

## REPORT TO PICKMERE PARISH COUNCIL

4<sup>th</sup> December 2018

### AGENDA ITEM 9.5      HS2 - update and consideration of response to consultation

#### 1.      **Background**

1.1      Responses to the current consultation are required by 21<sup>st</sup> December 2018. There has been no indication to date that this deadline would be extended despite the pressure from many of those affected, including your Council, and also Esther McVey MP.

1.2      Your parish council has in the month since its previous council meeting:

- Held a meeting with representatives of HS2;
- Secured additional information from HS2 as to the likely height of embankments etc passing through the parish.
- Held an informal meeting of councillors to discuss the issues arising;
- Requested a meeting with CEC to discuss their current thinking on how off-site traffic movements eg of HGVs might be dealt with on the roads, particularly the smaller roads, in Pickmere.
- Circulated to all properties in the parish a newsletter specifically explaining the current situation with regard to the HS2 project and inviting residents to a drop-in session to discuss with councillors the current proposals and consultation exercise;
- Held the drop-in session for residents of Pickmere;

#### 2.      **Report**

2.1      The drop-in session was successful. It was attended by perhaps 50-60 residents, many taking away copies of the consultation reply forms (although consultation responses can also be made on-line on HS2's website), and a note produced by the parish council summarising some of the key points of concern.

2.2      It is now appropriate for your council to consider how to respond to the consultation. As a basis for your possible comments, a list of the bullet points highlighted in the note mentioned above is appended.

#### 3.      **Recommendation**

3.1      That Council consider how to respond to HS2.

**VISUAL INTRUSION**

- *The height of the line, on an embankment and viaduct, at up to **19m** (11m plus 8m for associated gantries and track equipment) is unacceptable and will be substantially detrimental to the landscape in and around Pickmere. There has been no explanation of why the line is designed to be this height.*
- *The proposed Pickmere Lane/Flittogate Lane overbridge/earthworks is inexplicably enormous (14m high/2.5km long) and will severely detract from the character and appearance of our rural village*

**IMPACT OF LONG CONSTRUCTION / ENABLING WORKS PHASE**

*The impact on Pickmere's village and residents through noise and disturbance during the long construction period is unacceptable on every level.*

- *Pickmere Lane, Frog Lane, School Lane and Flittogate Lane are earmarked as primary construction routes but using these will reduce local access to local amenities, services, town and routes (e.g. Flittogate Lane – A556 – Knutsford).*
- *Building compounds are planned for both Milley Lane and Budworth Road*
- *Large numbers of HGVs can be anticipated*
- *The re-routing/diverting of roads will also result in unacceptable general traffic*
- *It is essential to ensure that Pickmere Lane is not closed **at any time** during the construction period.*
- *The proposed closure of Budworth Road (in the final scheme) would substantially impact on the movement of local traffic, and traffic through the village. The construction traffic movements and proposed road alterations will result in **severe community severance***

**SIGNIFICANT OMISSIONS IN THE DRAFT STATEMENT THAT IMPACT MEANINGFUL RESPONSE**

- *The information supplied in the draft Statement is inadequate and insufficient to enable meaningful comment. The lack of detail of the heights of the embankments and other structures, the potential impact and extent of noise and disturbance through heavy traffic movements and construction noise is of particular concern*
- *Insufficient value has been placed on our community quality of life and 'sense of place': local habitats, tranquil rural aspect, leisure & recreation, health & wellbeing, civic and community activities*
- *There is no reference to Pickmere Lake, despite it being one of Cheshire East's 'Local Wildlife Sites', no reference to the IROS, Turton Pavilion or Village Hall and no mention of the importance of these sites to our village way of life*
- *Paucity of meaningful information in terms of local environmental impact: lack of 3D visuals; noise levels; number of HGV movements; air quality; impact of satellite building compounds (Milley Lane & Budworth Road); height elevations etc.*

**NEGATIVE IMPACTS ON COMMUNITY QUALITY**

- *The draft Statement is based on up to 18 trains per hour - nine each way – with each train having a capacity of 1100 passengers: up to **19,800 passengers per hour**. It is hard to believe this is a rational business forecast of passenger demand but if it is, it will create **very frequent and unacceptable levels of noise** in this area of quiet Cheshire countryside*
- *The proposals in summary acknowledge 'Major Adverse Effects' (which will have a permanent negative impact on the quality of life for Pickmere's community)*

- *Air quality is a major issue for people in Pickmere and there is insufficient detail to gauge the likely impact that construction and operation will have on 'receptors' - whether they are commercial premises or homes. Ludicrously, The Elms is singled out as a commercial premise - when it is currently undergoing residential development - and other relevant commercial/leisure premises are excluded*
- *The risk of community severance is very real for Pickmere, given the prospect of construction routes that affect access to Knutsford and Northwich*

#### **MITIGATION**

- *Given that HS2 can justify and afford to construct a bridge over the HS2 rail line for the footpath that provides access to the split Cheshire Show ground -- that will be only used for three days a year – why can't HS2 do likewise to keep Pickmere Lane 'open' during construction and operational phases by diverting under HS2 line - and keep Budworth Road open at all stages too?*
- *It would make far more sense to take existing routes under, not over, the HS2 line. Building the rail line at grade/current ground surface and maintaining roads under the rail line would reduce the visual impact of unacceptably high embankments; require less material and HGV movements; generate less noise and significantly reduce the environmental impact during construction and operation*
- *If, despite alternative suggestions, alterations/diversions to roads are deemed necessary, these must be done first*

*As a Council, we feel that not enough information has been made available by HS2 Ltd in the consultation process regarding these and other concerns, including the business case for the western leg to justify the environmental and commercial impacts. We will struggle to support the HS2 project until/unless robust and effective mitigation measures can be developed to an exceptionally high standard and HS2 Ltd establish a forum with affected communities and businesses to determine whether their proposals are viable.*