

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Draft Scope and Methodology report

This was published for consultation on 4 April 2012. The consultation will be open for a period of 8 weeks, running to 30 May 2012. The Government are specifically seeking responses from relevant organisations such as the County Council, but will also accept comments from the wider public. It is intended that the finalised report will be ready to view online in summer 2012.

What is the report?

It is a technical document whose purpose is to define those environmental topics that should be assessed as part of the EIA, the methods that are to be used and the scope of the EIA over space and time. The Scope and Methodology report is intended to establish the overall approaches that should be taken during the Environmental Impact Assessment of the HS2 project. So it is saying: “these are the impacts we will measure; this is how we will measure them; and we will consider them over a certain area and over a certain timeframe.” The report will set out what standards the work will be done to, or where there is no established standard, justify the approach taken.

What is being consulted on?

The Government is seeking views on:

- what impacts should and should not be included in the assessment
- how information should be collected; and
- the method and criteria that should be used for analysing impacts.

What impacts will it examine?

The report looks at fourteen types of impact – included among these are: Air Quality; Climate; Cultural Heritage; Ecology; Landscape; Sound and Vibration; Traffic and Transport; Waste; and Water Resources and Flood Risk Assessment.

The report takes as its starting point the responses received from the Appraisal of Sustainability. It includes looking at: effects during construction; effects during operation; and cumulative effects (with other schemes proposed in the vicinity, for example, East West Rail).

Why does it matter?

The results of the work will inform the EIA, which will enable the preparation of an Environmental Statement (ES). The ES will describe the scheme, setting out the likely significant effects the HS2 project may have on the environment, and

proposals to avoid, reduce or remedy significant adverse effects that may be identified. It is the ES that will be submitted to Parliament along with the hybrid bill and considered alongside the draft legislation in order to authorise Phase 1 of HS2. It is therefore important that the ES is a sound representation of the issues, impacts and mitigations proposed, and it will rely on the work of the EIA to demonstrate this.

What other opportunities are there to influence this work?

HS2 has set up community forums along the line to inform the public about potential significant effects, listen to what people want in their community and discuss possible solutions that might avoid, reduce or remedy impacts. This process will continue into Spring 2013.

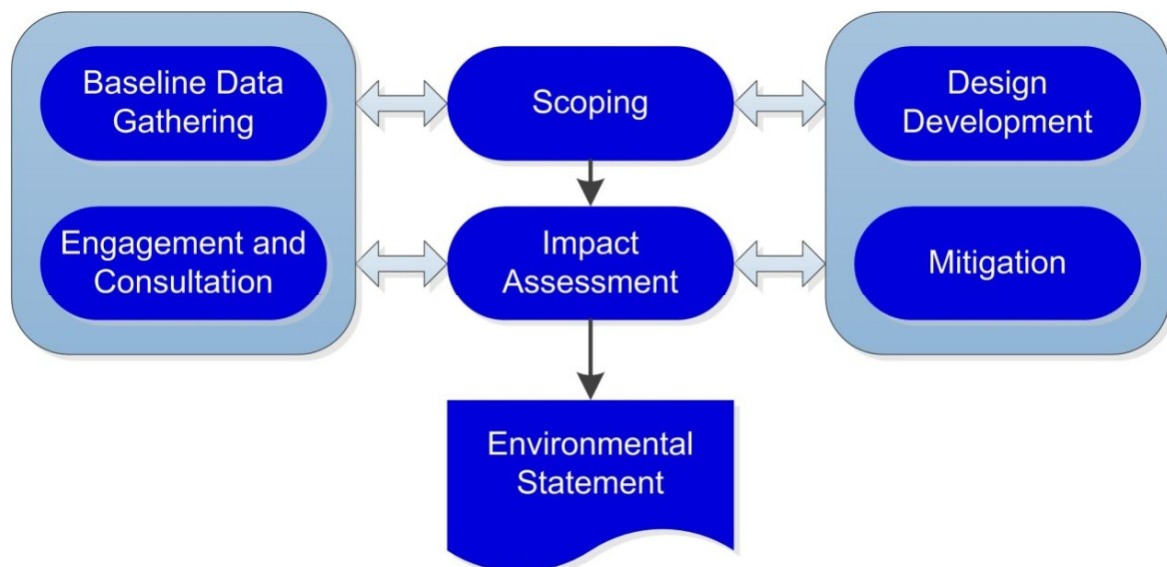
During Spring and Summer 2013, the Government will consult on the Draft Environmental Statement for Phase 1.

How does this fit in the overall programme?

The Government expects to deposit a hybrid bill in Parliament by the end of 2013. If passed, it becomes an Act of Parliament conferring powers to build the railway line and thereafter to operate and maintain it.

Further information on the EIA methodology (supplementary)

The EIA will comprise a number of related activities, as shown below:



The EIA will need to establish current baseline conditions. These will vary according to what is being measured (examples being landscape assessment; transport

modelling; ecological surveys). It will project future baseline conditions; and consider the impacts of two scenarios on these:

- The effects of the proposed scheme at various times;
- The effects of the proposed scheme in addition to other schemes (consented or under construction) to identify cumulative impacts.

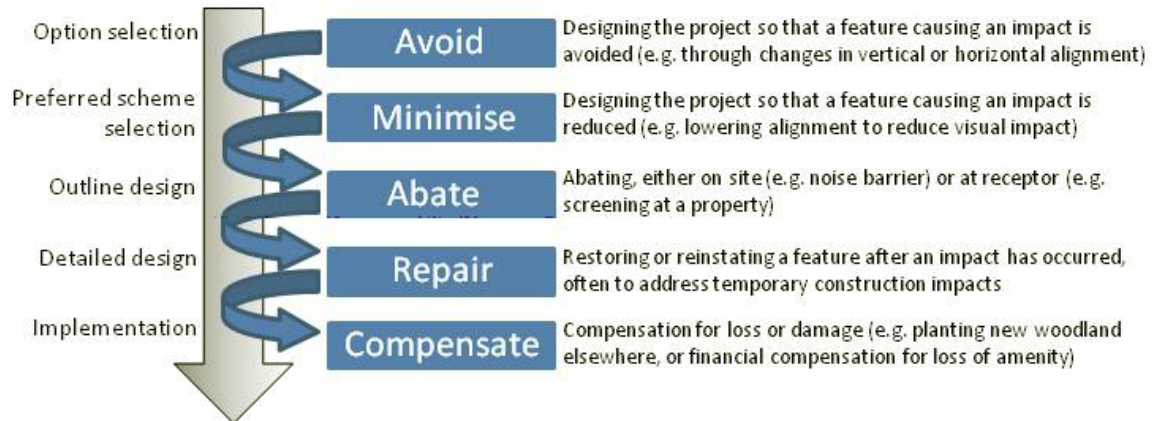
Temporal scope will consider scenarios during the construction phase (2017-2026); and as the line runs to maximum capacity, both before and after the opening of Phase 2.

Geographic scope will vary according to the area over which changes to the environment are likely to occur for different impacts.

Technical scope – the environmental topics proposed for inclusion are as follows:

- Air quality;
- Agriculture and soils;
- Climate;
- Community;
- Cultural heritage;
- Ecology;
- Electromagnetic interference;
- Land quality;
- Landscape, townscape and visual assessment;
- Socio-economics;
- Sound and vibration;
- Traffic and transport;
- Waste and material resources; and
- Water resources and flood risk assessment (this includes hydrology).

The following hierarchy will be used to consider mitigation measures:



Key outputs will be:

- Environmental Design Aims
- Mitigation report – to demonstrate mitigation committed to
- Code of Construction Practice, including the use of Environmental Management Plans

Significant predicted effects are defined as:

- Major, moderate or minor; and
- Beneficial, negligible, adverse, or no impact