

High Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester)

Supplementary Environmental Statement 1 and Additional Provision 1 Environmental Statement

Volume 5: Appendix EC-001-00000

Ecology and biodiversity

Ecological baseline data - designated sites

MA01: Hough to Walley's Green

MA02: Wimboldsley to Lostock Gralam

MA03: Pickmere to Agden and Hulseheath

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Department for Transport

High Speed Two (HS2) Limited has been tasked by the Department for Transport (DfT) with managing the delivery of a new national high speed rail network. It is a non-departmental public body wholly owned by the DfT.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Structure of this appendix

- 1.1.1 This report is an appendix to the ecology and biodiversity assessment which forms part of Volume 5 of the Supplementary Environmental Statement 1 (SES1) and Additional Provision 1 Environmental Statement (AP1 ES). This report covers the following community areas (CA):
- Hough to Walley's Green (MA01);
 - Wimboldsley to Lostock Gralam (MA02); and
 - Pickmere to Agden and Hulseheath (MA03).
- 1.1.2 This report provides details of changes to nature conservation site designations (new site designations, changes to existing site designations, and/or changes to existing site designations extents) since the production of the High Speed Two (HS2) High Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester) Environmental Statement (ES) published in 2022 (the main ES)¹.
- 1.1.3 This report should be read in conjunction with the main ES Ecological baseline data – designated sites report (see main ES Volume 5, Appendix: EC-001-00001).
- 1.1.4 Maps relevant to this appendix are contained in the SES1 and AP1 ES Volume 5 Ecology and biodiversity Map Book, Map Series EC-01.
- 1.1.5 In order to differentiate between the original scheme and the subsequent changes, the following terms are used:
- ‘the original scheme’ – the Bill scheme submitted to Parliament in January 2022, which was assessed in the main ES;
 - ‘the SES1 scheme’ – the original scheme with the changes described in SES1 that are within the existing powers of the Bill; and
 - ‘the AP1 revised scheme’ – the original scheme as amended by the SES1 changes and AP1 amendments.

¹ High Speed Two Ltd (2022), High Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester), *Environmental Statement*. Available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-phase2b-crewe-manchester-environmental-statement>.

1.2 Methodology, assumptions and limitations

- 1.2.1 The assessment scope, key assumptions and limitations are as set out in the main ES Environmental Impact Assessment Scope and Methodology Report (SMR)².
- 1.2.2 Additional data on designated sites of nature conservation importance was obtained to inform the SES1 and AP1 ES. Data was sought from Natural England with respect to statutory designated sites and Cheshire Wildlife Trust with respect to non-statutory Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). It was reviewed against the AP1 revised scheme to identify newly designated sites, changes in the reason for designation and/or revision to the importance of site, and changes in site boundaries and extent, since the production of the main ES.
- 1.2.3 Changes to designated sites of nature conservation importance meeting the following criteria are presented in this report:
- all statutory designated sites within a 500m buffer of the land required for the AP1 revised scheme;
 - any other statutory designated sites which are considered potentially subject to significant effects;
 - all non-statutory designated sites within or adjacent to the land required for the AP1 revised scheme; and
 - any other non-statutory designated sites which are considered potentially subject to significant effects.
- 1.2.4 The updated dataset was also reviewed in relation to the AP1 revised scheme to identify designated sites relevant to the SES1 and AP1 ES that were not reported in the main ES. Where sites were identified, for example as a result of AP1 amendments meaning that sites are now within the buffers set out above, they are presented in this report.

1.3 Reporting to inform Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 1.3.1 Assessment of the effects upon internationally important sites was undertaken to inform the main ES. Further assessment to inform the SES1 and AP1 ES has been undertaken for the following sites:

² High Speed Two Ltd (2022), High Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester), *Environmental Statement, Environmental Impact Assessment Scope and Methodology Report*, Volume 5, Appendix: CT-001-00001. Available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-phase2b-crewe-manchester-environmental-statement>.

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Ecology and biodiversity

MA01, MA02 and MA03

Ecological baseline data – designated sites

- see Document to inform a Habitats Regulations Assessments for the Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 2 Ramsar site (Oak Mere) and Oak Mere Special Area of Conservation (SES1 and AP1 ES Volume 5, Appendix: EC-016-00001);
- see Document to inform a Habitats Regulations Assessment for the Rostherne Mere Ramsar site and Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 1 Ramsar site (SES1 and AP1 ES Volume 5, Appendix: EC-016-00003);
- see Document to inform a Habitats Regulations Assessment for the Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 3 Ramsar site (Oakhanger Moss) (SES1 and AP1 ES Volume 5, Appendix: EC-016-00006); and
- see Document to inform a Habitats Regulations Assessment for the Midland Meres and Mosses Phase 1 Ramsar site and the West Midland Mosses Special Area of Conservation (Wybunbury Moss) (SES1 and AP1 ES Volume 5, Appendix: EC-016-00009).

1.3.2 The further assessments take account of changes to traffic modelling and updated air quality modelling reflecting differences between the AP1 revised scheme and the original scheme.

2 Baseline

- 2.1.1 The changes to designations since the production of the main ES are described in Table 1. As noted in Section 1.2 above, all relate to changes in LWS in Cheshire identified through data provided by Cheshire Wildlife Trust. No relevant changes to statutory designated sites were identified.
- 2.1.2 One LWS is now relevant to the AP1 revised scheme that was not previously reported in the main ES. Wincham Brook Valley and Mill Wood LWS is now 44m from additional land permanently required for modifications to A530 Griffiths Road and A559 Manchester Road junction (AP1-002-013).
- 2.1.3 No baseline updates are applicable to MA01 or MA03.

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Ecology and biodiversity

MA01, MA02 and MA03

Ecological baseline data – designated sites

Table 1: Changes to non-statutory designated sites since the production of the main ES

Site name and designation	CA	Ordnance Survey (OS) grid reference	Site description	Change in designation/ reason for inclusion	Distance from the AP1 revised scheme (m) and orientation	Relevant to AP1 amendments (Y/N)
Shropshire Union Canal (Middlewich Branch) LWS	MA01	SJ680630	Section of the canal starting at Bridge 16 (Brook House Farm Bridge, Minshull Vernon) and stretching 570m north towards Bridge 17. The current designation includes only part of the previously designated species-rich grassland that stretched along a sizeable section of the canal banks.	Change to designation boundary to include only the channel located within Polestead Wood.	469m west	N
Heath Farm Marshy Grassland LWS	MA01	SJ723509	A mosaic of semi-improved neutral grassland, marshy grassland and ponds in proximity. Marshy grassland covers the majority of the site with abundant rushes (<i>Juncus</i> sp.) and wetland species including greater bird's-foot trefoil (<i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>), water mint (<i>Mentha aquatica</i>) and lesser spearwort (<i>Ranunculus flammula</i>). The site supports a number of breeding butterfly and dragonfly species as well as grass snake (<i>Natrix natrix</i>).	Newly designated.	229m south	N
River Dane, Bostock LWS	MA02	SJ685679	Stretch of the River Dane from Middlewich to Bostock Green surrounded by wet woodland, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, tall ruderal vegetation, scrub and semi-improved grassland. Veteran crack willows (<i>Salix fragilis</i>) are present, with veteran oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>) and ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>) trees also present within woodland areas. Woodland ground flora includes locally scarce toothwort (<i>Lathraea squamaria</i>) and ancient woodland indicator species.	Extension to existing designation to include further channel to the south-east of the site and redraw the boundary near to Bull's Wood.	Within	N
Greenhays Farm Pasture and Woodlands LWS	MA02	SJ689671	The woodland corridor and fields located on the Keuper marl terraces of the River Weaver. Habitats present include wet woodland containing veteran trees, neutral grassland, semi-improved grassland and species-rich	Extension to existing designation to include a field boundary to the north-west of the site and	Adjacent	N

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MA01, MA02 and MA03

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Site name and designation	CA	Ordnance Survey (OS) grid reference	Site description	Change in designation/ reason for inclusion	Distance from the AP1 revised scheme (m) and orientation	Relevant to AP1 amendments (Y/N)
			hedgerows.	change to redraw the northern boundary.		
Veteran Ash Tree, Bank Hall Farm LWS	MA02	SJ687676	A mature veteran ash with a diameter of 345cm.	Newly designated.	29m south-east	N
Bank Hall Farm Flush LWS	MA02	SJ684677	Site comprising semi-improved neutral grassland with scattered trees and scrub. The site lies on a slope which contains several gullies, the largest of which forms part of a flush that runs through the centre of the site and supports reed sweet grass (<i>Glyceria maxima</i>), brooklime (<i>Veronica beccabunga</i>) and rushes.	Newly designated.	Within	N
Wincham Brook Valley and Mill Wood LWS	MA02	SJ684749	Site comprising a complex of habitats in the valley of the Wincham Brook, including neutral grassland, swamp, woodland and scrub and running water. To the east of Wincham Bridge, east of the A559, Wincham Brook supports river water-crowfoot (<i>Ranunculus fluitans</i>).	The LWS is now relevant due to AP1 amendment AP1-002-013.	44m north	Y

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