

Oakthorpe and the Impacts of HS2

Introduction

Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe & Acresford Parish Council has been asked by the Secretary of State for Transport to give our views on a proposal to change the route of HS2. Six different areas of impact have been set out and we will seek to answer these as fully as we can in the time that we have available. They are:

- The Measham Wharf Development
- The local environment
- Commercial property
- The community of Oakthorpe
- A longer realignment of the A42 past the village
- Increased costs

We have been given a very short deadline to compose this response so must state that the information we have gathered together is **to the best of our knowledge in the time available**.

The Measham Wharf Development:

We are aware that the current plans for the Wharf have been blighted by the route of HS2 that was announced in July 2017. So far, we have had very little direct communications with the Measham Land Company about their plans, but a community meeting is to be scheduled during September as we need to be able to take account of our parishioners' views.

We understand that the route change is being referred to as "Option 4" and will move the line further westwards around Measham to clear the proposed site for future development. Unfortunately, we have very little information to hand about the scheme, but we believe that this is for a substantial number of houses (over 400) and the construction of the Ashby Canal wharf in Measham.

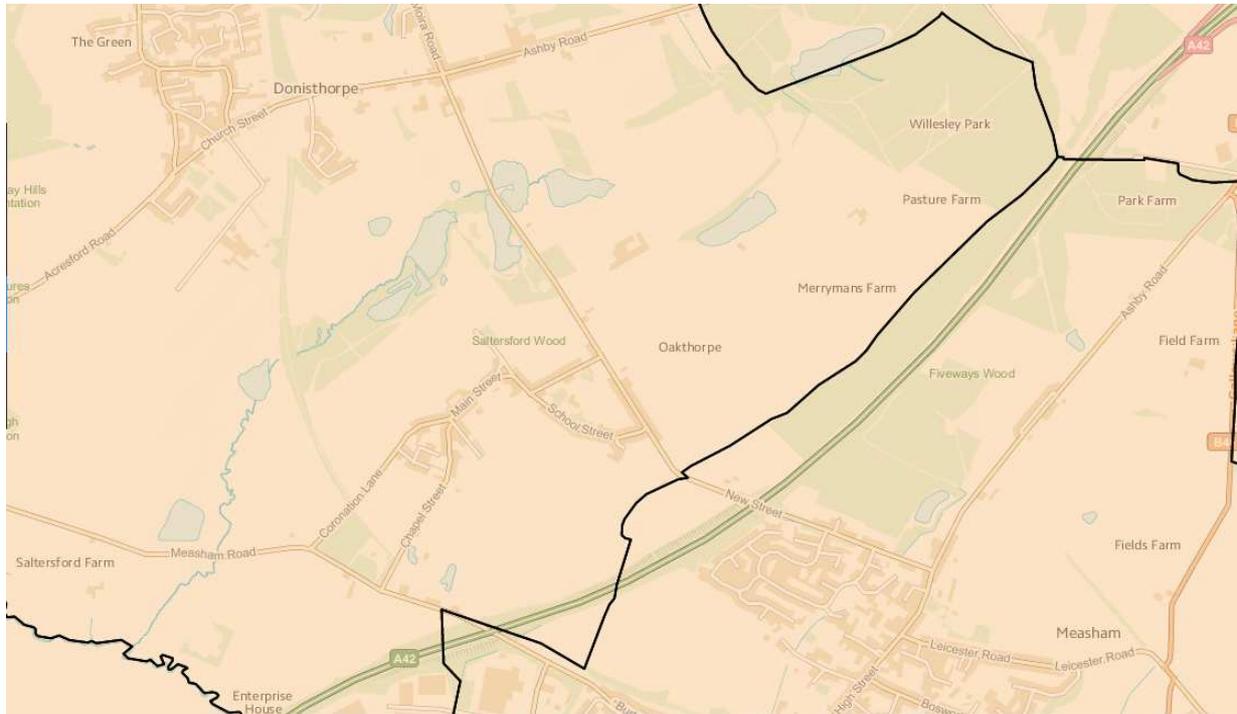
We are aware that this will bring much needed housing to Measham and an opportunity for regeneration through the restoration and rebuild of the Ashby Canal, but from the point of view of our own parish, we feel that we may pay a heavy price as the proposed amendment of the line clears the development site but pushes HS2 and the M42 very close to our village.

The local environment:

Much of our parish is rural and the amended route (and realignment of the M42) will pass through farmland. We note that land belonging to Merrymans Farm and Pasture Farm may be adversely affected. This may involve loss of land due to compulsory land purchase for the railway and/or the road, and possible land severance. These could cause considerable inconvenience to landowners. Agricultural land will also be subject to particulate contamination during the construction period.

We also note that the railway and/or M42 realignment could affect the eastern end of Fiveways Wood and Willesley Park which is near the boundary of the parish as it runs towards Ashby. While we are aware that HS2 will undertake to replant wooded areas which are affected, there will be an inevitable loss of older trees.

The section of parish map below shows green/wooded areas, some of which are not shown on Measham Land Company's own maps. It also shows the current route of the M42, which will be realigned under Option 4.



Oakthorpe was formerly a colliery village and in the 1980s there were several underground fires which caused damage to residential properties, with some having to be demolished. While these did not occur in the direct course of HS2 or the M42, we would wish to raise concerns about the need for full land surveys before any formal decision to pursue Option 4 is taken.

The new route and realigned M42 will cross Measham Road and New Street very close to the village and we will need to be reassured that both of these roads would not be subject to restricted access at the same time, as there would be no access to Measham for essential service such as access to GP surgeries, dentists and shopping. We are assuming that a bridge crossing will be required over New Street and this will inevitably cause disruption on the main street into the village.

Oakthorpe Primary School & Oakthorpe play area will be only a few hundred yards from the road and rail corridor, and we are concerned about disruption from noise during the construction period and afterwards, and also risks to children from dust and particulate contamination.

Commercial property:

There are only a handful of commercial properties in Oakthorpe, but these are all vital to our community. In the event of the uptake of Option 4, access to these must be appropriately maintained. We are particularly concerned about the Village Stores and Winfields Outdoors as they will be very close to the route of the realigned M42. At the moment we cannot tell whether either of these businesses

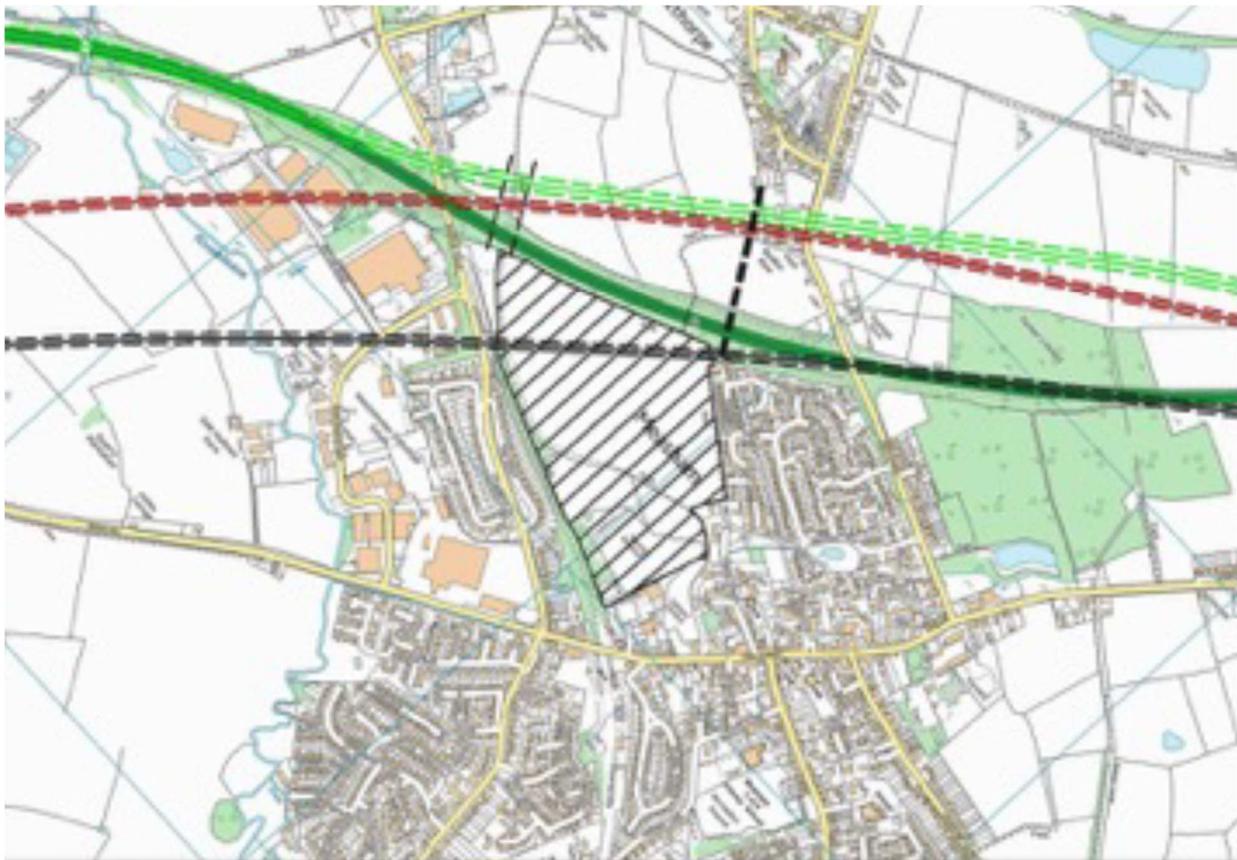
would fall into either the Safeguarding or Compensation Zones. Other local small businesses will also require access to and from the village during the construction period, which we recognise may be lengthy, particularly as this will involve work on two transport routes. The small community leisure centre will be affected, and surrounding village users may wish to move to another centre – this could cause the centre to close.

The community of Oakthorpe:

Our first and most pressing concern for our community is the proportionate impact from Option 4. Oakthorpe is a small community; the entire population of the parish is some 2,700 and this includes the villages of Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe and Acresford. Oakthorpe is still a deprived area and the main route in and out of the village will be totally cut off for a long period of time – this could cause the village to ‘die’.

A mining village since 1787, Oakthorpe has shrunk since the colliery was closed in the 1990s. We have suffered from the impact of the underground fires in the 1980s and as a result of this there has been an adverse effect on the property market here, particularly near the areas where the fires broke out.

As we are such a small community, we fear being overrun by the new course of HS2 and the M42.



The transport corridor would move to within yards of the western side of Oakthorpe and proportionately the number of houses affected would be large. We feel that it will be inevitable that

property prices will be affected, but more importantly, the fabric of the village will be radically changed by the proximity of HS2 and the M42.

We recognize that we have not yet had the opportunity to canvass any opinions from residents, but the feeling of the Parish Council is that people will be extremely distressed. We have previously been largely unaffected by HS2 and this represents a large and sudden change which will be difficult to come to terms with.

As there has been so little time to prepare a response, we have not had time to adequately consider the following, which could be important adverse impacts:

- The extent of visual impacts. We understand that both HS2 and the M42 will be contained within a cutting, but this has not been confirmed and we have to assume that sound bunds may be needed to mitigate noise
- Noise. HS2 and the motorway will produce different types of noise. Trains will pass by every few minutes from approximately 6.00a.m. to 12.00a.m., but noise from the M42 will be more or less constant. A significant number of the houses on the east side of the village, plus the school are likely to be affected
- Socioeconomic and health effects
- Environmental/ecological effects

We feel that if Option 4 is to be considered seriously as an alternative to the current route, it is imperative that there is a full consultation to enable a proper response on the proposal.

Realignment of the M42:

As mentioned above, Oakthorpe will not only be affected by HS2, but also by a lengthy realignment of the M42. The course of the motorway will be moved further west and will border the east side of the village.

Our concerns are that the combination of road and railway will greatly increase noise levels, affecting houses and the village school. In addition, we feel that there will be disruption to Oakthorpe during the construction period which will affect access as well as previously mentioned issues of dust and particulate contamination.

It is difficult to view the realignment of the M42 as anything other than a “double whammy” for Oakthorpe and we would not be surprised if the opinion of some of our residents is that this is adding insult to injury.

Costs:

It is difficult for us to comment on costs as we have not been given any accurate information. We understand that Option 4 will be costlier than the current route, and we would hope that this is taken into consideration by the Transport Secretary.

Feedback from residents – obtained at an extraordinary Parish Council meeting held 30/08/18, approximately 100 residents attended.

- Oakthorpe is noted as having the most noise impact on the HS2 route – route 4 would increase this considerably & it would be difficult to mitigate noise levels with both HS2 and the M42 running so close.
- Will there be a cutting around Chapel Street?
- Dirt and pollution levels both in construction phase and also completion a major concern.
- Canal can still be restored with 2017 route.
- MLC (Measham Land Co) has proposed route 4 for its own reason – to enable building of 400 houses, why aren't their proposals being made public?
- Oakthorpe is already blighted with underground fires, route 4 will exacerbate the issues.
- Nobody in NWL will benefit from HS2.
- (Resident from Measham in attendance) – houses in all areas outside of the compensation zone will be badly hit.
- Where will people who lose their homes move to, and who will assist them?
- We feel really angry at the way we are being treated – lack of information to help us understand.
- We heard that the 2017 route had already been approved but 3 technical issues along the route, especially in Measham are causing problems. Can we be informed which of these will resolve the issues – we understand this will be resolved by 30/11/18.
- The marina does not exist and the 400 houses don't exist, but we do and our houses do, we should take priority.
- This is a lovely rural Parish and the village of Oakthorpe has been our home for one year, however we don't feel we can improve our home as we may lose it or it loses value – who will want to move into this village with this hanging over us?
- We feel MLC has hidden agendas re the so called marina and more houses.
- MLC has dubious ethics and we would like to know their driver re HS2 route 4, which involves additional cost to the public purse.
- We are not opposed to housing developments in the Parish, but we are opposed to losing the character and bones of the village.
- Plastic Omnium have a very great influence over the route. They manufacture parts for Jaguar/Landrover and this being important to the export industry enjoy full Parliamentary support to uninterrupted continuity in their operations. They have plant and a factory which would be affected by route 4 - near Measham on the Eastern side of the A42.
- MLC has been invited to many Parish Council and public meetings but has failed to attend any. But then refusing to present to the community once CG had asked Hs2 to investigate the feasibility of route 4.
- We will all contact Mr Grayling with our thoughts.

Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe and Acresford Parish Council – clerk@odapc.com or www.odapc.co.uk

30th August 2018

To The Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling cc. Andrew Bridgen MP

Sean Sheahan County Council, Robert Ashman District Council, HS2 Jason Pacey, Lucy Colls, NWLDC.