

## **HS2 SES2 & AP2ES PETITION**

### **General Comments**

We are concerned that the Promoter's basic data contains significant inaccuracies. For example, ES1 Vol. 2, MA03 6.3.3 stated erroneously that *'Pickmere comprises approximately 1,000 residential properties. The nearest residential properties are located 1km west of the route of the Proposed Scheme. The village of Pickmere itself is to the west of the route of the Proposed Scheme, outside of the study area. There are scattered farmsteads and residential properties north of Pickmere towards the M6, some of which lie within the study area.'*

Despite being informed of the errors neither AP2 ES nor SES2 have corrected these inaccuracies. A correction is necessary and can be verified by using two publicly available sources; the Electoral Register and OS mapping software.

The more accurate figure is that Pickmere comprises approximately 350 residential properties, many of which are clearly and demonstrably located less than 1km from the Proposed Scheme.

This fundamental error casts doubt on the accuracy of other data, some of which has been described by Cheshire Wildlife Trust's "HS2 Double Jeopardy Report" – February 2023 as 'flawed', 'amateurish' and 'misleading' with reference to Ecology and Biodiversity data in particular. Therefore our first ask is that the Promoter is required to update its significant datasets to reflect reality and generate more accurate evaluations about impacts and outcomes. The validity of the initial data is critical to an accurate analysis.

### **Ecology and Biodiversity**

The HS2 Select Committee has noted in its First Special Report:

*'111. We note the petitioner's concerns relating to the promoter's wildlife mitigation measures, but we will wait until we have heard further petitioners on natural and environmental issues before responding on this point.'*

The Select Committee has subsequently heard compelling evidence from other petitioners, including The Wildlife Trusts, on natural and environmental issues. However, as it has yet to respond on this vital issue, we can do no more than respectfully remind you of our initial petition, specifically.:

*'HS2 Ltd makes many claims about its green credentials. We are very concerned by Cheshire Wildlife Trust's recent report claiming HS2's assessment of nature loss to be "fundamentally flawed", "amateurish" and "riddled with inaccuracies".'*

*'Can HS2 Ltd confirm that it has 100% confidence in the methods it has used to calculate the value of nature affected by Phase 2b and that it hasn't not missed watercourses, ponds and trees out of the data in our area?...*

*'...We believe that the primary proposed mitigation measures (of woodland habitat creation to replace ancient woodlands and to provide connectivity between habitats; and a provision to maintain vehicle and pedestrian access to Cheshire Showground during construction of the proposed scheme), fall woefully below the measures that will be required to minimise the impact of the massive and extended construction impacts on our parish.*

*'We are particularly concerned about the impacts of noise pollution on wildlife and our own quality of life. We trust you are too. Cheshire Wildlife Trust states that "Woodland expansion is desirable to buffer Pickmere's existing woodlands, which are mainly to the south of the study area. Additionally, planting in the north of the parish would provide a network from Arley Brook and Waterless Brook LWS into the Parish."*

*'Nature is in a perilous position in the UK. The league table of biodiversity intactness based on data from the Natural History Museum ranks the UK as languishing at the bottom of G7 countries, and twelfth worst of 240 countries and territories.*

*'We therefore request that HS2 is mandated to provide a binding undertaking that it will upgrade its mitigation plans to include protection of wildlife corridors and work in collaboration with Cheshire Wildlife Trust in order to achieve the best possible outcome for wildlife and the natural environment.'*

We are also very concerned that the Promoter's additional plans for modifications to Junction 20a of the M6 (AP2-003-004) will also result in a further loss of 500m of hedgerow. This will result in *'a different permanent adverse effect that will remain significant at the county/metropolitan level.'* We have seen no viable proposal that mitigates against this loss, which will cause extensive further damage to habitats and disrupt more wildlife corridors. We request that the Promoter is required to propose appropriate mitigation.

## **Traffic and transport**

### **Effects arising during construction**

The Promoter has subsequently identified new significant effects that it failed to determine within the original Hybrid Bill.

It is concerning that something was termed simultaneously as 'minor' / 'moderate' / 'significant'. Any new negative impacts involving our footpaths are of great concern to us and we request that the Promoter is required to explain the reason for the new categorisations, the impacts of the new categorisations; and their plans to mitigate them.

- Footpath Pickmere 9/2 - new temporary minor adverse significant effect;
- Footpath Pickmere 8/1 - new temporary moderate adverse significant effect;

Pickmere Parish Council is very concerned by the stated intention of HS2 Ltd to re-engineer the layout and traffic arrangements at Junction 19 of the M6 (AP2-003-002)

- The proposed works will have a major effect on the junction of Pickmere Lane (B5391) and Chester Road (A556) which are both in very close proximity to the intended works at Junction 19 and will inevitably and unreasonably cause significant inconvenience and delay to users of this route on their essential daily commutes to and from Pickmere and Wincham for the duration of the works.
- The proposed widening of the northbound exit slip road, realignment of the junction with Pickmere Lane and the provision and installation of a further overbridge and extra lane over Junction 19 of M6 is planned solely for the purpose of the construction of the railway and has no bearing or relevance to the recently completed works at Junction 19 by Highways England which themselves caused massive disruption to residents and other commuters for two years during construction.

### **Changes to train patterns and services during operation**

The train service specification for the original scheme for the AP2 revised scheme has apparently been reduced 'to one service per hour between London and Glasgow, with no service to Edinburgh. In addition, the Birmingham to Scotland service is removed.'

Consequently, we believe it is reasonable to request that the Promoter is required to produce an up-to-date forecast of train patterns between Crewe to Manchester, with the accompanying updated business plan and environmental impacts.

### **Health and Wellbeing**

Fears about community severance and isolation are causing stress for residents, particularly given the ongoing uncertainty about the Scheme's impact on the village. In the First Special Report of Session 2022–23 produced by the House of Commons High Speed Rail (Crewe - Manchester) Bill Select Committee, the Promoter was asked to provide us with '*written responses on outstanding points, particularly: plans for, or the consideration given to, the provision of transport services for compound staff; measures proposed to mitigate, offset or prevent community severance and isolation..*'. As this information remains outstanding, we request that the Petitioner is reminded to respond in a timely manner.

The main ES reported an adverse neighbourhood quality effect in the vicinity of Budworth Road (and Tabley Superior). '*Changes to construction traffic flows and changes to the sound, noise and vibration assessment will result in the removal of HGV traffic effects and a different noise effect. The traffic noise effect will be removed, and the duration of the construction noise effect will reduce. Visual effects reported in the main ES will remain the same. This will result in a different adverse neighbourhood quality effect in the vicinity of Budworth Road, Tabley Superior.*'

We object strongly to the statement that '*Changes to construction traffic flows will result in a new adverse neighbourhood quality effect for residents in the vicinity of Pickmere Lane,*

*Pickmere. Part of this area was identified in the SES1 and AP1 ES as having a negative neighbourhood quality effect as a result of noise and HGV traffic effects. Pickmere Lane is a construction traffic route and will experience a significant increase in HGV traffic as a result of the AP2 revised scheme. In addition, the Promoter accepts that 'traffic noise will be noticeable in the vicinity of Pickmere Lane, Pickmere, during peak months of construction.'*

It is unacceptable to us that 'Changes to traffic flows will result in new moderate adverse effects on residents of approximately 20 residential properties on Pickmere Lane, Pickmere, due to new noise and HGV traffic effects.'

Likewise, we note that 'Changes to construction traffic flows will result in a new adverse neighbourhood quality effect for residents in the vicinity of Pickmere Lane, Pickmere. Part of this area was identified in the SES1 and AP1 ES as having a neighbourhood quality effect as a result of noise and HGV traffic effects. Pickmere Lane is a construction traffic route and will experience a significant increase in HGV traffic as a result of the AP2 revised scheme. In addition, traffic noise will be noticeable in the vicinity of Pickmere Lane, Pickmere, during peak months of construction.'

In terms of mitigation, it must be noted that SES2 and AP2 ES are based on the out-of-date assumption that Budworth Road will be closed. This does not reflect the Promoter's assurance that the closure of Budworth Road will be reviewed as per our Petition, 26 June 2023. Therefore, any traffic and neighbourhood quality impacts will need to be significantly reevaluated and consulted upon separately in due course. We request that the Promoter is required to undertake to liaise closely with Pickmere Parish Council on any design proposals as they will also have an impact on the neighbouring roads and use of School Lane, Frog Lane and Pickmere Lane. It is imperative that any adverse neighbourhood quality impacts are minimised to reduce the ill-effects of construction traffic and noise.

### **Socio-economics**

The rural economy is already under great strain. There are few local opportunities for recreation and leisure for Pickmere residents, so the fact that the newly announced land take that is required for modifications to M6 junction 19 (AP2-003-002) will result in a new temporary adverse significant in-combination effect on The Windmill public house and Heyrose Golf Club, whether temporary or permanent, is unsatisfactory. Their viability is an important local issue both in terms of employment and recreation for local people.

### **Issues beyond the project boundary**

Whilst we can understand why the Promoter is keen to portray an overly positive vision of the Scheme bringing nothing but good news for the environment, we remain dubious, based on their presentation of their data, that the outcomes claimed will ever be achieved and local residents fear that the project is more likely to have serious detrimental effects to our community.

In particular, HS2 Ltd's own predictions of modal shift indicate a very modest move from car and air. In response to a Parliamentary question by Cheryl Gillan in 2019, the DfT acknowledged the modal shift would be 1% from car and 4% from aviation.

Regardless of operational emissions, construction alone will give rise to embedded carbon emissions, which HS2 Ltd estimated in 2019 to be around 1,451,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e tonnes. The AP2 revised scheme changes the GHG emissions reported in the SES1 and AP1 ES, which confirm that construction emissions are even worse than estimated, having increased by 20%.

We speculate that HS2 Ltd are relying on a huge growth in demand for travel generally in order to maximise projections for total passenger numbers to make proportional numbers look viable. The business case has not been updated post-Covid, nor indeed to reflect the emissions reductions that will be achieved by car drivers switching to electric vehicles, thus making claims that HS2 is the key to carbon zero travel less plausible.

Given that the entire scheme is entirely funded by the taxpayer, we feel it is reasonable to request that the Promoter is required to produce an up-to-date business case priced in 2023 values.