

The Heathrow spur: description of HS2 Ltd's recommended route and station option

1. As stated in January 2012, the Government believes the HS2 network should link to Heathrow and its preferred option is for this to be built as part of Phase Two. However, since that announcement the Government has also established an independent commission, chaired by Sir Howard Davies, to recommend options for maintaining the country's status as an international aviation hub. Subsequently the decision has been taken to suspend work on the spur to Heathrow until after 2015 pending the outcome of the commission.
2. However, the Government notes that HS2 Ltd have undertaken a significant amount of work developing options for serving Heathrow T5 in accordance with their remit. The Government recognises that there is likely to be speculation regarding the proposed route and station and that withholding that information would be likely to cause blight and uncertainty and that this could be spread over a wide geographical area and over a number of years until the Commission has reported.
3. Therefore, the Government has concluded that, in the interests of reducing uncertainty, it will make public the details of HS2 Ltd's route and station selection process and the single route and station option for Heathrow T5 that HS2 Ltd recommended ("the recommended Heathrow route"). This is not part of the initial preferred route for Phase Two. The recommended Heathrow route reflects the route and station option described in HS2 Ltd's March 2012 reports and which was further refined by the recommendations in the document covering route refinement work since March 2012. The recommended Heathrow route is described below.
4. Though the Heathrow spur is not part of the initial preferred route for Phase Two, the Government recognises the impact that the release of information about the recommended Heathrow route may have on property owners and therefore is willing to consider applications from property owners potentially affected by it under the proposed Exceptional Hardship Scheme (EHS) for Phase Two.
5. The Minister of State for Transport will write to the small number of people whose land may be required or whose properties are at risk of demolition should the recommended Heathrow route be built, to explain the situation to them and, in respect of property owners, to confirm that the Phase Two EHS would be open to them. The Government will also write to people whose land or property is above a proposed tunnel on the Heathrow spur route to make them aware of it.

Heathrow route alignment

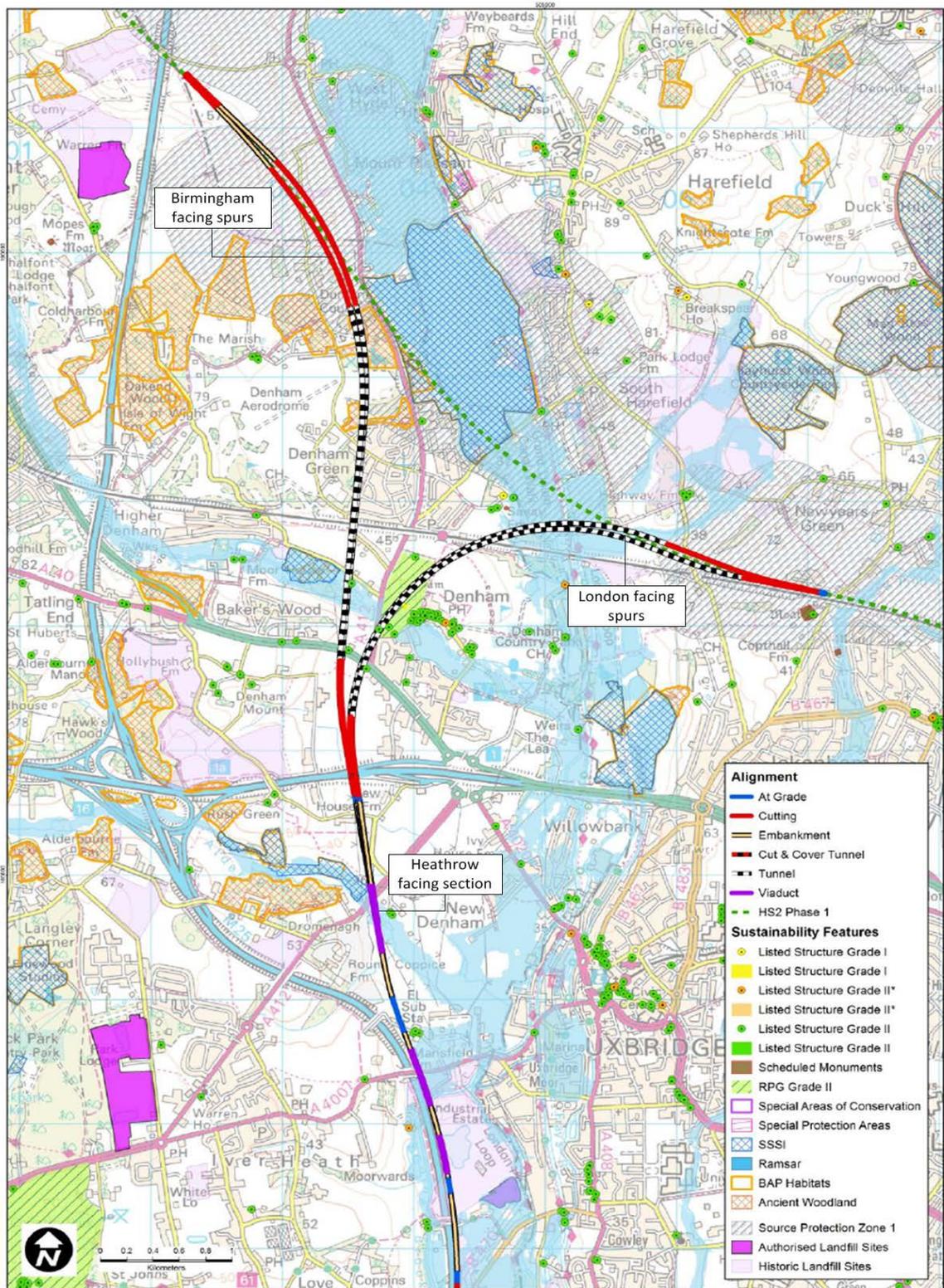
6. For the purposes of this document, we split the route into four sections; (1) the London facing spurs, (2) the Birmingham facing spurs, (3) the Heathrow facing section adjacent to the M25 and (4) the station.
7. Although work on a proposed high speed route and station for Heathrow has been suspended, it is necessary to put some measures in place earlier. Following the Airports Commission review, if the Government decides to construct a high speed route to Heathrow, subject to securing the necessary powers, it would be as part of Phase Two. The high speed route would be built to leave and re-join the Phase one route (as shown on the map below) which would already be operating. If no measures are put in place in advance, the Phase One route between London and Birmingham would need to be closed during the works to construct the junctions where the route to Heathrow leaves and joins the Phase One route. This would be costly and disruptive.
8. Therefore, the Government is considering putting measures in place to ensure the continued operation of the Phase One route should the decision be taken to construct the spur as part of Phase Two and after the Airports Commission has reported. This will require powers from Parliament, as part of the Phase One hybrid bill, to widen the construction footprint of Phase One in this location to enable construction of a route to Heathrow as part of Phase Two without impact on the operation of Phase One. The construction works would only occur if the then Government had decided to construct a route to Heathrow. The areas concerned would be immediately adjacent to the Phase One route in the vicinity of Tilehouse Lane and Harvill Road.

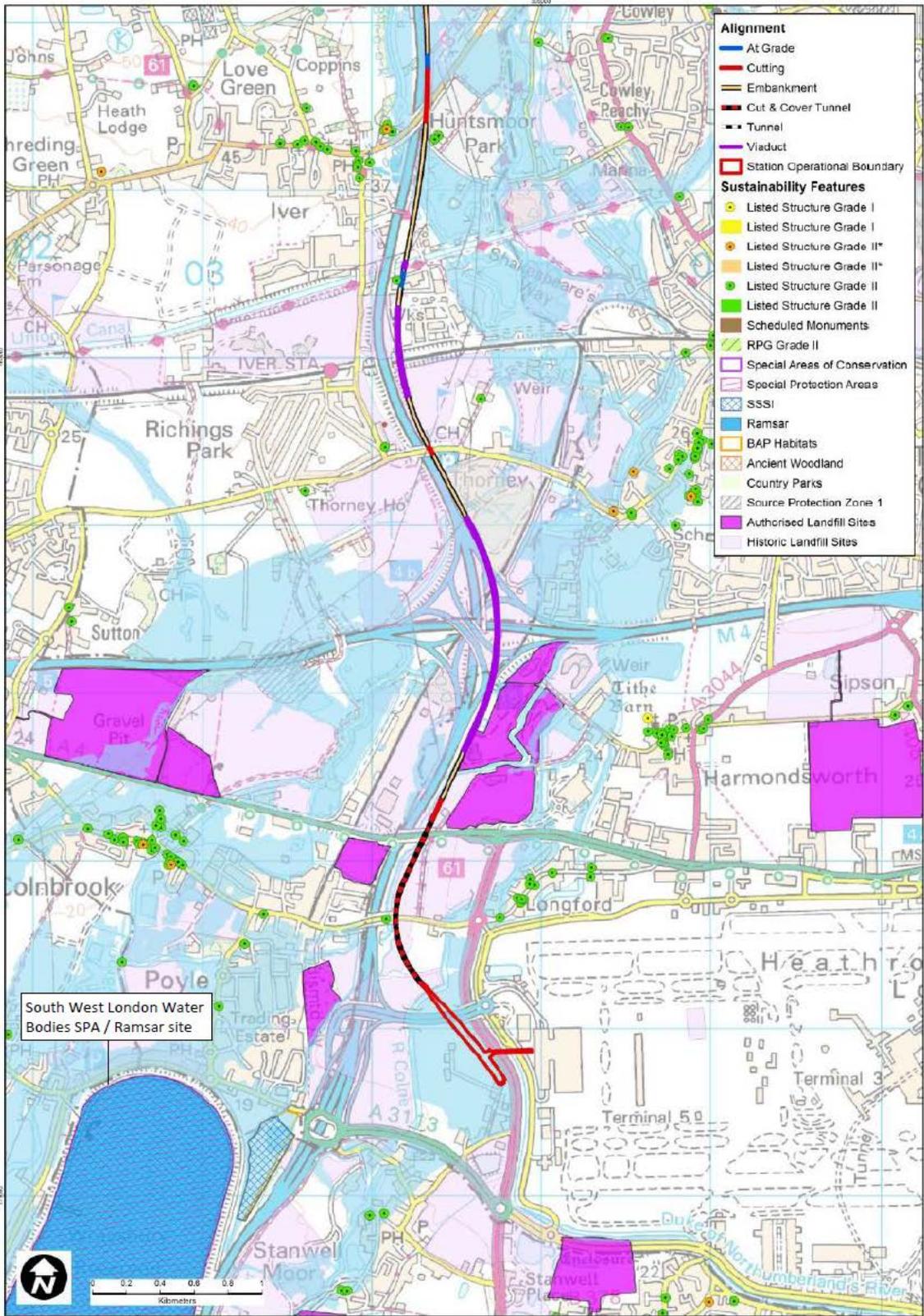
London facing spurs

9. The London facing spurs start west of Ruislip and the HS2 tunnel under Ruislip in the vicinity of Breakspear Road South. The spurs to Heathrow descend sharply, passing below Havrill Road in a deep cutting. The route would then enter a tunnel and pass under the Phase One route, the Chiltern Line and Denham Country Park.

Birmingham facing spurs

10. As with the London facing spurs, the Birmingham facing spurs were designed to pass into tunnel almost immediately after leaving the Phase One route to avoid impacts on the village of Denham. The junction would be located east of the M25 at the point where the Phase One route would enter the Chiltern Tunnel. The Birmingham facing spurs would run parallel to the Phase One route, under Tilehouse Lane, and then pass under the Phase One route entering a tunnel near Denham Court to pass under Denham Green.





Map of the high speed route towards Heathrow including sustainability features

Heathrow facing section

11. Both the London facing and Birmingham facing spurs would emerge south of the A40. The routes would climb from the tunnel portals passing under the M40 approximately 800m west of Junction 1. The route would rise onto a series of embankments and viaducts up to six metres high with the junction between the Birmingham facing and London facing spurs located near Southlands Manor. The route would run close to Kingcup Meadows & Oldhouse Wood SSSI, also requiring the movement of a section of high voltage power cables.
12. Heading south the route would start to follow the alignment of the M25 running on its eastern side and being at a similar height to the motorway. The route would continue to run on a series of embankments and viaducts up to five metres high to cross rivers and waterways. Further south there would be bridges to cross the Grand Union Canal and the Great Western Railway with the route climbing to pass over the M4/M25 junction on a large viaduct. The highest point of the viaduct would be approximately two metres above the highest point of the existing viaducts forming the motorway junction. From here the route would descend passing through a short length of tunnel to avoid the end of the runway.

Heathrow Station

13. The Heathrow station would be broadly orientated north-south located between the M25 and Terminal 5. The station would be approximately six metres below the existing ground level and above the current railway tunnels serving Heathrow Terminal 5. The station would be 44m wide and 440m long, with the platforms curved at the south end to enable the route to be extended into a loop at a future date should this be required.

The station concourse would be above the platforms and a link bridge to Terminal 5. The link bridge would pass through the first floor of the Terminal 5 car park providing the connection between the station and the Terminal 5 building. The station would require a 650m permanent diversion of the River Colne and temporary diversion of the M25 spur.