

## HS2 Phase 2b Working Draft Environmental Statement Consultation

Although the construction for HS2 may seem years away, a key deadline looms: the response to the Working Draft Environment Statement (WDES) is only a few weeks away **21 December 2018**.

As a Council, we are very concerned that many residents will struggle to fully understand and respond in a meaningful way to this consultation, given the volume of consultation documentation - it has taken us a lot of time to get to grips with the main issues.

The issues are profound for our village. Given the huge negative impact that this phase of HS2 will have on Pickmere if the current proposals go through unchallenged, we have prepared this **consultation response document** which explains how to respond, where to find the documents, and what we believe are the main issues are for Pickmere.

By providing you with all the relevant information and issues we hope that you will take the time to respond to the consultation.

***N.B. The Parish Council has arranged a public event at the Village Hall on Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> November between 4pm and 9pm. All the documents, maps etc. will be available for you to view and several members of the Council will be there to answer questions.***

### **PLEASE RESPOND TO THE CONSULTATION!**

We urge you to respond to the WDES. We recommend that you base it on one or more of the points below. The email address for your response is: [environment2b@ipsos-mori.com](mailto:environment2b@ipsos-mori.com). We recommend that you also copy Chris Grayling (Secretary of State for Transport) [chris.grayling.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:chris.grayling.mp@parliament.uk) and Esther McVey, our MP, at [officeofesthermcveymp@parliament.uk](mailto:officeofesthermcveymp@parliament.uk)

## **PRINCIPAL ISSUES FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

### **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.

**THANK YOU!**