

MARCH 2018 UPDATE FOR LOCAL COUNCILS

MID CHESHIRE AGAINST HS2

HS2 Phase 2b from Middlewich to Pickmere and M6

HS2 BILL IN PARLIAMENT

The 28th January 2018 was the 5th anniversary of the HS2 Phase 2 route announcement; which means MCAHS2 have been active for half a decade. The Bill for the HS2 Phase 2b confirmed route from Crewe to Manchester has yet to be put before Parliament.

The HS2 Phase 2a Bill (up to Crewe) passed the second reading in Parliament at the end of January. Far fewer MPs voted than when the HS2 Phase 1 Bill went through. More MPs abstained than voted in favour of the HS2 Phase 2a Bill. Esther McVey, MP Tatton, abstained and has stated to constituents that **'HS2 should stop at Crewe'**.

MEETINGS WITH HS2 LTD ENGINEERS

A meeting was held in September 2017 between HS2 Ltd engineers, HS2 Ltd consultants and *Mid Cheshire Against HS2*. The technical and engineering challenges of the route were discussed and a detailed list of technical questions tabled by MCAHS2. This was followed by a walk-over the route from Lostock Green to Wimboldsley (near Middlewich) in October 2017.

MCAHS2 IS NOT REASSURED THAT ROUTE CHOICE IS LEAST RISK AND BEST OPTION

Also discussed with HS2 Ltd was whether the choice of the HS2 Phase 2b route north of Crewe is the least risk and best option route through Cheshire. The route selection process for the 2013 preferred route of HS2 Phase 2b failed to identify, and therefore cost, the need for extensive engineering through the unstable ground and salt industry infrastructures in the Cheshire salt district.

As a consequence the HS2 Phase 2 route decisions made by Government were based on insufficient data. Also a fair comparison on risk and cost was not assessed relative to other routes in the 2013 HS2 preferred route selection process.

Both HS2 Ltd's and the Department for Transport's statement that the route from Crewe to the M6 is the **'least risk' and 'best option' route through Cheshire is countered by HS2 Ltd themselves.**

HS2 state:

'The 2012 Options Report did not make any recommendation as to a Preferred Route option, but provided information on the sustainability performance of different possible route options between common node points on a comparable basis to help Government identify a single initial preferred scheme.

It is worth noting that considerations of salt and other geological risks were not explicitly considered at this early stage of option development.

The Western Route as outlined in Figure 6 emerged as an Initial Preferred Route through the study area based on this appraisal. This decision was based on the connectivity opportunities arising from passing through Crewe. Neither the M6 route (HSM13) nor the Airport route (HSM17) served Crewe.'

From HS2 Ltd Document: Consultation Route Technical Note – C320 Contract – Cheshire Salt Area Review HS2 Document Number: C320-AEC-CV-NOT-220-000003 MDL Ref: B340Revision – P03 Date Approved –2017
4. Chronology of Options Considered 4.2 Initial Preferred Route & 2013 Page 16

The HS2 Ltd route selection process for the January 2013 preferred route of HS2 Western Leg failed to identify and also cost the need for extensive engineering due to the presence in Cheshire of:

- *One working salt mine*
- *170 + brine producing wells*
- *20 + gas storage cavities + more planned for national strategic gas reserves*
- *A dense network of pipelines carrying high pressure brine, water, air and gas*
- *Feedstock for the NW chemical industries*
- *Subsiding ground, sink holes and flashes*
- *And 2000 + years legacy of continuous and ongoing salt extraction*

CONSEQUENCES OF FLAWED JANUARY 2013 HS2 ROUTE SELECTION PROCESS

- **HS2 route decisions made by Government**
 - Decision made by government was based on insufficient data
 - A fair comparison on risk and cost was not assessed relative to other routes pre 2013
 - Route chosen has very high engineering content
- **Cost HS2 Project under estimated**
 - Additional very high cost of engineering content not included financial assessment of January 2013 route at:
 - Pre-construction assessment, design
 - Construction in time and size and extent of infrastructure
 - Operation – on going monitoring, maintenance and remediation
- **Detrimental to the public interest**
 - The public not aware whether the key impacts of the HS2 project are being investigated appropriately and designed appropriately so that the HS2 high speed rail infrastructure is being developed with the best advice and services.
 - The public has considerable concern over the key impact of unstable ground conditions and salt industry infrastructures on the high speed rail project for the safety of those people building the project, people using the rail service and people living adjacent to the high speed rail infrastructure.
 - The HS2 project has yet to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the key impact of unstable ground conditions and salt industry infrastructures on the high speed rail project engineering and operation design.
 - The public is not aware whether they are getting value for money
- **HS2 project delayed**

REPORT IN PREPERATION

Mid Cheshire Against HS2 have been very active recently and are currently putting the finishing touches to a very substantial report that will detail why HS2 should not come anywhere near to our part of Cheshire, the reasons why and the alternatives that are possible.

This report follows meetings with local MPs and Cheshire West & Chester Council. Since the submission of our 1800 signature petition in 2015 to Cheshire West & Chester Council, CWaCC has formed a 'HS2 Task & Finish Working Group' and are now consulting us, listening to us and most importantly, involving us, in their meetings with HS2 Ltd. HS2 can be STOPPED and we continue to strive to achieve this.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE GO TO

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Facebook: Mid Cheshire Against HS2 **Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/mcahs2>