)”.

Place by place – Appleby Magna

Heritage issues:

2013 Route



2016 Route



- Listed Building Grade I
- Listed Building Grade II*
- Listed Building Grade II
- Scheduled Monument
- Conservation Area

- The edge of the Conservation Area is on Top Street, and there are a number of 17th C buildings close to Snarestone Lane. The effects on this setting is acknowledged and accepted in HS2’s documents, and in the 2013 assessment, 9 listed buildings were noted
- It is worth noting that the village is located on lower ground and the railway line will be set on higher countryside, increasing the visual impact of HS2

- The Grade 1 listed building Sir John Moore Foundation houses the village school and a range of community activities is on edge of village and at the **closest point to the proposed route amendment** (between 200-300m).



Figure 1 Sir John Moore's Foundation



Figure 2 Sir John Moore's Foundation Museum

Sir John Moore's Foundation Building

- Based on an original design by Christopher Wren and provided by a local entrepreneur who became Lord Mayor of London
- Opened as a school in 1697
- Houses village primary school, a museum of school life, businesses, residents and a range of community activities including weddings
- Refurbished under a community-led scheme, overturning the option to build a new school
- One of only a handful of secular Grade 1 listed buildings in the county.

The line will be on embankment past the school, which has raised concerns about noise and disruption during the construction period, and train noise thereafter. There are no noise mitigation measures which can be carried out on the building because of its listed status.

There are three major threats to the future of schooling arising from this:

- **Operational impact:** the noise of the operation of high speed trains will be a continual unsettling and disruptive intrusion on the learning environment where stable quiet conditions are essential for attention and concentration.
- **Constructional impact:** the massive disruption involved in an engineering project of this scale could render the operation of the school completely impossible for 1 or 2 years. Although temporary this could nevertheless result in a discontinuity threatening long term viability.
- **Strategic impact:** the proposed reroute would maroon the villages of Appleby Magna and Measham in between two major noisy transport infrastructures. This is normally regarded as unacceptable in terms of general land use planning. It could well have a major chilling effect on settlement intentions of potential residents with adverse consequences for future school enrolment.

Businesses and economy:

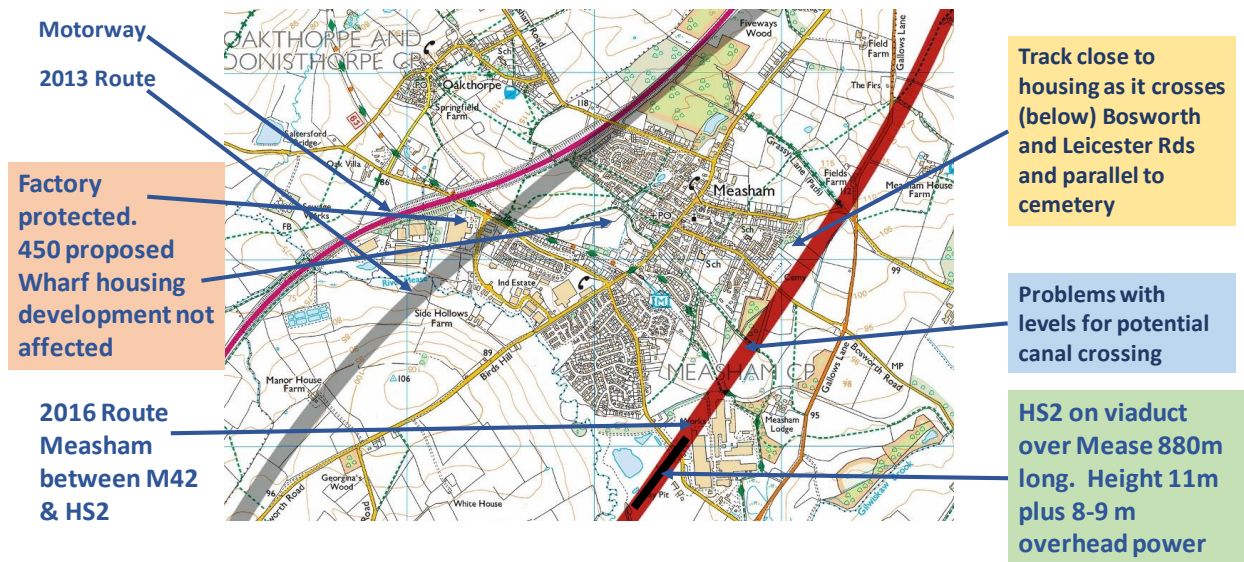
- The land on the proposed route (as shown on HS2 maps) is **Agricultural Grade 2** and as such of significant value. Much of the agricultural land in this area is used for potato, wheat and barley farming
- The proposed route would demolish two farms which have diversified over the years to incorporate thriving business parks
 - **Redhill Farm.** A number of businesses (including professional services) located here. Currently estimated at 170 jobs with planning permission for more (details to follow)
 - **Barns Heath Farm.** 9 businesses with another committed, 107.5 permanent jobs (with add. 4 planned), 18 casual, combined turnover £5.7m (full details available), of which a large proportion stays in the local economy
- There are also a significant number of **home-based professionals** (including design, finance, and other services)
- Distinct and diverse businesses make for a resilient local economy. If one closes it does not have a major impact on the overall local economy, but smaller businesses are more vulnerable to

disruption than larger ones. Compensation would not be available for those renting business premises. Currently farm-based sites provide supportive start up conditions (e.g. rate relief)

- These businesses recruit locally and their employees often spend money within the local economy.

Place by place - Measham:

- The current settlement pattern has commercial properties concentrated on Westminster estate along A42. Housing development focussed on the other side. New houses already built/being built will be affected by the new proposed line
- The track runs close to and parallel to the 19th C cemetery. It is the **only cemetery still in use being affected by HS2** (confirmed by HS2 Ltd)
- The 2 primary schools serving Measham are both on the proposed route side of the village and around 250-300 yards from the line, along with an outdoor recreation area. There are concerns about noise, and whether construction traffic will affect access.
- Measham has suffered deprivation as a result of the loss of coal mining, including more recent loss of open cast mining. Residents are concerned that being hemmed in by HS2 will make Measham a less attractive place for inward investment and the village will suffer as a result
- The viaduct over the River Mease will create a major visual impact on the east side of the village
- Protected reinstatement of the canal line is not compatible with a lengthy crossing by HS2. Work is already in progress to restore the canal and this will probably be finished before HS2 construction starts.



Housing:

- David Wilson Homes estate under construction on Atherstone Rd has been halted since the new route was announced, to prevent any further blight. This puts at risk 11 council houses as an affordable housing contribution to the area, and a traffic calming scheme. An expected extension application for this site is no longer being progressed
- Sites with planning permission on Bosworth Rd and New St are now under threat; these had included 8 affordable homes

- A site under the SHLAA list next to the brick works could have been expected to provide returns at some point in the future to allow redevelopment of that brownfield site at end of life. This is unlikely to be viable and the site may be left derelict.

Measham Cemetery:

- The cemetery is a current burial ground
- It is of special sentimental and religious significance to residents with relatives buried there
- There is a special area reserved for children
- Careful planning has meant that this area has been kept quiet and peaceful, providing the right ambience and with dignity that people expect of a cemetery especially in a village setting
- The proposed HS2 line and banking will inevitably have an impact on the character of the place.

Business issues:

Effects upon the following have been identified:

- Springs Hydro Leisure Centre. Estimate 200 jobs
- Measham Red Banks Brick Works. Estimate 100 jobs and sterilisation of significant clay reserves. As such obviously cannot be relocated. It is within the Minerals Conservation Area.
- Measham has been a deprived area for many years following the loss of the mining industry here. Local businesses fear that “hemming in” will have a poor effect on opportunities for business expansion.

Place by place - Packington

The route amendment brings the line much closer to Packington, including its listed buildings and Conservation Area; a listed building noted by HS2 as “derelict” in the 2013-14 document is in fact inhabited, increasing the known count by another one. The visual impacts are likely to be increased as the line will now skim much closer to the village.

2013 route



2016 route



Conservation Area

Holyrood Church is Grade II* listed; other listed buildings marked in green.

Other issues which may affect Packington include:

- Access to the local primary school (OFSTED “Outstanding”); up to 50% of the school population of c.110 pupils come from outside Packington. The construction period may affect pupil numbers and have an impact on the future of the school as it is very dependent upon maintaining its current headcount. Construction noise is also likely to affect use of the school’s outdoor amphitheatre for teaching, particularly as most building work will take place during daytime hours. Preschool children attend the playgroup in the Memorial Hall, which will be some 200m from the line
- Secondary school children in Packington are also likely to be affected as many attend Ivanhoe High School and Ashby School, both of which will necessitate students crossing the construction route twice a day. In the event of this route being approved, provision would need to be made to accommodate this
- Disturbance of Holyrood Church; the graveyard is open and local people are interred there. There is an expectation that the place will be quiet and peaceful
- Construction traffic affecting village life, as it is likely to impinge on local activities
- Issues with noise, both during the construction period and afterwards. Noise from the A42 is already very evident, and listed properties will be unable to benefit from mitigation measures such as double or triple glazing. Residents are also very concerned about the combined effects of noise from HS2 and the main road.

- Effects on the Champney Springs Spa, which employs c.200 people and has around 1000 active members. Spa users visit in the expectations of a peaceful and stimulating experience, and will be affected by the construction works and ongoing noise from HS2, which will run very close to the site.

Place by place - River Mease Special Area of Conservation

- The countryside between Appleby and Measham is the location for the River Mease SAC. It is believed to be the **only SAC on the HS2 route in this area**
- The SAC is subject to European law and environmental assessment requirements, and the expectation is that the **least damaging route** is taken
- The area is a named site with significant populations of *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitriche-Batrachian* vegetation. Shading of these plants is a concern, and variations in population will affect the wider ecosystem, with knock on effects to other flora and fauna
- The River Mease is also a good example of river habitat for *Cobitis taenia* (Spined Loach) and *Cottus gobio* (Bullhead). Both species are of very localised distribution in the UK (only 5 habitats listed for *Cobitis taenia*, and the Mease specific as a known habitat for *Cottus gobio*) and are dependent upon a clean habitat with diverse plant life.



Figure 3 *Cobitis taenia*

UNDERSTANDING THE CHANGE

It is clear that many people in the area are opposed to HS2 in its entirety whatever its route, and this is understandable for many reasons, whether this is discomfort with change, effect upon property values, damage to the environment or disagreement with the philosophy behind it.

The previous consultation round (which closed Jan 2014) asked for specific problems with the earlier route. The official report records ‘a handful’ or ‘several’ responses to various aspects along the route. The full data is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/hs2-phase-two-proposed-line-of-route-from-west-midlands-to-manchester-and-leeds>

In comparison, 1075 people attended the consultation event in Measham on January 18th 2017, despite the venue being inaccessible by public transport, showing the strength of public opinion. Attendance at this and other public meetings since November 2016 suggests a high level of concern about this change.

It is therefore unclear, given what is reported in this consultation response, why a route amendment affecting **more** people than the previous one has been selected and the Council calls upon HS2 Ltd to clarify this.

Comparing the two routes:

2013:

- Noise from HS2 trains would result in annoyance for an estimated **578 people** (equivalent to the occupants of some **245 dwellings**). This would represent about **21** people per km of route
- 113 dwellings would be located within 100m of the route and could be of greater risk of disturbance from construction activity
- Embankment or short viaduct close to Austrey, Measham and Packington would cause visual impact on residents at the edges of these villages. In general due to the route being in cutting and close to the road corridor, it would have limited landscape and visual impacts. The Grade II listed Meer Bridge could be directly affected.

2016:

- Noise from HS2 trains would result in annoyance for an estimated **841 people** (equivalent to the occupants of some **357 dwellings**). This would represent about **31** people per km of route
- 73 dwellings would be located within 100m of the route section that could be of greater risk of disturbance from construction activity, However, this does not take account of new houses built since 2013..
- The route would continue through undulating land using high embankment and deep cutting, causing visual impact on nearby residents at Austrey, Appleby Parva, Measham and Packington and causing a minor effect on the setting of Packington Conservation Area.
- Where the route section diverges from the A42 corridor across open countryside, there would be a landscape impact.
- There would be minor impacts on a Grade I listed structure, the Sir John Moore Foundation school Appleby Magna and on the Grade II* listed Church of the Holyrood (Packington). A further 34 Grade II listed structures would be near the route and subject to impacts on their setting. Nine of these in Appleby Magna Conservation Areas and six in Packington Conservation Area and would be subject to minor impacts on setting

Challenging the change:

1. HS2's claims:

- The number of responses was termed as “significant” in the route amendment document, yet other sources say “a handful”
- The impacts are only detailed as “Measham”, whereas the true situation is that it affects Measham, the Appleby villages and Packington
- Claims of supporting the River Mease Special Area of Conservation are inaccurate as a longer crossing is now required, which logically would be more problematic
- The 2013-14 consultation stated that placing HS2 in the M42/A42 corridor would help reduce visual impacts and this is now not the case.

2. Jobs and Businesses

- The main concern (as stated by HS2 officials) relates to the Plastic Omnium factory. This is a major local employer and a nationally significant supplier to the car industry. However:
 - HS2 have told us they have a route ‘tweak’ to the 2013 route which would miss the Plastic Omnium factory but go through their car park, avoiding the need for a complete re-route. There is no rationale available as to why this option was rejected. We would encourage HS2 to re-examine this route again and to publish a full impact assessment of the route options in this area.
- Additionally, we have shown that there are more local jobs at risk from the re-route which make a significant contribution to a resilient local economy. These do not seem to have been fully considered.

3. Housing and Development

- The 2013 route would have an impact on a site with planning permission for 450 houses (known as Measham Wharf). Documents state that the route would reduce the number of houses viable on this site to 230
- North West Leicestershire District Council are in the final stages of their Local Plan inspection. As part of this they have made provision of an alternative site to provide equivalent housing to those lost
- The proposed canal redevelopment aspect of this site does not connect to the existing canal either the other side of the A42 (to Moira) or to the Snarestone end (the other side of the High Street). The proposed wharf aspect of the isolated waterway is not on land affected by the original HS2 route
- In addition, the new proposed route is incompatible with the protected (by Act of Parliament) route of the canal east of Measham as the levels are too similar for the canal to cross the new proposed route of HS2. As the canal work is likely to be completed a number of years before HS2 is constructed, this could cause further issues later on.

CONCLUSION

Most of the issues set out in this consultation response are not amenable to mitigation or compensation, unless the re-route section is tunneled throughout, which is a very expensive option.

Therefore, whilst North West Leicestershire District Council is broadly in support of the HS2 project and recognizes the benefits that the scheme will bring both nationally and locally, the proposed re-route of

the line in the south of the district has a significantly greater negative impact than the original route that was consulted upon in 2013.

Therefore, based on the available information, The Council is strongly of the opinion that this route amendment is not viable and ask HS2 Ltd to reconsider it and publish a full impact assessment of the comparative impacts of the original route west of Measham, the "tweaked" route west of Measham (avoiding the Plastic Omnium factory), and the proposed amendment east of Measham.