

# HS2 Update - July 2017

Transport Minister Chris Grayling has recently confirmed the decision made by the Government not to adopt the route proposed in the November 2016 consultation, stating that HS2 will not adopt the route proposed in November 2016 to the east of Measham in Leicestershire, but instead to confirm a revised version of the 2013 route to the west of Measham which follows the A42 transport corridor.

This means that the confirmed route for Phase 2b as it passes Austrey reverts to the original line proposed in 2013 and by doing so places it closer to the M42 and further away from the village.

Craig Tracey, North Warwickshire's Member of Parliament, has long campaigned and voted against the project and has described it as very positive news for residents in the village: "HS2's announcement moves the track back away from the village of Austrey. When the proposals were announced last year I held HS2 to account in Parliament, the move was done by stealth despite reassurances given to local people. I instantly met with the Transport Secretary and HS2 to express my anger and disappointment, but I am glad that they have listened and today's track move is a welcome one. This means that the line will not be directly on the village boundary"

This has to be good news for villagers, who along with Austrey Parish Council, Austrey Residents' Association, local Action Groups Warwickshire Borough Council, Warwickshire County Council and Craig Tracey, our local MP, have fought the proposal to bring the route 150 to 200 metres closer to the village, with all the implications for increased sound and sight pollution.

This will not now happen!

Looking ahead, construction of Phase 2b is expected to start in 2023, some six years from now, and ready for the railway to begin operations by 2033. HS2 states that the next stage of work will develop the design in more detail, addressing some of the issues already raised regarding specific local impacts, such as noise.

Nevertheless, it will now become increasingly important to secure the best sight and sound mitigation that we can for the village in order to ensure that we protect our rural environment. We must continue to ensure that our voice is heard in the future and that we continue to influence the decisions that will be made about the line as it passes Austrey. As HS2 progresses the design in more detail it will become increasingly important that we all work together to make certain that as a village we

get the very best deal.

We also need to make certain that the construction stage has a minimum impact on the village and that we work with HS2 to limit any increase in heavy traffic, dust, noise, disruption to travel and general upheaval within the village to the bare minimum: otherwise the village may well be blighted by all or some of these for several years while construction takes place.

In the meanwhile the discretionary schemes already available for other phases of the project are now in place for those living along the 2b route. This decision has taken into account the feedback from the recent consultation and obviously the efforts of all those who have returned their questionnaires to HS2 are having an effect on decisions now being made. HS2 will be writing separately to those involved if you are now part of the confirmed Rural Support Zone or if your eligibility for statutory compensation has changed since the announcement of the preferred route in November 2016.

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