



Overview - Transboundary screening undertaken by the Secretary of State	
Project name:	Western Rail Link to Heathrow
Address/Location:	Between Langley (east of Slough) and Terminal 5 of Heathrow Airport, West London
Planning Inspectorate Ref:	TR040009
Date(s) screening undertaken:	First screening – 10 June 2015 following the applicant's request for a scoping opinion
EEA States identified for notification:	First screening: None identified

FIRST TRANSBOUNDARY SCREENING UNDERTAKEN BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE	
Document used for transboundary Screening:	Environmental Impact Assessment – Scoping Report, April 2015 ('the Scoping Report').
Date	10 June 2015
Screening Criteria:	Secretary of State Comments:
Characteristics of the Development	<p>The proposed development would provide a new rail connection from the Great Western Main Line (GWML) to Heathrow Airport Terminal 5. The link would allow direct services from Reading to Heathrow as well as travel between Reading railway station and Paddington via Heathrow (using the Heathrow Express line for onward travel). Network Rail anticipates that a minimum of four trains per hour (in each direction) would operate between Reading and Heathrow Airport Terminal 5. Trains would operate via electricity and run at the highest speed possible.</p> <p>The main project components are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversion of the existing 'Up Relief' and 'Up Goods' lines between Langley and Iver; • Provision of a new 25kV AC electrified rail connection between Heathrow and the existing GWML at Langley; • Construction of a new rail intersection bridge to carry the new airport lines under the existing GWML; • Construction of a 5km long rail tunnel, with 6.5m diameter twin-bores between Richings Park and Bedford Court at Heathrow Terminal 5, including new cut and cover tunnels at the end of the twin-bore tunnels; • Construction of intervention shafts with headhouse buildings and secure compounds at Richings Park and Bedford Court; • Construction of ventilation/intervention shafts with headhouse buildings and secure compounds at Old Wood (south of M4) and Poyle; and • Connection into existing stub tunnels on the western side of Heathrow Airport Terminal 5. <p>Construction of the proposed development would utilise natural resources including land, concrete, steel, track ballast and timber. Construction materials would be obtained locally where practicable, although some resources are likely to be obtained</p>

	<p>from outside the UK.</p> <p>Construction of the tunnels and cuttings is anticipated to generate a large volume of excavated material, some of which may be incorporated into the scheme and the remainder exported away from the site for disposal or re-sale. Excavated material is envisaged to be transported via rail, although should this not be possible, Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) would transport the excavated material via road.</p> <p>Due to the presence of existing and historic landfill sites within and around the proposed site boundary, some contaminated waste is likely to be encountered during construction. This would be removed via road to approved sites.</p>
<p>Geographical area</p>	<p>The site area has not been specified in the Scoping Report.</p> <p>The proposed development is located entirely within the UK.</p>
<p>Location of Development (including existing use)</p>	<p>The proposed development would be located between Langley (east of Slough) and Heathrow Airport Terminal 5, West London. From west to east, the route of the proposed development would cross the local authority boundaries of Slough Borough Council, South Bucks District Council and the London Borough of Hillingdon. A site location plan has been provided as Appendix A (Figure 2.1) of the Scoping Report.</p> <p>Approximate distances from the proposed development to other EEA States have not been provided in the Scoping Report. An approximate distance from the proposed development to the nearest UK coastline has also not been provided.</p> <p>The proposed development would be situated within the valley of the River Colne, within a flat and relatively low-lying landscape heavily influenced by mineral extraction (evidenced by the presence of reservoirs and water bodies). Existing land use along the route of the proposed development is mixed, consisting of industrial and commercial areas, large-scale transport infrastructure, utility pylons and pipelines, low density settlements, agricultural land and recreational open space.</p> <p>The route of the proposed development would cross through the Metropolitan Green Belt, several watercourses and a number of historical and licensed landfills.</p>
<p>Cumulative impacts</p>	<p>Chapter 18 of the Scoping Report confirms that '<i>reasonably foreseeable</i>' developments which could interact with the proposed development to deliver cumulative impacts, have been identified on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All major developments within 3km of the proposed development (e.g. large scale housing development; • All strategic development, such as transport improvements within 10km of the proposed development; and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any other developments considered likely to result in environmental effects of some nature. <p>In line with these criteria, Table 18.2 in the Scoping Report considers various developments and identifies that the following projects will be considered in the EIA as part of the cumulative assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> M4 Junctions 3 to 12 Smart Motorway; and Crossrail – passenger railway linking Reading and Heathrow in the west, to Shenfield and Abbey Wood in the east. <p>The applicant notes that the projects listed in Table 18.2 will be updated as further details become available and as new projects are identified, including (if necessary) the expansion proposals for Heathrow Airport.</p> <p>The potential for the cumulative effects of these projects to have significant effects on the environment in another EEA State has not been described in the Scoping Report.</p>
Carrier	<p>Greenhouse gas emissions are identified in Appendix B (Table B.1) of the Scoping Report as a potential transboundary effect which is likely to extend beyond the jurisdiction of the UK. The most likely means of greenhouse gas emissions spreading is through atmospheric processes.</p>
Environmental Importance	<p>The proposed development is not within any internationally designated areas. Two European sites are located nearby:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> South West London Waterbodies Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site. <p>Other designations identified on or in proximity to the site include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs); Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs); Biological Notification Sites (BNSs) Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs); Ancient Woodland (UK BAP Habitat); Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA); Metropolitan Green Belt; A Scheduled Monument, listed buildings, Conservation Areas and areas of archaeological interest; Principle and secondary A aquifers; Flood Zones 2 & 3; and An Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). <p>Ecological surveys have identified records of, or the potential for, various protected and notable species to be present on and around the proposed development site. Species include bats, otter, great crested newt, reptiles, breeding and non-breeding birds, water vole and badger.</p>

	<p>There are a number of small and medium settlements in proximity to the proposed development site, including Richings Park, Poyle and Colnbrook. The area also features a range of community facilities and open spaces.</p> <p>The route of the proposed development would cross a number of watercourses, including the River Colne, Wraysbury River and Colne Brook and would be located immediately to the south of the Grand Union Canal (Slough Arm).</p>
Extent	<p>The applicant's screening matrix for potential transboundary effects (provided as Appendix B (Table B.1) of the Scoping Report) refers to the '<i>...potential release of greenhouse gas emissions</i>' and acknowledges that any such emissions would be likely to spread beyond the jurisdiction of the UK.</p> <p>However, the applicant has indicated that this potential is unlikely to have significant impacts on another EEA State in Table 1.1 of the Scoping Report.</p>
Magnitude	<p>Appendix B (Table B.1) of the Scoping Report states that the likely magnitude of change to greenhouse gas emissions (as a result of the proposed development) would be negligible. Table 4.3 of the Scoping Report defines 'negligible' as: '<i>No discernible impact predicted</i>'. It is proposed to calculate the likely greenhouse gas emissions as part of the EIA.</p> <p>There is no evidence that the impacts identified would be likely to have significant effects on the environment in another EEA State.</p>
Probability	<p>Appendix B (Table B.1) of the Scoping Report acknowledges that the proposed development could lead to the 'potential' release of greenhouse gases and states that '<i>The probability ...to contribute to greenhouse gas emissions is likely...</i>'. These emissions are anticipated to occur as a result of the construction and operational phases of the proposed development. However, although there is potential for the release of greenhouse gases, Chapter 10 (section 10.1.1) of the Scoping Report indicates that operation of the proposed development would be unlikely to lead to significant emissions of pollutants to air.</p> <p>There is no evidence that the impacts identified would be likely to have significant effects on the environment in another EEA State.</p>
Duration	<p>Appendix B (Table B.1) of the Scoping Report states that the impact of increased greenhouse gas emissions is likely to be long-term, given that it relates to both the construction and operational phases of the proposed development. Table 4.3 of the Scoping Report defines 'long term' as: '<i>Between 5 and 15 years following completion of the project</i>', although it is noted that there are currently no plans to decommission the</p>

	<p>development.</p> <p>There is no evidence that the impacts identified would be likely to have significant effects on the environment in another EEA State.</p>
Frequency	<p>Appendix B (Table B.1) of the Scoping Report states that the temporal pattern of greenhouse gas emissions would be relatively constant throughout the construction and operational phases of the proposed development.</p> <p>There is no evidence that the impacts identified would be likely to have significant effects on the environment in another EEA State.</p>
Reversibility	<p>Appendix B (Table B.1) of the Scoping Report states that the impact of increased greenhouse gas emissions (as a result of construction and operation of the proposed development) is considered to be irreversible in human lifetimes.</p> <p>There is no evidence that the impacts identified would be likely to have significant effects on the environment in another EEA State.</p>

Transboundary screening undertaken by the Secretary of State

Under Regulation 24 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009 (as amended) (the EIA Regulations) and on the basis of the current information available from the Applicant, the Secretary of State is of the view that the proposed development **is not likely** to have a significant effect on the environment in another EEA State.

In reaching this view the Secretary of State has applied the precautionary approach (as explained in the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note 12: Transboundary Impacts Consultation); and taken into account the information currently supplied by the Applicant.

Action:

No further action required at this stage

Date:

10 June 2015

Note: The Secretary of State's duty under Regulation 24 of the EIA Regulations continues throughout the application process.

Note:

1. The Secretary of State's screening of transboundary issues is based on the relevant considerations specified in Annex 4 to Planning Inspectorate Advice Note 12 available on the Planning Inspectorate's website at <http://infrastructure.planningportal.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/advice-notes/>