

# **Council Meeting - 24 February 2011**

## **Notice of Motion – High Speed 2**

### **Introduction**

The following notice has been submitted from Councillors I. Shires and P. Hughes:

*'The Council welcomes the announcement of the new High Speed Rail link (HS2) from London to include a "Y" shaped network providing links via the Midlands to the North West and North East.*

*Council notes the "Y" option has been chosen, which means that two High Speed lines will branch out north of Birmingham at Lichfield with a line towards Sheffield, Leeds and the East Coast Mainline, and a line towards Manchester and the West Coast Mainline.*

*Council also notes the "Y" link will mean the great majority of the British population will have direct access to the High Speed network including Walsall and the Black Country*

*To ensure that Walsall gains maximum benefit it is essential that the local network feeding into HS2 includes train stations at Willenhall, Bloxwich and Aldridge.*

*Council resolves to write to our three MPs asking that they support HS2 in Parliament and the Chief Executive writes to the Transport Secretary giving this Council's support to HS2.'*

### **Background Information**

#### **1. High Speed 2**

HS2 phase one will link Birmingham with London via high speed, high capacity trains travelling at around 220mph. It is planned to be delivered by 2025. A preferred route had been set out by the Labour government and the HS2 Company, however when the coalition government took control they set about re-examining the route and asked HS2 company to look at a revised route.

#### **2. Current Position**

On 20<sup>th</sup> December 2010 the Coalition Government published their preferred route which will be consulted on in 2011. This route has changed from the original preferred route with slight alterations to alleviate environmental concerns. The new official proposals are for a 'Y' shaped network with high speed lines branching from the original London to Birmingham phase to Manchester and Leeds. This network was previously an option but is now the coalition governments preferred route which will go to consultation. This route will allow access from the Midlands to the North West and North East as well as London.

The main direct change in the midlands is that the line has moved further from Lichfield to reduce the blight on the city.

There are two major changes from the previous governments HS2 plans which could affect Walsall indirectly. They are the link to Heathrow via a spur or loop which could potentially lead to direct services from both Birmingham stations, and linking HS2 with HS1 giving the potential for services to the continent from both Birmingham Stations. This will allow Walsall's residents to get on a train to the continent, after a 23 minute train journey from Walsall Town Centre.

With regard to international services coming to Birmingham the HS2 report to government (<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/rail/pi/highspeedrail/proposedroute/route/pdf/route.pdf>) states:

*'We have developed a revised proposal for Old Oak Common station to allow international services, in line with our recommendation that it could act as a "gathering- point" for HS2 passengers from the West Midlands and beyond, and passengers from West London, to join international services...'*

*'We have not developed revised proposals for Birmingham International or Fazeley Street to incorporate international facilities. The consultation could invite views on whether international facilities should be provided at these locations; or it could include specific proposals. What approach do you wish to take to international stations for consultation?'*

This highlights the need to take a full and active part in the consultation to support international services coming to Birmingham rather than having to change at Oak Common.

Another recommendation to note is confirmation for the Rolling Stock Maintenance Depot to be at Washwood Heath on the spur into Birmingham city centre. This will create jobs in the region.

The new stations will be at Birmingham City Centre and Birmingham Airport/NEC. Walsall currently only has direct conventional rail access to Birmingham City Centre. To maximise the potential Benefits to Walsall of high speed 2 the Council needs to work with partners and the DfT to improve these links and rail access to Walsall in general including current work on stations at Aldridge and Willenhall and reinstating the Stourbridge – Walsall – Lichfield rail line to provide rail access to Pelsall and Brownhills. The majority of these improvements need to be in place by the time HS2 is active to reap full benefits from the line.

### **3. Indicative Timetable**

Spring 2011 - Public consultation by DfT on HS2 phase one – Birmingham to London

Later in current Parliament - Public consultation by DfT on HS2 phase two – Birmingham to Leeds/Manchester

2017 - Proposed Construction Start date for phase one

2025 - Proposed Completion of Phase one

#### 4. Further Information

More detailed information and plans can be found on the Department for Transport website:  
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/rail/pi/highspeedrail/proposedroute/>

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tim Johnson', followed by a vertical line and a period.

Tim Johnson  
Executive Director

16 February 2011