

Hints & Area Short Tunnel Mitigation Proposal 25 June 2013
(Drayton Bassett, Hints and Weeford Community Forum CF 21)

_ My name is Ann Outen, I am Vice Chair of Hints with Canwell Parish Council and I represent the community of Hints

“Around the course of the Black Brook at Hints & Weeford , the relatively level and undulating ground gives way to a series of steeply sided rolling hills and interlocking valleys ,creating a sense of remoteness and tranquillity , punctuated by a series of prominent hill tops.” Draft ES CF21 2.3.6

Not my words but taken from the Draft ES .

“ The EIA process is iterative , which is likely to enable further refinement of the scheme , **with the objective of avoiding or reducing significant adverse environmental effects**” (EIA Scope & Methodology Report Sept 2012) so I welcome the opportunity to meet you and seek your support in achieving effective mitigation for our area which so far has not been possible either through Community Forums, bi laterals or even a meeting with Prof McNaughton ,proposing the short tunnel option , in July 2012 ----- synopsis handout Prof McNaughton

This short tunnel option is backed by Christopher Pincher MP and by Staffordshire County Council . It would be approx 800M long and Dean Sargeant from Staffordshire CC will outline the technical side of this.

Mitigation is requested for 2 reasons

1.To prevent the serious damage to the **environment** & to a protected and sensitive landscape which we ,as locally elected Parish Councillors & the government have a “**duty of care**” to conserve . (see appendix 1)

2.To reduce the “ major adverse effect “ in terms of noise and visual impact on all **the residents of Hints.**(app2)

(The mitigation proposal is supported by attached appendices –all of which are on record in the Draft ES CF21 or other HS2 Ltd documents , DfT reports & relevant correspondence)

1.Environment

1. Because of the proposed line of the track through the ridge of an escarpment , 2 separate **Ancient Woodlands** ,– Roundhill Wood and Rookery Wood (SBIs and designated cultural heritage assets)will suffer significant and permanent damage .— these 2 woods are described in the draft ES (May 2013) as “irreplaceable” -- & also described as such by Philip Hammond (Lichfield October 2010) The percentages of loss in the draft ES are conservative and the likelihood is that certainly the whole of Rookery Wood will be removed as what will remain lies on sloping land above the track.(appendix 3)

2. Hints is within a **Conservation Area** & the visual aspect of the protected landscape forms part of the policy document , published by Lichfield District Council . It is described as “ an enclosed and tranquil landscape .” in the Draft ES CF21 (appendix 4)

3.**The protected and sensitive landscape** designation by Staffordshire County Council(Sandstone and Heaths LCA) specifically states that ANY development should preserve its character & blend unobtrusively into the landscape However the draft ES states that the “magnitude of change” caused both by construction & operation will be “ high” (appendix 5)

MAPS 4 and 5 and Conservation Area on back

4. **Several BAPS and SBIS will** be permanently affected including bat roosts , foraging routes , feeding grounds ,& severance of continuity associated with the Ancient Woodlands and the “ likely residual effects ...in combination may be significant.” Draft ES CF21([appendix 6](#))

“ Major adverse effect” on the community of Hints

1.The small rural community of Hints (approx 200 people) is situated on one side of a hill directly opposite & overlooking the escarpment on the top of which are the 2 Ancient Woodlands.

2. The proposed route is within an open cutting through the top of this escarpment creating serious visual blight on the village in view of the permanent and damaging change in the protected & sensitive landscape .([appendix 7](#)) [PHOTOS 1.2 3](#)

3. The history of mitigation proposals in this area has now resulted in a compromised alignment which is even more damaging to Hints than was first proposed in March 2010 [Appendices 8, 9 and 10](#)) [Reports on the DFT website Sept 2010, November 2010 and December 2010 to be read out .](#)

4. The proposed rail line is routed through the top of the escarpment & the residents are located on the opposite hill. The topography of the area creates an amphitheatre effect which from experience is known to magnify noise. Both the construction and operation of HS2 will create a “major adverse effect” in terms of **noise blight** . We suggest that this situation is unique to Hints , as many other affected villages are level with the proposed track.

5. As highlighted in the history of mitigation reports, there are 3 compromised factors – **1.** A reduction in the design speed to 350 KPH **2.** additional significant wheel to rail screech due to the increased curvature of the track and **3.** 200 to 300 % increase in night time maintenance with attendant noise and light pollution (all facts confirmed by Prof McNaughton – In County Hall Stafford , April 2011 & also at a meeting with Community reps at HS2 ltd offices in July 2012 .)

6. Although the adverse visual impact is described , there is no reference at all in the Draft ES of these design effects on the **noise blight** on Hints .

Our short tunnel proposal would greatly reduce this impact both on the environment and on the residents of Hints which Dean Sargeant Msc.IEng MICE HS2 (HS2 Project Manager, Staffordshire County Council)will explain more fully .([appendix 11](#)).

[Our hope is that, in highlighting the combination of the major& damaging environmental and social effects, we can expect a reappraisal of the mitigation in the Hints area and that our short tunnel proposal will be approved & adopted into the scheme.](#)

Ann Outen (Vice Chair,Hints with Canwell Parish Council and Hints and Area against HS2 Action Group) 25 June 2013