SOLIHULL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH

Interfaces between HS2 and existing/potential cycling routes

View of Berkswell Station with possible link to the village

Route maps and notes  April 2017

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The HS2 Project will cut across numerous local cycling routes and footpaths. The quality of its provisions will affect both everyday journeys and visitors trips in some way however small. The detail of the design of bridges and diversions, and the quality of provision for new paths will contribute greatly to the attractiveness of local journeys and to the overall level of cycling in the future along a broad swathe of the country.

In addition, unless we anticipate future plans and potential routes, the HS2 project may end up frustrating the development of popular cycling routes along its route.

These notes bring together the **interfaces with HS2** of the proposals arising from the recent study into a National Cycleway along the general corridor of the HS2 project, and a number of other isolated locations arising from “cycle proofing” considerations. In this last respect these notes have only considered the limited number of locations where there are clear opportunities or advantages from providing for dedicated cycling facilities either crossing or parallel to the HS2 route. We have excluded most minor roads where there is no need, as traffic flows will be small and those major roads where there is no reasonable or foreseeable expectation for anticipating a cycling route in the future.

The standards set out in the HS2 Assurances refer to current design standards. Their recommendations are set out in Appendix 1 and may be summarised as follows:

1. **Types of parallel facility in relation to the volume of traffic in highway.**

2. **Typical cross sections showing Cycleway standards.** Note that the Dutch CROW guidelines followed by the study of a National Cycleway associated with HS2 puts great store on the attractiveness of cycling routes and requires considerable verge widths near heavily trafficked roads.

3. **Types of crossing requirements and standards in relation to traffic flows.**

4. **Gradients should be 1:20 or less except in areas where the adjacent road gradients are anyway steeper.**

5. **The surface of the routes should be of an adequate width and finished with a sealed surface to provide a durable and high quality route to encourage more people to cycle.**

Here in **Solihull** the enhancement and completion of the Kenilworth Greenway through to Berkswell Station has already been identified by the Council and confirmed through undertakings given by HS2. The additional locations discussed here have arisen from the recent study into the opportunities for making a National Cycleway along the general corridor of the HS2 Railway, and from considerations viewed through the perspective of the cycle proofing process. At the most critical location, namely the approaches to the planned station at UK Central, it has only been possible to set out the requirements of creating a high quality access from a number of directions in order that the station is accessible from the surrounding areas, and so as to ensure that the inevitable concentration of traffic in this area does not block out all chance of making wider journeys by cycle in this area.
1 Kenilworth Greenway

This is a substantial traffic free route, nearly 5 miles long. Its southern section lies within Warwickshire and includes part of the National Cycle Network route between Kenilworth and Warwick University/Coventry. It also boasts a substantial new bridge over the main Kenilworth Road and an interesting section of path running on Network Rail land adjacent to the main Coventry and Leamington Spa line.

Part of the line of the former railway is to become the course of HS2 and that Project has made extensive provision for its diversion including for a new bridge under Cromwell Lane in Burton Green to take the Greenway through under the road and running in top of the HS2 tunnel.

And into Solihull. The route from here to Berkswell Station can perhaps best be described in 3 sections as follows:

a) The first section north of Cromwell Lane where the Greenway will be running in a cutting above the HS2 tunnel. There are a number of details of note. The approach to the Cromwell Lane Bridge should be straight on so as to give good visibility through the bridge for convenience and security. The Greenway should continue on a very gradual gradient to rise from the floor of the cutting left after the construction of HS2 all the way to the field edge. Keep the whole width of the cutting to allow for wider verges which should be grassed as far as possible on both sides for openness and sunlight. Once at the field edge make a level link back to Cromwell Lane in order to provide for a convenient access towards Berkswell Station. Continue along the field edge where the path can have wide views out over the countryside.

b) The central section where the Greenway can return to the existing railway trackbed although at this stage it is not known if the HS2 works will affect this. If the Greenway is to continue as a permissive bridleway then careful screening will be required to minimise sudden noise from the adjacent railway. The path surface throughout should comprise a 3m wide asphalt surface to carry the planned National Cycleway, and a wide grass verge to accommodate equestrians.

At this stage the details of the Rd1101 (Waste Lane) bridge reconstruction are unclear, but the Greenway should pass under the new road and the earthworks should include a ramped link to the road no steeper than 1:20.

c) At the Berkswell Station end the HS2 project is constructing a permanent access road for the last 1.1 kms which will function as the final section of the Greenway which will be traffic free at all normal times.

The arrangement of the road loops south to join Station Road where a clear provision is required to connect to the existing Hall Meadow Road cycling route and links into Balsall Common.

For Greenway users going to the station a more convenient and direct route would be to provide a link through the car park, marked out along one of the car park aisles.

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Overall location plan showing the line of the Kenilworth Greenway from Burton Green to Berkswell station

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A note on landscaping and tree planting along the railway path

It is a characteristic of paths on old railways that their boundaries become overgrown with hedges and trees. These often completely block out views over the adjacent countryside. In this case every opportunity should be taken for opening up such views and wherever HS2 works affect the south-west boundary of the railway path, this section should be left seeded with wild grass and flower mixes and not replanted with hedges or trees.
1 Kenilworth Greenway

1. 1:20 rising up side of cutting to reach Cromwell Road.
2. Planned new bridge under Cromwell Road and above the HS2 Tunnel.
3. Climb up from the level at the bridge on a very gradual and even slope to reach the field edge.
4. Level access link back to Cromwell Road.
5. Fence out do not hedge this section in order to maintain wide views.
6. Ramp back to track level with a gradual slope no steeper than 1:20.
7. Pass under Waste Lane Bridge.
9. Connect to and use the planned works access road.
10. Planned new link to Station Road.
11. Mark out cycling and walking route through car park to station entrance.
12. Provide positive crossing via wide splitter islands.
14. Link through to Balsall Green and preferred way through to UK Central.

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[Map Diagrams]
2 Lavender Hall Lane

This road is a main connection from the village of Berkswell to its station. The road is fairly well trafficked and it would be desirable to create a traffic free route through to the village from the station.

But rather than provide a separate cycle track alongside the new road embankment and bridge we suggest rearranging the planned field access to the foot of the embankment where the ground is level, and then continuing a good path along the boundary of HS2, under its viaduct to the fishing lakes and thence reach direct to Berkswell Station, and the Kenilworth Greenway.

Notes on detailed plan
1 Potential field side path to Berkswell Village.
2 Rearrange the farm access road to run level at the foot of the embankment.
3 Continue along HS2 boundary.
4 Continue along edge of Brock.
5 Berkswell Station.

Location plan for link from Berkswell to Station
1 Potential traffic free link along field edge.
2 Connection via planned farm access road and new path at foot of railway embankment.
3 Berkswell station.
3 Kenilworth Road A452

The reconstruction of this fast dual carriageway is going to present particular problems for equestrians, cyclists and pedestrians following Marsh Lane (from the popular Packhorse Bridge area) to Mercote Hall Farm Lane, which leads to a minor road for a direct cycling route to Coventry.

As the approach to the bridge climbs on an earthwork embankment there is the opportunity of constructing a subway at ground level which would create a safe traffic free crossing rather than the potentially unsafe arrangement at present.

There is no doubt that the existing road forms a considerable barrier for equestrians and cyclists at present and this is an opportunity to connect through a valuable route and provide access for all.

1 New Mercote Hall Farm Lane Bridge.
2 Planned entrance to main road dual carriageway which will be very difficult to cross.
3 Proposed underpass suitable for all users including equestrians.
4 Join old road which for its first short length is used by industrial traffic.
5 Link to small car park and historic packhorse bridge.
4 UK Central

The arrangement of the planned new station and its approach roads is not known at the time of writing (March 2017). There are major plans envisaged to create a whole new central development around a fusion of the HS2 station, Birmingham International and a huge range of supporting interests.

This will be an opportunity to construct walking and cycling routes of the highest quality, traffic free and all running in green corridors which can act as the open spaces and recreation areas for the whole development. These routes need to reach out in all directions from the HS2 Station to provide access for all, and through routes to wider destinations. The map indicates the key routes which will be required.

It will be necessary to build into the design brief the requirements for these cycling routes, and to set the standards required, else provision will be fragmentary and little used. Once the outline of the planned transport structure is clearer, these notes can be expanded to show the necessary detail of cycling provision.

**Cycle parking** at the HS2 Station should be adequate in size (2000 or an agreed % of the anticipated number of passenger trips each day) and conveniently located with a quick access to the actual station entrance and direct links to the main cycling network.

1. A direct route to Birmingham International. There are plans for a people mover but cyclists will need to be catered for with a route which runs around the central lake.

2. The National Cycleway study envisaged the main route to Birmingham running along a corridor adjacent to the main line via Marston Green.

3. A route northwards to Coleshill Heath and a direct route to Coleshill to connect up with the planned national cycleroute north to Tamworth.

4. A route eastwards to Meriden which is within easy cycling range -5kms. This could perhaps cross the main Chester Road via the existing river bridge or if there was wholesale reconstruction here then a specific crossing could be provided. It can then pass under the A45 at Stonebridge.

5. The old railway south towards Hampton in Arden where the existing bridge under the A45 provides the basis of a good way south.

6. Enhance the existing cycleroute to Solihull.

7. Newly built route to Jaguar.