Dear Sirs,

**HS2 – PHASE 2 ROUTE CONSULTATION**

**Introduction**

The Inland Waterways Association (IWA) is a national charity which campaigns for the conservation, use, maintenance, restoration and development of the inland waterways for public benefit. IWA members’ interests include boating, towpath walking, cycling, angling, built heritage, nature conservation, freight transport and the regeneration benefits of the canals and navigable rivers network.

This response is from the Lichfield Branch of IWA which covers (inter alia) parts of Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Leicestershire. You will also be receiving a national representation from IWA and this response is consistent with that one, but includes additional details about the impacts of HS2 on our local canals and how these may be avoided, mitigated or compensated.

The canals around Lichfield affected by these proposals are the Trent & Mersey Canal, the Birmingham & Fazeley Canal and the Coventry Canal. These are historic waterways and valuable amenity and recreational corridors, providing leisure boating, walking, angling, cycling and nature conservation benefits. The HS2 route also impacts the Ashby Canal which is under active restoration to provide similar public benefits.

**IWA’s Position on HS2**

IWA accepts that the overall economic and social case for the proposed High Speed Rail network is for the Government to make and for Parliament to decide.

If it proceeds it will have major adverse impacts on the local environment and quality of life of many people on its route, both during construction and operation, including impacts on the inland waterways infrastructure and users.

IWA considers that the project needs to be designed and implemented so as to minimise its impacts, to mitigate those impacts that cannot be avoided, and to fully compensate all those disadvantaged by its construction and operation.

IWA will therefore continue to seek engagement with those planning and implementing the project to identify the negative impacts on the waterways and to seek their avoidance, mitigation or compensatory enhancement wherever necessary. The waterways affected include both existing navigations and canals under restoration for which equal consideration and provision should be made.

**WEST MIDLANDS TO MANCHESTER**

**Route Section HSM03: Fradley to Swynnerton**

**Trent & Mersey Canal**

Near Fradley Junction the Manchester line starts just north of the Trent & Mersey Canal, where there are three canal crossings in close proximity requiring four rail bridges at different levels. IWA has put forward alternative alignments for the Phase 1 link to the West Coast Main Line (WMCL) that would avoid two of these crossings, but it is accepted that the spur for the Phase 2 route will need to cross the canal between Shade House Lock and Woodend.
If all these canal crossings are constructed, this part of the Trent & Mersey Canal will be one of the most adversely affected sections of the canal system nationally. The cumulative effect of all these bridges, their associated embankments and other constructions would be to overwhelm and destroy the setting of the historic canal, its Listed structures and Conservation Area. The visual impact and noise intrusion will also seriously damage the recreation, tourism and economic benefits of the canal.

The Phase 2 line starts on a 6m high embankment close to the canal, followed by an 11m high and 130m long viaduct over the Curborough Brook, then a further long section of 6m high embankment to beyond Rileyhill and a another long viaduct over the A515 and Bourne Brook. It starts within 500 metres of the Fradley Junction Conservation Area and this whole 3 km section of the line lies between 200 and 900 metres of the Trent & Mersey Canal Conservation Area. Because of its elevation it will be readily visible and audible across the open countryside. It is important that the visual and noise impacts are mitigated by landscape planting to replace woodland destroyed by the railway and by additional noise barriers on the viaducts to help protect the canal environment.

**Great Haywood Marina**

Further north, the route converges on the Trent & Mersey Canal again at Great Haywood where it runs right alongside the canal marina at Great Haywood and crosses the canal on a 570m long viaduct about 10 metres high.

The toe of the embankment is shown as intruding on the northeast corner of the marina basin, which would cut off the roadway and footpath access to the mooring pontoons on the north side, rendering 64 of the 200 berths unusable. The embankment and viaduct would also be likely to require removal of a line of mature trees along the north side of the marina, including a large ancient Elm tree adjacent to the canal which was specifically protected when the marina was designed. It would further wipe out a large part of the environmental compensation area to the north of the marina which was created as a condition of the marina construction.

This would effectively destroy the marina business, seriously damage the brokerage business, boatyard and farm shop it helps support, reduce the facilities available to leisure boating users of the local canal system, and seriously impact the carefully nurtured environment of the marina. This route is therefore totally unacceptable.
As an absolute minimum the viaduct section should be extended to the WCML crossing and not stopped at the
arbitrary floodplain boundary line shown on the plans. This was inaccurately located before the marina was built,
as there could never have been any flooding east of the canal from the River Trent, and it is now wholly wrong
due to the level changes from the construction of the marina. Substituting an extended viaduct for the section
of embankment shown west of the WCML would allow access under the viaduct and around its supporting pillars.
With agreement to use the space under the viaduct the present pedestrian and vehicle access to the moorings and
the necessary car parking could be maintained. This would also narrow the overall footprint of HS2, reducing the
land taken from the environmental area and preventing its severance.

However, even with access retained, the visual and noise impact on the marina will be very damaging. It is
normal for boats in marinas to be used residentially overnight, at weekends or for other short periods, but the
noise from the trains at such close proximity would severely limit its residential use. Compared with the existing
WCML the HS2 trains will be travelling at twice the speed and the height of the railway means it will broadcast
its noise over a wider area. With up to 200 boats in the marina, it is likely at any time that there will be several
boats being used residentially. Enhanced noise barrier screens should therefore be provided to the highest
possible design standards as it would be for adjacent housing.

However, it would be preferable for the railway alignment to be moved by at least 30 metres to the north to
maintain internal access to and full use of the marina and to reduce the noise impacts, although it is accepted that
this would depend on not unduly increasing its impact on Ingestre Hall on the other side of the valley. Any
realignment should also be designed to avoid or minimise the impact on the landscaping and conservation
planting of the environmental mound.

In summary, therefore, IWA considers that this section of the route can and should be redesigned and realigned in
order to reduce the direct physical and noise impacts on the marina.

WEST MIDLANDS TO LEEDS

Route Section HSL01: Marston to Birchmoor

Birmingham & Fazeley Canal

Near Bodymoor Heath the start of the Leeds line runs parallel to the Birmingham & Fazeley Canal. Although
the first section is in cutting, the embanked and viaduct section near Bodymoor Heath starts at only about 300
metres from the canal. This and a further 9 metres high embanked and viaduct section through the Kingsbury
Water Park may add to the noise impacts northwards from the Phase 1 canal crossing. As this section of canal is
already afflicted with motorway noise every effort should be made to reduce additional sound transmission from
these elevated sections of the new railway.

Route Section HSL06: Birchmoor to Tonge (north of Measham)

Coventry Canal

At Polesworth the Coventry Canal is crossed by a bridge about 10 metres high, spanning an entrance to the old
colliery basin which provides attractive and tranquil moorings for canal boats, including residential use, and also
a base for holiday hire boats. The former colliery site alongside the canal has been reclaimed as the Pooley
Country Park and Heritage Centre and is a well used recreational facility.

Pooley Hall Colliery Basin moorings, Coventry Canal. The HS2 bridge will cross right over this point.
Both the country park and moorings would be severely damaged by the present proposals, with the line cutting right through the middle of the country park on embankment, destroying heritage buildings used for light industry and the visitor centre, and cutting off access to most of the site including the moorings, rendering these unusable.

As a minimum the viaduct should be extended across the site in place of the embankment, including a bridge for Pooley Lane to reinstate road access. Even then, the direct physical damage and the constantly intrusive noise would severely limit future use and enjoyment of the country park facilities and could make the canal boat moorings uninhabitable for residential use. At present there are about 8 boat moorings of which one is a permanent residential mooring and, as is common, the others are often used residentially overnight, at weekends or for other short periods. Enhanced noise barrier screens should therefore be provided to the highest possible design standards as it would be for adjacent housing.

However, IWA considers that the route alignment in this vicinity should be re-examined to see if it could be moved either to the northwest, close to the M42, or to the southeast nearer to the edge of the park, and thereby to reduce the damage to the country park and the canal moorings.

**Ashby Canal Restoration**

At Measham the route crosses the route of the Ashby Canal which is currently under restoration by the Ashby Canal Trust with active support from Leicestershire County Council (LCC). As a general principle, canals under restoration for future navigation should be treated in the same way as existing navigations and adverse impacts avoided, mitigated or compensated to ensure that there is no net disadvantage to the restoration programme.

The canal line alongside the Burton Road has been infilled and is shown on the plans as a linear landfill site. A TWA Order has been obtained by LCC authorising its reinstatement between Snarestone and the A42 at Measham and a bridge must be provided over the canal. Due to historic mining subsidence in this area, the exact line and level of the canal may be subject to some adjustment and early discussions should be held with LCC to determine the optimum position and level of the canal bridge.

As the adjacent section of the A42 will need to be realigned to accommodate HS2, a road bridge for the continuing canal restoration should also be included, designed and positioned in conjunction with the rail bridge.

The two Ashby Canal crossings should be designed to the satisfaction of LCC and North West Leicestershire District Council to maintain the required canal level and headroom under HS2 and the realigned A42 in accordance with the Canal & River Trust requirements for a broad canal.

**Conclusion**

HS2 will have significant long term adverse effects on several parts of the canal system in the area covered by IWA Lichfield Branch. These should be reduced by realignment or extended viaducts at Great Haywood and Polesworth, additional canal bridges at Measham, and mitigated throughout by additional noise fencing and landscape planting. Short term construction impacts should also be reduced by appropriate screening. The impact on usage of the waterways should be fully assessed and minimised through sympathetic planning of the construction works and timetable.

Yours faithfully,

Philip G. Sharpe
Planning Officer
Lichfield Branch of IWA