Interfaces between HS2 and existing/potential cycling routes

Route maps and notes  February 2017

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A note on the interfaces between the HS2 Project and existing planned and potential cycling routes in Staffordshire

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 maybe 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 GROW 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 cycling routes should be free of all barriers or obstacles to making easy progress.

Here in Staffordshire a distinction needs to be made between those elements of HS2 Phase 1 where cycle proofing issues may be pertinent, and Phase 2A, north of the Trent and Mersey Canal where the Council has the opportunity to discuss their requirements for cycling with HS2 Ltd, the promoter of the new railway.

A Summary of HS2 Phase 1 and Phase 2A and existing and potential cycling interfaces in Staffordshire

1. Whittington
2. Link to Fradley South
3. Fradley Canal
4. Kings Bromley
5. Netherton
6. Moreton House
7. Ingestre
8. Hopton
9. Pire Hill
10. Yarnfield
11. Blakelow Farm
12. Swynnerton to Beech
13. Baldwin’s Gate
Summary of HS2 Phase 1 and Phase 2A intersections with existing and potential cycling routes in Staffordshire showing extent of works on HS2 lands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whittington Footpath</td>
<td>900m of HS2 boundary path, via planned subway. Crossing of main road required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link to Fradley South</td>
<td>600m of planned works access track and 900m of new HS2 boundary path</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fradley Canal</td>
<td>500m of planned cyclepath, 500m of new roadside required and shared use bridge over canal to reach towpath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kings Bromley Link</td>
<td>1.4kms of planned works access track, and 500m of new path and relocate planned bridge over brook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherton Link</td>
<td>900m new HS2 boundary path and main road crossing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moreton House Link</td>
<td>250m new path</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingestre Link</td>
<td>Use 400m planned bridleway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopton</td>
<td>New bridge over HS2 and 200m new roadside path</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pire Hill</td>
<td>Planned provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarnfield</td>
<td>600m roadside path including planned bridge over HS2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blakelaw Farm</td>
<td>Upgrade existing footway and use planned underpass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swynnerton to Beech</td>
<td>1000m new roadside path, including across planned HS2 bridge and crossing of A51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baldwin’s Gate</td>
<td>1.4kms of planned works access, 400m new path</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Summary of distances and bridges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Distance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Utilising HS2 works access tracks</td>
<td>3.4km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New HS2 boundary path</td>
<td>3.65km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New “roadside” path</td>
<td>2.3km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main road crossing</td>
<td>3 No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New bridge over canal</td>
<td>1 No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional bridge over HS2</td>
<td>1 No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roadside paths on planned bridges over HS2</td>
<td>2 No.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Phase 1: A51 to Trent and Mersey Canal

Each location of an existing or potential intersection between HS2 Rail and cycling routes is very briefly described against the HS2 plans.

1 Whittington Heath Golf Course

Upgrade status and alignment of exiting footpath to bridleway to join the extensive networks in the area. The HS2 planned bridge under the railway needs to be dimensioned to allow equestrians and cyclists. The existing public footpath (16) could be realigned to run down the boundary of HS2 thereby reducing severance to the Golf Course. Its surface needs to be left as a stone track. The design of the A51 bridge should provide for a crossing of this main road either by paving under it, or by a wide central island (5 day traffic flows = 5493, Sun = 3589).
2 Fradley South to Lichfield (Trent Valley Station)

The Council have long wanted to make a good cycling route to allow local residents to reach the station, which is 4kms away. HS2 can deliver this route by providing a segregated cycle track along the north side of the A38 and linking it along the foot of the railway embankment to their “Rough Stockings” access track (900m).

1. New path set back from the main road
2. New path constructed at the foot of the HS2 embankment
3. Complete the link on HS2 access road.
3 Fradley: Trent and Mersey Canal Link

National Cycle Route 54 (Lichfield to Burton on Trent) is severed by HS2 Phase One. HS2 has made provision for this route which should be constructed as described here.

1. Existing cycle track along east side of Gorse Lane.
2. Provision to cross Gorse Lane at junction to reach the north side of Wood End Lane.
3. Construct new shared use path 2.5m wide set back from road with wide grass verge. (5 day traffic flows =2114, Sun=882)
4. This separate cycle track to continue through under the HS2 bridge with balustrade against highway if necessary.
5. The new route of Wood End Road climbs up beside HS2 whilst the path is to continue on the level at the foot of the embankment.
6. Pass under the road and the railway.
7. Join the link to Netherstone Lane. This road should be designed as a low flow, low speed road to match the existing lane to Lichfield. It should aim to discourage vehicular traffic.
8. Connect up with existing lane and NCN54.
9. This long diversion would make sense if a link to the Trent and Mersey Canal towpath were built. This is the recommended solution for the National Cycleway. Such a bridge could take advantage of the HS2 earthworks to lift the path up at the south side of the canal bridge.
10. Route to King’s Bromley and canal towpath to Fradley Junction.
12. Canal towpath to Handsacre.
Phase 2a: Trent and Mersey Canal to the Stoke and Market Drayton Railway

In this section we have endeavoured to identify the locations where provision, often by way of quite modest works, would make all the difference to the future of popular cycling in the area.

For the great majority of road diversions and new works we can see no reason for additional or special provision for cyclists, except in the case of the examples listed here. This is not to say that a more local knowledge, or more considered review of the HS2 proposals might not raise other issues. If this does happen then these notes can be revised so that they provide a complete record of the opportunities and problems for cyclists around HS2 in Staffordshire.

These notes do not specifically consider issues relating to public footpaths or bridleway except that whoever our suggestions are for traffic free links then these could also be used by pedestrians and equestrians as appropriate.
4 Link to Kings Bromley – Pyford Brook

This large village is less than 6 miles from the centre of Lichfield but completely isolated for cyclists on account of the traffic on the A515. A new cycle path should be constructed along the boundary of HS2 to reach the estate roads or the public road at Common Lane. Most of this link can utilise the planned access track to the Pyford Brook Balanotn ponds.

1. Link from NCN Route 54 diversion.
2. New bridge over canal to reach the side towpath (note this could be constructed in association with the HS2 bridge further north).
3. Ramp back down in landscaped area.
4. Reconstruct towpath over this section.
5. New path at foot of HS2 embankment.

6. Continue through landscaped area.
7. Make link to balancing pond turning head.
8. Link direct across brook to avoid the circuitous route taken by the access track (which could also reroute this way).
9. Join the HS2 access track all the way through to Common Lane.
5 **Link to Netherton**

A link to this village would give Lichfield residents access to an extensive network of minor and very lightly trafficked roads leading north from Netherton. It would be well worthwhile making the link described here.

1. Shaw Lane is being stopped up.
   A remnant of this lane should be kept for cyclists and extended around the end of the HS2 earthworks.

2. Construct a new path through the landscaped area here.

3. Provide a central island to make a safe crossing of the main road at a convenient location.

4. Connect to the farm track which is the start of the short footpath link to Netherton.
Moreton House - Great and Little Haywood to connect with network of bridleways and good cycling routes, and Blithfield Reservoir

This area has an extensive network of bridleways which connect to long cul-de-sac roads all of which have very low volumes of traffic and are particularly suitable for cycling. Moreton House is the key node of this network and the detailed design of the link is important. We suggest that the deep cutting proposed for HS2 offers the chance of making a level connections (via a bench in the cutting) running to the south of Moreton House, rather than the existing rather intrusive bridleway which climbs up the hill to pass very close to the buildings.

1. Moreton Lane.
2. Construct path along boundary of HS2 and divert bridleway BW35 along this line. This will then provide cycling connection for a route to Little Haywood.
3. Construct short linking path on this alignment, if possible on the level as part of HS2 earthworks.
4. A new link south of Moreton House would allow this bridleway to be diverted?
5. Bilshton Lane provides a route to join the Trent and Mersey Canal towpath, thereby extending the options for local routes.
7 Stafford to Ingestre Hall Arts Centre

The hall (which is owned by Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council) is little more than 4 miles from Stafford Station. Hanyards Lane makes for an excellent direct cycle route and the Council would like to see the Lane continued as a cycle route to reach Ingestre Hall and a possible route to Hixon.

The HS2 bridleway bridge should be designed and built as part of this cycleway.
8 Hopton – Sandon Road works

The planned diversion of Sandon Road will render Hopton residents less likely to travel into Stafford on account of its detour, and additional gradients and further exposure to traffic on the B5066. This detour will also divide the village into two parts. It would be much better if the HS2 scheme provided a foot and cycle bridge on the line of the existing road.

1. Planned diversion.
2. Cycling bridge on desire line of existing Hopton Lane.
3. If a Hopton Lane bridge is not built, then a separate cycleway will be required along the whole length of this road on account of traffic volumes and speeds.
4. Retain half the width of the old road for cyclists.
5. Continue separate path in verge of road.
6. Connect to local authority future route to Stafford.
7. The former railway is a continuation of the main cycling route through Stafford but access to this section is blocked by the Barracks and Depot. Should this situation ever change in the future then a continuous route could be provided in any development.

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[Map showing cycling proposals and HS2 route]
9 Pire Hill

The reconstruction of the farm road, BWO.1135, should be done to a good standard as this is the recommended route for the Stafford/Stone section of the National Cycleway. In particular, the gradients of the approved ramps need to be as easy as possible and the surface sound.
10 Yarnfield Lane

The local authority wish to make a cycling route from the large village of Yarnfield to Stone and Stone Station less than 4kms away. Traffic levels are such that a traffic free path alongside the realigned road works would be appropriate, preferably set close to the field edge rather than hard against the road.
11 Blakelow Farm – Swynnerton Footpath 27 (Ch 223)

The cycleway study identified this route as a potential cycle link from Swynnerton to Stone. The works to FP27 should be completed to a shared use standard in order that the local authority can promote a route connecting Hall Lane to BOAT34.
12 Swynnerton to Beech - Tittensor Road Diversion (Ch 225)

The proposed road works are likely to cause problems for cyclists and will also be a problem for the “Stone Circles Path” route. Swynnerton is boxed in by a combination of main roads and the M6 and it is important not to worsen the position. At the same time the HS2 works offer the choice of an almost traffic free route to Beech.

1. Provide a traffic free path along field edge of road.
2. Provide for path to continue over bridge.
3. Link through landscaped area to crossing of A51.
4. Construct underpass to make safe crossing of main road, or other measure, 5 day traffic=3280, Sun=2134)
5. Make a link to BW54 for a route to Beech.
13 Baldwin’s Gate to Stoke/Market Drayton railway (Ch 234)

Baldwin’s Gate has very limited access to quiet roads or cycle routes. The HS2 access track to the balancing pond provides an excellent link to the former Silverdalees Railway which the Cycleway study recommended for its route from Newcastle to Crewe.

1. Make up this access track to a good cycleway to connect with the road from the village at Snapehall.
2. Continue the track as a cycleway and as the route of footpath FP14.
3. Pass under the HS2 viaduct through landscaped area.
4. Join line of disused railway for link to Madeley and Newcastle/Stoke.
5. Railway path to be constructed by others.
6. Maintain the railway route to offer cycle route to west and connect with existing footpaths.
Appendix of common standards omitted