

Draft Response to HS2 Consultation

Introduction

Our response is in respect of the base area we cover, namely the Bolsover District, North East Derbyshire District, and Chesterfield Borough Council areas.

We only comment on the public rights of way (PROW) affected and any present and proposed future shared routes (Greenways/Trails).

This response will be copied to the Ramblers Areas and Groups affected and neighbouring i.e. South Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire, plus our cycling contacts in the same vicinity.

We are not commenting in detail about each of the, in excess of 40, PROW concerned but only about guiding principles and specifics where considered necessary.

Background and Guiding Principles

It needs to be appreciated that the proposed route(s) cover ground previously disturbed by mining and other heavy industrial activity. This is combined with the construction of the M1 motorway has led to a situation where there is a reduced level of West/East connectivity already. To illustrate the point there are only 2 PROW which provide relatively direct routes between Chesterfield and Bolsover (Sutton cum Duckmanton FP18 and 19).

For that reason, any further erosion of West/East connectivity needs to be demonstrated as essential on the grounds of insufficient proven use and costs. The distance between crossings under or over the HS2 route need to be kept to a minimum.

Connectivity needs also to extend into the Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire PROW networks, Greenways/Trails.

The nature of the latter, often based on former railway lines, provide flat easy walking available to most people. Any diversion of PROW to them needs to reflect the same level of accessibility.

Diversions suggesting road side walking should be severely limited especially on routes used by HGV's and narrow lanes. Road side walking does not provide healthy exercise and tends to deter walking considerably.

Consideration needs to be given to proposed Greenways/Trails which may not currently feature on maps provided i.e. the disused mineral line from Buttermilk Lane, Bolsover to Chesterfield Rd, which provides a link to the Stockley Trail to the South and the Trans-Pennine Trail and others to the North.

We also support the full restoration of the 46-mile long Chesterfield Canal. The towpaths and surrounds of canals provide easy and pleasant walking for many.

More Detailed Comments

Beginning in the South we note the proposed arrangements in respect of Pinxton FP1, Blackwell FP6/8 and 11. Please see the earlier comments on roadside walking and the ease of access to Greenways/Trails.

To the North we stress the importance of Sutton cum Duckmanton FP 18 and 19 to retain the Chesterfield to Bolsover connections.

One proposed Greenway Route of particular concern is the extension Northwards of the Stockley Trail from Chesterfield Rd to Buttermilk Lane, Bolsover and beyond. The disused mineral line concerned is shown in the WDES on Map Number CT-06-458 as 'Disused Railway will be permanently closed'.

No provision is made for what is seen as a Key Strategic Link for shared use. Accordingly, it is likely we would oppose any closure plans which thwart this collective aim.

Finally, we reiterate our support for the Chesterfield Canal restoration in full. Only 9 miles remains to be restored and progress on this has already been severely hampered by the HS2 plans so far with the knock-on effect on funding.

It is important that the continuity and integrity of the continuous through route along the 46-mile canal, recognized as a long-distance footpath by Ordnance survey, is preserved. We understand the paths in Wales, South Yorkshire, outside our remit, require attention in this regard.

In our area LA11 - Staveley to Aston, it is essential that HS2 does not block the canal line at Norwood or Lowgates.

We also have concerns as to the apparent lack of provision for routes crossing the proposed IMD site notably Staveley FP11 and 14.

We are sure the Chesterfield Canal Trust will provide the greater detail and their reasoning.

Conclusion

We will be pleased to comment on more detailed plans as they become available.

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