



## Executive

19 September 2011

### Joint report from the Directors of Regeneration & Major Projects and Environment & Neighbourhood Services

For Action

Wards affected:  
All

## HS2 – Response to Government Consultation

### 1.0 Summary

- 1.1 An explanation of the current proposals for a new High Speed rail link to Birmingham and beyond is provided, with particular reference to the implications for the Borough of the proposed interchange at Old Oak Common. There are likely to be significant impacts, both negative and positive, upon regeneration in the Borough. It is without doubt, though, a major opportunity to enhance regeneration and economic growth in Brent as well as significantly improving access for Brent residents. Executive is asked to endorse the response to the Government consultation on the route submitted in July.

### 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Executive endorses the response set out in paragraph 3.24 which was submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport in July 2011.

### 3.0 Detail

#### Background

- 3.1 In February 2011, the Government commenced public consultation on its High Speed rail proposals. The consultation closed on 29<sup>th</sup> July and it is anticipated that there will be a Ministerial decision about whether to proceed before the end of 2011. A briefing session for Members was organised by officers on June 21<sup>st</sup> and was attended by officers from HS2 and TfL who presented their proposals and answered questions about them. Concerns have been expressed about the route of the tunnel, and potential impact on residential amenity, by Kensal Triangle Residents' Association and others. It is known that local authorities expressed differing views on both the principle of HS2 and the proposed route. Some local authorities, particularly outside of London but including Hillingdon, have made known their opposition to the proposed route. LB Ealing put in a "holding objection".

- 3.2 London Councils' response to the consultation is broadly supportive of the development of a high speed network but indicates concern about: the adequacy of information provided within the consultation, a number of particular aspects in relation to the proposed route, plans to manage onward dispersal from Euston and the opportunity to improve the proposals further by making use of the existing rail station at Stratford.

### The Proposals for HS2

- 3.3 The proposals were first put forward by the previous Government who published a Command Paper in March 2010 setting out its preferred route option for a new high speed rail link (High Speed 2) between London and the West Midlands and potentially beyond. The overall proposal, shown below, is for a Y-shaped national high speed rail network linking London to Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds, and including stops in the East Midlands and South Yorkshire, as well as direct links to the HS1 line and into Heathrow Airport. Phase 1 of this is the route from London to Birmingham which it is hoped will be operational in 2026.



- 3.4 The proposals include a London terminus at Euston and a tunnel between Euston and Old Oak Common, where there would be a new interchange station with Crossrail, Heathrow Express and Great Western rail services.
- 3.5 Within Brent, the route will cross Kilburn in a tunnel to a new interchange station with Crossrail at Old Oak Common (in Hammersmith & Fulham). Along the tunnelled route in Brent a ventilation and construction shaft is proposed at the site of the Council-owned car park off Salusbury Road, south of Queens Park Station. There is also a proposal to link the channel tunnel high speed line (HS1) with HS2 utilising the surface level North London Line.

**The Implications for Brent**

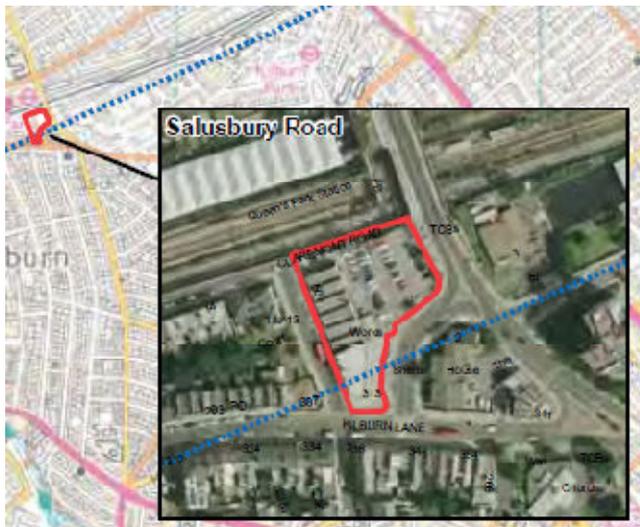
- 3.6 A more detailed plan of the route of the proposed tunnel through Brent is shown below.



- 3.7 The line is proposed to emerge from the tunnel at North Acton and then will run along the Chiltern Line corridor, skirting past Coronation Road and the Veolia depot at Alperton, to the M25 and beyond. The tunnel, necessary because the existing track into Euston is operating at full capacity, will be at a depth of 25 to 40 metres. This is the same as the HS1 tunnel in east London where no claims relating to noise or vibration have been made.

**Queens Park Vent Shaft**

- 3.8 The proposed location of the vent shaft on the Queens Park station site is shown in the diagram below.



- 3.9 The shafts for tunnels are essential to provide for emergency access in the event of an incident, as well as relieving air pressure and thus maintaining passenger comfort. Vent shafts are provided at strategic points and the minimum number required for the length of tunnel is 3. The building would contain fans which would operate only in emergencies and occasional testing. In day to day use the building would be passive and would not generate any noise. The shaft building is approximately 25 metres across and also requires land adjacent to it to accommodate four emergency vehicles. The alignment of the proposed tunnel has been adjusted to enable it to pass directly beneath the shaft.
- 3.10 The Queens Park station site is a key development site in the South Kilburn regeneration area and, therefore, the proposal for the shaft is a major concern. The size of the shaft building and space required means that the development potential, and therefore the value, of the site is substantially reduced.

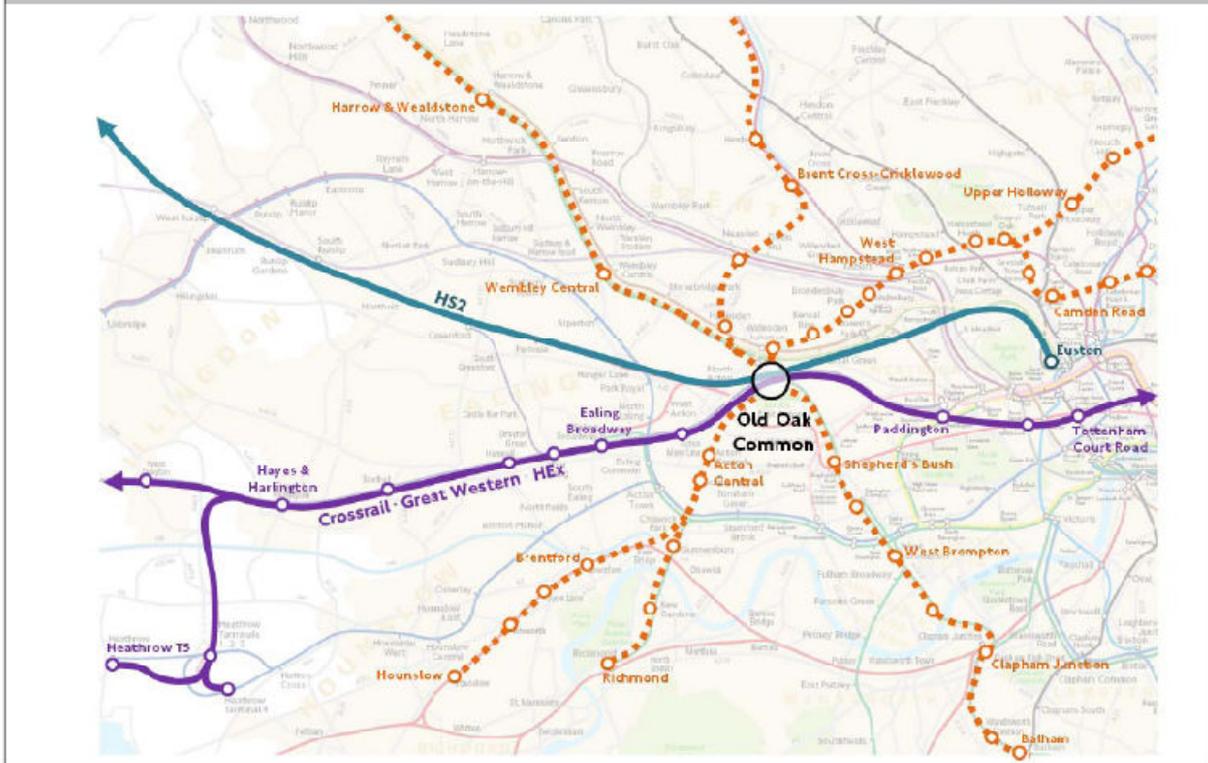
#### Old Oak Common

- 3.11 Old Oak Common (OOC), in Hammersmith and Fulham, has been chosen as the location of an interchange station between HS2, Crossrail and the Great Western mainline. This would be similar to the international interchange on HS1 at Stratford in east London. It would also provide a rapid link to Heathrow using the existing Heathrow Express. An analysis shows that one third of passengers on HS2 would use OOC to change onto Crossrail to travel on into central London, thus reducing the pressure of crowding at Euston.
- 3.12 The proposed new interchange will be less than 800 metres from Willesden Junction station and, hence, the borough boundary. Clearly, a major new international interchange at OOC is likely to have a significant effect upon Brent and on the Harlesden and Kensal Rise areas in particular. The nature of the proposals is such that they make no mention of how the OOC hub interchange might be connected to the surrounding area (surface connectivity) or to the local rail/underground network.
- 3.13 It is inconceivable that, ultimately, there would not be major development associated with such an accessible location. There is also an opportunity to provide further interchange with the rail network in this part of London which would mean that the regenerative and economic benefits will be spread beyond the immediate local area.

This is, without doubt, a major opportunity to enhance regeneration and economic growth in Brent.

- 3.14 There is an opportunity to ensure that this major new international interchange station is a catalyst for major economic regeneration of the area and, in particular, the exact location and layout should maximise the opportunity for development. Appropriate forms of development can deliver economic growth and job opportunity in what is currently a low-grade industrial environment, but which is also identified as a major Opportunity Area in the London Plan. HS2 Ltd. estimates that 20,000 jobs will be generated by the interchange. Brent officers are liaising with officers from Hammersmith & Fulham and other relevant west London boroughs about the potential for regeneration at OOC. Hammersmith & Fulham have appointed Terry Farrell as consultants to advise on the future development of the area and the council's formal response to HS2.
- 3.15 There is also an opportunity to maximise the potential for interchange between different rail routes at Old Oak Common, not only to enhance access to the new High Speed line but also so that it can be a catalyst for greater economic benefit and regeneration. This could mean providing interchange with the North London line and the West London line, both of which run close to the proposed new station.
- 3.16 However, a potentially much greater benefit could be achieved by providing a direct link to the current West Coast Mainline which is approximately 800 metres to the north. There are options for achieving this. This could be by means of a physical (travelator or similar) link together with the re-instatement of platforms at Willesden Junction.
- 3.17 Alternatively, a proposal that is being developed by TfL, with much wider benefits for London and beyond and which would make better use of the track capacity freed up by HS2, is to provide another branch of Crossrail onto the existing West Coast Mainline. This branch could include a stop at Wembley Central and would significantly enhance access to the Borough's largest and most important regeneration area. This would place Wembley within a relatively easy (1 change) and speedy journey to Heathrow. It would also mean that Wembley could be much better linked to central and east London.
- 3.18 The diagram below has been produced by TfL to demonstrate the potential rail connectivity at OOC. In addition to Crossrail northwards to Wembley Central, use could also be made of the existing Dudding Hill freight line to provide passenger services connecting Brent Cross and beyond, through Brent, to OOC. TfL have also indicated that there is also a possibility that a new spur off the Bakerloo line could link to OOC.

## Old Oak Common – potential connectivity



### Connection to HS1

- 3.19 A direct link from HS2 at OOC onto HS1 (Channel Tunnel rail link) is proposed to allow for direct high speed services from across Britain to European destinations via the Channel Tunnel. This is proposed to comprise of a tunnel from OOC to the North London Line at Chalk Farm where it will run on existing track to join with HS1 north of St. Pancras. Although HS2 Ltd suggest that this will consist of only 3 trains per hour, there are concerns that this could have a detrimental impact upon suburban services on the North London Line and compromise the benefits of recent investment in the line.

### Impact on West London Waste Authority Site in Hillingdon

- 3.20 Brent Council also has an interest in the impact of the route on the existing West London Waste Authority (WLWA) site at Victoria Road in the London Borough of Hillingdon. The route proposal at this location is likely to reduce the size of the site and compromise connectivity between sidings on the site and the mainline rail network. This would have a serious negative impact on the operation of the site, with significant potential cost implications for WLWA members, including Brent.
- 3.21 Critically the WLWA has embarked on a procurement process to find a partner to provide waste treatment facilities so as to divert waste away from landfill. The Victoria Road site is a critical site in that procurement/development strategy. The existence of the HS2 proposals will create uncertainty which may in turn compromise that procurement/strategy.

## **Consultation**

3.22 The Government's consultation on the HS2 proposals closed on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2011. There were seven questions on which the Government was seeking views as follows:

- i. Do you agree that there is a strong case for enhancing the capacity and performance of Britain's inter-city rail network to support economic growth over the coming decades?
- ii. Do you agree that a national high speed rail network from London to Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester (the Y network) would provide the best value for money solution (best balance of costs and benefits) for enhancing rail capacity and performance?
- iii. Do you agree with the Government's proposals for the phased roll-out of a national high speed rail network, and for links to Heathrow Airport and to the High Speed 1 line to the Channel Tunnel?
- iv. Do you agree with the principles and specification used by HS2 Ltd to underpin its proposals for new high speed rail lines and the route selection process HS2 Ltd undertook?
- v. Do you agree that the Government's proposed route, including the approach proposed for mitigating its impacts, is the best option for a new high speed rail line between London and the West Midlands?
- vi. Do you wish to comment on the Appraisal of Sustainability of the Government's proposed route between London and the West Midlands that has been published to inform this consultation?
- vii. Do you agree with the options set out to assist those whose properties lose a significant amount of value as a result of any new high speed line?

3.23 Brent's response focuses upon questions i to iii and v, with particular emphasis on the issues associated with the proposed (tunnelled) route through the Kilburn/Queens Park area, the proposed air vent close to Queens Park station, the issues of connectivity to/at the proposed interchange at Old Oak Common and impact on the WLWA site in Hillingdon.

## **Proposed Brent Response**

3.24 The following was put in as Brent Council's formal response to the Government consultation on HS2.

- i. Brent Council supports, in principle, the development of high speed rail to help provide the basis for long-term and sustainable economic growth, whilst having the potential to deliver reductions in carbon emissions by achieving a modal shift from air travel. However, investment in high speed rail should not detract from funding for other rail infrastructure.
- ii. Brent Council supports the proposals for the Y' shaped network as one which delivers the greatest benefits for connecting the Midlands and the North to London.

- iii. Brent Council welcomes the commitment to link HS2 to HS1. However, it is considered that the current proposal, to use existing track on the North London Line, could adversely impact upon existing suburban services, or upon future proposals to improve these. Any link should have dedicated infrastructure so as not to compromise capacity on the North London Line and/or the frequency or running speed of the HS operation.

The proposal for an interchange station at Old Oak Common is also supported in principle.

However, this must maximise the potential for surface and rail connectivity with the surrounding area so that it can become a major transport hub for West London in the same way that Stratford has developed as a major hub in East London.

There is an opportunity for interchange not only with Crossrail and the Great Western line, but also with the North and West London lines and with the existing West Coast Main Line and London Midland services at Willesden Junction, less than 800 metres away.

The Council believes that maximum benefit would be gained from linking Crossrail at Old Oak Common to the existing West Coast Main Line so that Crossrail trains could then run through onto this track and extend Crossrail northwards through Wembley Central station. This would support Brent's largest growth area where substantial mixed use development is proposed, and make use of the track capacity anticipated to be generated by HS2.

Such a proposal would not only help maximise connectivity at Old Oak Common but would, more importantly, further relieve pressure from passengers arriving at Euston. The Council are of the view that the scope of HS2 should be widened to develop this proposal hand in hand with HS2.

Additionally the Council is concerned that the proposals do not contain details of arrangements for surface level connectivity to the hub station. The Council are of the view that the hub station should provide increased opportunity for residents in Brent, particularly those in the Harlesden and Kensal Green areas, to access employment opportunities in the region. This should be afforded by direct and suitable surface connectivity to the OOC hub station through Willesden Junction.

- v The Council echoes concerns that have been expressed by residents in Brent about the potential effect on residential amenity of a tunnel for high speed trains located directly beneath their homes. Those concerns have not been addressed by information HS2 has provided during the consultation period about the impact during construction and when HS2 is in operation.

It is Brent Council's view that it should be possible for a tunnel to be constructed under the current West Coast Main Line track for a substantial part of the route from Old Oak Common to Euston, thus avoiding the possibility of such additional disturbance.

The Council is of the view that HS2 should undertake further work to explore the possibility of re-aligning the route (to the North Acton portal) beneath the WCML.

Additionally HS2 should ensure that construction and operational arrangements for any length of HS2 (or the HS2-HS1 link) in tunnel clearly demonstrate the absence of any impact on properties above the route so as to eliminate current concerns about amenity and blight.

The Council is also concerned about the potential impact of the proposed vent shaft on the Queens Park Station site at Salusbury Road. This is an important site which is a key part of the South Kilburn regeneration proposals, providing a mix of housing (around 200 homes) over lower ground commercial uses. The Council understands that the vent shafts are required approximately every 2 kilometres of tunnel, and that this is the distance between vents implemented on HS1. It is also understood that there is some flexibility over the precise siting of the vent shafts.

The Council is proceeding with the development of the Queens Park station site and therefore asks that the vent be located on an alternative site that is of less value to the South Kilburn redevelopment programme. For example, the vent shaft could be located on land to the east of Queens Park station which is currently used as a builders yard/depot.

Brent Council also has an interest, as a member of the West London Waste Authority, in the potential impact of the route on the waste management site at Victoria Road in the London Borough of Hillingdon. Brent would wish to see a re-consideration of the route at this point so that it no longer impacts upon the operation of, or future operational proposals at, the Victoria Road waste transfer station.

Finally, and in the wider context, the Council is concerned about the development of HS2 proposals in the absence of plans to manage onward dispersal from Euston. Notwithstanding the positive impact of the OOC hub station on the numbers of passengers needing to use Euston, the Council is concerned that proposals for HS2 are developed and progressed in tandem with a package of measures to ensure that the transport network at, around and beyond, Euston can cope with the additional passenger numbers anticipated as a result of HS2 and regional growth.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. However, should HS2 go ahead as proposed in the consultation document, and land is safeguarded, then statutory blight provisions would become available to qualifying property owners. The Council would be a qualifying property owner in relation to the car park at Queens Park station where the vent shaft is proposed. It is proposed in the consultation document that a bond-based property compensation scheme be used whereby a qualifying property owner applies to the Government for a compensation guarantee. This is intended to provide people with a Government-backed guarantee that the holder would be compensated for a loss in the value of the property.
- 4.2 The Council's membership of the West London Waste Authority means there could be an impact financially on the Council if the route, as currently proposed, impacts upon the potential operation of the waste transfer station at Victoria Road in Hillingdon.

#### **5.0 Legal Implications**

5.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report

## **6.0 Diversity Implications**

6.1 The development of an international interchange station at Old Oak Common is likely to have a major regenerative and economic impact on the local area. The extent of this will be dependent upon the level of connectivity with surrounding areas. Nevertheless, the proposed new hub at Old Oak Common is close to deprived areas in Brent where disadvantaged groups have been identified. It is anticipated that major regeneration locally should assist in providing economic benefits with the prospect of new jobs being provided locally in the long term.

## **7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications**

7.1 There are no staffing or accommodation implications arising directly from this report.

## **8.0 Environmental Implications**

8.1 The environmental implications of a proposed new High Speed line would be considerable, although these will be less substantial locally in Brent because it is not proposed that the route would run on the surface in any part of the borough. However, there may be some potential for impact on residential amenity of the tunnel running directly underneath homes as explained in paragraph 3.24v above.

## **9.0 Background Papers**

High Speed Rail: Investing in Britain's Future, Consultation Feb. 2011

<http://highspeedrail.dft.gov.uk/>

### **Contact Officers**

Any person wishing to inspect the above papers should contact Ken Hullock, Planning & Development 020 8937 5309 or Tim Jackson, Transportation Unit (x5151)

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