



## **INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION**

This document is the Inland Waterways Association's (IWA's) response to the **HS2 Consultation**

It comprises:

Part I IWA: Waterways- Stakeholder

Part II IWA Response – Strategic Issues

Part III IWA Response- Detailed Route Observations

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### **PART I**

#### **IWA: WATERWAYS STAKEHOLDER**

The Inland Waterways Association is a registered charity, founded in 1946, which advocates the conservation, use, maintenance, restoration and development of the inland waterways for public benefit. We have 17,000 individual members and over 350 corporate members with a combined membership representing a voice of over 65,000 people supporting and involved with the inland waterways.

IWA works closely with navigation authorities, national and local authorities, voluntary, private and public sector organisations. We campaign and lobby for support and encourage public participation in the inland waterways. IWA also manages the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation for the public benefit, through its subsidiary Essex Waterways, ([www.essexwaterways.com](http://www.essexwaterways.com)) having stepped in to prevent its closure in 2005.

IWA actively supports waterway restoration, and through its waterways restoration volunteering organisation, Waterway Recovery Group ([www.wrg.org.uk](http://www.wrg.org.uk)), organises and subsidises over 20, week-long waterway restoration working holiday schemes for volunteers of all ages throughout the UK each year, as well as conducting multiple work parties around the country on most weekends. This particularly enables young people to participate in the preservation and restoration of our heritage, and in doing so learn construction and heritage skills.

More than 500 miles of canals and navigable rivers have been re-opened to public use since the Association was founded in 1946. The Association is working to restore a further 500 miles of derelict inland waterways.

IWA is organised into 35 local branches covering geographical areas of the country, through which volunteers coordinate activities as diverse as policing planning applications through the waterway corridor, organising festivals and events to raise public awareness, providing engineering expertise and arranging affordable insurance for over 180 waterway organisations, restoration societies and trusts, raising money for restoration, and providing education on the value and benefits of their local waterways.

## **PART II**

### **IWA RESPONSE – STRATEGIC ISSUES**

Earlier in 2011 the Government announced the preferred route of HS2 and this currently forms the basis of a public consultation that closes on 29th July 2011. On its route from London Euston to Birmingham Curzon Street/ Handsacre (where it joins the present West Coast Main Line) it crosses the canal network 12 times, one of these being a crossing of a current and viable canal restoration project (see detail point 8 below). This document forms IWA's official response to that consultation.

Whilst clearly it is not within IWA remit to object to the scheme we do need to consider where the construction or tunnelling work might affect the availability of the waterway network and thus the interests of our members, corporate or otherwise. Ideally the project should build in methods that will enable the construction works to take place without closing the canal or alternatively minimum disruption during the winter stoppage season with the Christmas/New Year window built in. However recent history, when the West Coast Main Line was widened earlier this century, has seen several canals closed for excessive periods that ran well into the main cruising season.

Given that the works will probably take place at the same time, maybe using several different contractors, and the desire to carry them out as cheaply as possible it seems highly likely that, if there was no provision built in to prevent or minimise canal closures, the system could be segmented in numerous places all at the same time effectively closing a large portion of the most heavily used part

of the network thereby putting at risk those businesses who depend upon the canal for their main source of income as well as inconveniencing the traditional user.

In addition there are concerns that the crossing of the Lichfield Canal/Cappers Bridge may not be high enough to prevent the newly built bridge having to be demolished and the consequential affect on the public restoration of this canal by community volunteers.

IWA is also surprised and disappointed to see from the 'Environmental Features Legend' on the maps that whilst other heritage and nature conservation sites have been identified, there is no recognition of the significance of Conservation Areas. Consequently we are concerned that the route may have been planned without any attempt to avoid its adverse impacts on Conservation Areas.

### **PART III**

#### **IWA RESPONSE – DETAILED ROUTE OBSERTVATIONS**

On in its route from London Euston to Birmingham Curzon Street/ Handsacre (where it joins the present West Coast Main Line) it crosses the UK canal network 12 times, one of these being a crossing of a current and viable canal restoration project (see detail point 8 below ).

From London these crossings are located at (the map reference being that used in the consultation document): -

1. Map 1 – Regents Canal in a tunnel just west of the present West Coast Main Line Bridge over the canal.
2. Map 2 – Grand Union Canal (GU) Paddington Arm in a tunnel that runs roughly 200 yards under, or partly under, the canal either side of Mitre Bridge 6 just west of Kensal Green
3. Map 3 – GU Paddington Arm between bridges 15 and 16 in Northolt
4. Map 5 – GU by viaduct at Denton Gravel Pits between bridges 180 and 181
5. Map 19 – Oxford Canal between Stoneton Bridge 127 and Wilson's bridge 128 at Wormleighton (on the famous winding section)
6. Map 21 – GU by viaduct over the canal and flood plain immediately south of Longhole Bridge 31
7. Map 27 – Birmingham and Fazeley Canal by viaduct that also crosses the adjacent M42 between Marston Lane Bridge and White Bridge (immediately north of lock 5). The west end of the viaduct abuts a high embankment that foots the offside bank of the canal. The canal at this point is within a flight of locks and it is important that its width is not restricted so as to maintain the limited water holding capacity between locks.

8. Map 29 – Wyrley & Essington (Lichfield Canal) by a viaduct immediately above the recently built Cappers Bridge over the, to be restored, canal. The viaduct also crosses the adjacent flood plan and the plan shows a clearance above ground level at this point (i.e. excluding Cappers Bridge) of 12 mtrs, one assumes this to be rail height and not the bottom of the supporting structure. Unlike all the other crossings above there is no mention of a canal being crossed.

The Lichfield and Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust (LHCRT) is a charitable trust with over 1,700 members, established in 1990. Their objective relevant to HS2 is to restore to navigation a 7-mile length of canal between Ogley Junction in Brownhills and Huddlesford Junction, east of Lichfield on the Coventry Canal. This section, opened in the 1790s and closed in the 1950s, is known now as the Lichfield Canal, but formerly as the Ogley Locks section of the Wyrley and Essington Canal.

The route (largely using the former line of the canal) lies wholly within Lichfield District, whose Council is in the process of safeguarding the route under the LDF (Local Development Framework) procedure. The Council support the LHCRT project for the environmental and other benefits it will bring to Lichfield. The route is also protected under government planning guidance as a canal in process of restoration

The proposed route for HS2 is shown to cross the route at GR 147092 (mileage 182+400 on the HS2 plans). At this point the restored canal will follow its original line, under a road overbridge on Cappers Lane which runs from Lichfield to Whittington. This was originally a “hump back” bridge, removed by Staffordshire County Council (SCC) highways department in the 1960s and replaced by level road. In 2006 a new bridge, funded through the Trust, was constructed by SCC to enable boats to again pass underneath Cappers Lane on restoration.

It is not for us as a charity whose objectives are unrelated to the railway project to express views on the specific questions asked in the consultation, although some of our individual members may do so elsewhere. Our concern is that HS2, if built, does not adversely affect the canal route. There are two things on which we seek assurances: that the line will be high enough that road vehicles will be able to pass underneath it without alteration to the existing bridge over the canal line; and that no support pillars or other works for the HS2 viaduct proposed at this point will, once completed, interfere with the canal itself, the towpath, or access to the canal from Cappers Lane.

Our scrutiny of the plans, and a conversation with John Castle, senior route engineer for HS2 Ltd at the “roadshow” in Lichfield Guildhall on 8 June this year, suggest that there should not be a problem, but at this stage we cannot be certain. We understand that, if the government decide to go ahead with this project, more detailed design work will proceed, with a further consultation on this is a couple of years’ time. We therefore ask that, if this happens, the canal restoration needs be taken into account. We would be happy to discuss these with HS2 Ltd in more detail at the appropriate time.

9. Map 30 –Trent and Mersey Canal twice either side of Woodend Lock 20/Bridge 53.

The Trent & Mersey Canal is a historic waterway and a valuable amenity and recreational corridor, providing leisure boating, walking, angling, cycling and nature conservation benefits to the area. In this location it is in a designated Conservation Area in recognition of its heritage and amenity value therefore any crossing of the waterway with need to be sympathetic to this designation and at a height above the water line suitable for navigation .

10. Map 33 (i) – GU Birmingham and Warwick Junction immediately north of bridge 108, possibly using an existing railway structure or an extension to it. [Saltley Viaduct (B4144)/Dorset Road]

We recommend that a brick faced bridge is used if possible to soften the impact.

11. Map 33 (ii) – BCN Digbeth Branch by Viaduct over Ashted Bottom Lock

There is a major crossing at Curzon Street, We are concerned that if the road has to be diverted towards Ashted Bottom Lock it may cover the tail of the lock meaning that there would not be enough headroom for lock gate operation. Lock would have to be moved back resulting in a very short pound and associated water supply issues for the navigation – these will probably need to be remedied by back pumping at HS2 cost.

If the approach route is altered to ease the approach curve for higher speed departure (i.e. avoiding the curve problems at St Pancras) it will be a bigger encroachment towards the tail of the locks.

**IWA 22 July 2011.**