

Realignment of the route at junction 10 of the M42, North Warwickshire

The proposed change involves replacing the cut and cover tunnel and jacked box structure under junction 10 of the M42 with a 2km twin bored tunnel.

The proposed scheme in this area impacts slightly upon part of Kettle Brook Local Nature Reserve (LNR), and also a small part of Kettle Brook Biodiversity Alert Site (BAS).

The proposed new design, shown on drawing 2DE02-AC1-CV-DPP-L001-000002, indicates a tunnel portal on the edge of the Staffordshire- Warwickshire border, with a deeper cutting passing through our area of interest. A wider embankment is shown, as well as within the LNR a re-shaped balancing pond, a planted landscaping bund and a shorter section of access road off Centurion Way through some existing scrub/ woodland within the Local Wildlife Site.

The current habitats in this part of the LNR/ BAS are not as diverse or high value as they could be, and the proposed design of the scheme appears to include adequate area for mitigation in this location. There are opportunities for the landscape and habitat creation to enhance the area in the long term if designed well.

The LNR already contains a lot of woodland, so new tree planting should be minimised and management of existing trees should be a priority. Creation of diverse neutral/ damp grassland and wetland habitats should be a focus, as well as restoring sections of the Kettle Brook to a more natural channel with more marginal wetland habitats and backwaters to improve filtration of water which suffers from run-off from the motorway.

As the area is well used by the public, visual amenity and access issues need to be integrated into the design. Hard infrastructure should be minimised and access tracks should be reinforced grass as far as possible. The industrial estate Centurion Park is largely cut off from LNR, with a fenced boundary meaning access for employees is limited. There are opportunities to link the current roads into the LNR via short paths.

The landscaped mound may not be required for screening as the homes in this areas are already screened by trees. However if there is a need to use spoil from the tunnel and balancing pond, this could be more creatively used in terms of landforms, to benefit wildlife (microhabitats) and provide interesting features for people and children to use.

Overall we have no objection to the proposed design refinement, and would urge that HS2 Ltd continue to work with ourselves and Tamworth Borough Council to ensure detailed designs maximise habitat value for wildlife as well as improving access and amenity for local people living and working here.