



# worcestershire county council

FREEPOST RSLX-UCGZ-UKSS  
High Speed Rail Consultation  
PO Box 59528  
London  
SE21 9AX

2<sup>nd</sup> November 2010

## **RE: Consultation on High Speed 2 Proposals**

Dear Sir,

I am writing with the views of Worcestershire County Council in response to the public consultation on the proposals of the Coalition Government to construct a high speed railway network from London to Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester.

### **General Comments**

Worcestershire County Council has improving the prosperity of Worcestershire as its key objective together with making the County "Open for Business" as one of four key themes. This is reflected in the Worcestershire LTP3 which will focus investment on solutions that unblock barriers to economic growth and reduce congestion whilst protecting Worcestershire's natural environment. To this end, all proposed investment in transport infrastructure and services in Worcestershire are assessed in terms of their support for these key objectives, in conjunction with an appraisal of their value for money.

As such Worcestershire County Council has examined the HS2 proposals in terms of its likely support for these key objectives. In particular, the extent to which the HS2 proposals are compatible with the need to improve Worcestershire's access by rail to key business and employment markets. The provision of significantly improved rail access is of great importance to Worcestershire County Council, the Worcestershire LEP and other key stakeholders. It is the view of Worcestershire County Council that the HS2 proposals must not undermine or jeopardise the delivery of the investment in rail infrastructure and services which are key to the performance of the Worcestershire economy and which are summarised below.

### **HS2 Proposals**

Based on the information provided by the Department for Transport and High Speed2 Limited in the consultation documents, in particular the economic appraisal, Worcestershire County Council recognises the benefits to the UK economy of the HS2 proposals. We are not able to comment on the precise

**Simon Geraghty**  
Deputy Leader,  
Cabinet Member for  
Economy and  
Infrastructure,  
County Hall  
Spetchley Road  
Worcester  
WR5 2NP



investor in excellence

Tel 01905 765765 • Fax 01905 766899 • DX 29941 Worcester 2  
sgeraghty@worcestershire.gov.uk • www.worcestershire.gov.uk

alignment proposals set out in the consultation document as they fall outside of Worcestershire.

Worcestershire County Council is, however, clear that if the proposed HS2 is to benefit the objectives of sustainable economic growth and improving prosperity, there will be a need to improve the quality of passenger rail and road links between Worcestershire and the HS2 "railheads" (e.g. Birmingham International and New Street/Curzon Street). This will help to ensure that Worcestershire can benefit from the better connectivity to national and international markets that HS2 could deliver.

### **Worcestershire's Key Rail Improvements:**

***Worcestershire Regional Parkway***, located at the crossing of the Worcester – London & Birmingham – Bristol main lines. This new station will help make Worcestershire more accessible by rail, in particular for journeys to/from Bristol, Cardiff, the South West, Birmingham and the North East and North West. It will improve access by rail to key markets and also help to provide relief to the M5 motorway over the congested sections to the north of Worcester

***Delivery of Cross-City Line South extension to the new Bromsgrove Interchange***. This scheme will provide much improved access between North Worcestershire and the employment opportunities in Birmingham, University, Longbridge and elsewhere in the West Midlands metropolitan area.

***Signal and line capacity enhancements in the Worcester area***. Current infrastructure in and on the approaches to Worcester constrains the ability to operate more frequent rail services to/from/across Worcester, thereby reducing connectivity between South Worcestershire and the West Midlands conurbation, with adverse impacts on the economy.

***Completion of the re-doubling of the Cotswold Line (i.e. Evesham to Norton Junction)***. This would enable further enhancements to rail journey times between Worcestershire and the key markets and destinations located in Oxford, Reading, London and the South East.

***Kidderminster Interchange Improvements***. This well developed scheme will provide significantly improved facilities for rail users and operators and enable continued growth in rail demand.

***Enhancing capacity on the Droitwich – Stoke Works Junction (Bromsgrove) section***. This will help to reduce constraints on the frequency and journey times of Malvern/Worcester – Birmingham New Street services.

---

***Improving the quality of passenger interchange facilities, in particular at Worcester Foregate Street and Shrub Hill Stations.*** This will encourage greater use of rail with consequent decongestion benefits.

### **Other Issues**

Worcestershire County Council also requires reassurance that:

- *The performance of Worcestershire rail network (and economy and environment) will not be compromised by passenger and rail freight traffic diversions caused by the construction and delivery of HS2*
- *Worcestershire will benefit from any line capacity released by the HS2 proposals (in particular for services to/from Birmingham and London [via the Cotswold Line])*

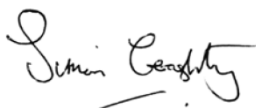
### **Conclusions**

In conclusion, the view of Worcestershire County Council is that investment in high speed rail is a nationally important decision, with significant local implications for Worcestershire. Worcestershire County Council cautiously welcomes the High Speed2 proposals and supports the Government's position as part of providing a strong basis for economic growth by investing in this infrastructure.

In particular, Worcestershire County Council would like to reinforce its view that the optimum benefits of investment in High Speed Rail will not be realised locally unless accessibility to HS2 stations is maximised, through investments in the existing rail network, including increases to rail park and travel capacity. The rail enhancement schemes set out above will significantly enhance access by rail to the Birmingham area, the proposed high speed rail network and other key markets. The County Council hopes that the Government will seek to support Worcestershire County Council in the planning, development and delivery of these schemes, to strengthen the case for investment in high speed rail.

I look forward to publication of the outcome of the consultation process later this year.

Yours faithfully,



**Cllr Simon Geraghty**

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy & Infrastructure

---