

**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**15 FEBRUARY 2016**

1. **HIGH SPEED RAIL 2 UPDATE**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

THAT the Authority note the update report of Peter Holland, the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor (CFRA), into the impact of the proposed High Speed Rail 2 (HS2) on the West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) site.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report provides the latest update on HS2 and its impacts upon the WMFS Headquarters site.

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 The proposed HS2 route comes in close proximity and has a very direct and highly visual impact upon the Headquarters and Safeside buildings and associated car parking facilities. The proposed rail line would run on top of the existing viaduct gantries to the rear of the Headquarters site on a table top platform at approximately 17m high.

3.2 An assessment of the impact of the proposed HS2 project on Fire Control has been completed by the CFRA and specifically concluded that there is not enough evidence to suggest that Fire Control should be relocated during the HS2 construction works. The report looked at noise levels, vibration, dust, height of hoardings, vehicle traffic, utilities being struck, site security and hazards to buildings by construction vehicles.

- 3.3 The CFRA has made further suggestions for HS2 to initiate independent noise verification assessments with the following two possible outcomes:-
- a) The existing building can be insulated to a satisfactory level.
  - b) Options for the movement of the control facility during construction should be more fully set out.
- 3.4 It should be noted that the CFRA report overall reflects that he believes all of WMFS concerns can be mitigated against HS2 and the control room should remain at Vauxhall Road as indicated in his summary:
- 'For the avoidance of doubt, my overall recommendation is that it is not reasonably required to relocate the Fire Control suite for operational reasons during the construction of the works affecting the property'.*
- 3.5 WMFS and HS2 are working together to agree a framework to work within. This framework will provide assurances to WMFS on all concerns, i.e. the works, car parking, security, noise, vibration, traffic, access to site etc.
- 3.6 Given the current position, it is not considered appropriate to pursue the option of going to Select Committee so long as all clarification and assurances sought by WMFS from HS2 are contained within the proposed 'working together agreement'. The clarification and assurances needed to provide reassurance against each concern to satisfy WMFS that the risk of not being able to discharge its statutory duties, have been mitigated.
- 3.7 HS2 are to carry out ground investigations at Headquarters consisting of five deep trial bore holes, one to the rear of Safeside, one to the rear of Headquarters and three within the lower car park off St James's Place.
- 3.8 A preliminary ground penetrating radar survey was undertaken by HS2 in December 2015 to establish service locations prior to bore holes being drilled. Bore hole works took place in January/early February 2016.
- 3.9 WMFS have been advised by HS2 that Royal assent for the HS2 project is being sought sometime during the latter half of 2016.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

No equality impact assessment has been carried out or required in the preparation of this report

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Sandwell Legal, Veale Wasbrough Vizards and Savills are advising WMFS on HS2 related matters.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Costs are being incurred due to the ongoing legal advice and meetings attended with HS2. However, these costs are recoverable from HS2 under the compensation code (unless associated with petitioning).

7. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

Environmental Impact Assessments were carried out by HS2 and are contained within their documents online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/hs2-phase-one-environmental-impact-assessment-consultation>.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Peter Holland (CFRA) - Impacts on the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Service Fire Control Centre from HS2 Construction Works – June 2015

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