

# Plans for 2.3km automated people mover submitted by HS2

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Plans for an automated people mover (APM) which will link HS2 Interchange Station with the NEC, Birmingham International Station and Birmingham Airport have been submitted.

They will be reviewed by Solihull Council.

So far, HS2 has gained a Schedule 17 approval. This approval, granted to HS2 in August 2020, provides a degree of local planning consent without unduly holding up the major scheme or raising its costs.

Following this, HS2 has worked closely with the Urban Growth Company (UGC) in Solihull to include extra design elements which will support wider growth plans at the UK Central Hub. This includes an option to modify the alignment of the APM as part of a potential major transformation of Birmingham International Station to create a new, integrated multi-modal transport exchange. The realignment would also support the UGC's plans to deliver new commercial development and public realm opportunities on adjacent land.

The option involves a slight change to the route of the APM, as it passes Birmingham International Station and connects into Birmingham Airport. The plans will also integrate the APM stop with a revitalised public

realm at Birmingham International Station, including additional planting and space for artwork. A proposed green wall with climbing plants will also add biodiversity, provide seasonal colour and contribute to better air quality.

As with the original alignment a pedestrian footbridge would connect the APM stop with Birmingham International Station, allowing seamless connections between HS2 Interchange Station, Birmingham International Station, the National Exhibition Centre (NEC) and Birmingham Airport.

The APM will provide an efficient, accessible, reliable and environmentally friendly mode of transport, carrying up to 2,100 passengers per hour in each direction on a six-minute journey along the 2.3km route. The services every three minutes will travel along a viaduct for the entire route, over major obstacles such as M42, Pendigo Lake at the NEC and the West Coast Main Line.

Niki French, HS2's deputy project client for Interchange Station said: "The APM will connect high speed rail passengers to the classic rail network, supporting the shift from car use to public, mass transit transport, which is so important in achieving the UK's target of net zero carbon.

"We have been working in partnership with the UGC, Solihull Council and the HS2 Independent Design Review Panel to develop an alternative proposal for the HS2 APM stop that can integrate in an accessible and sustainable way with the aspirational plans for future redevelopment of the Birmingham International Rail Station and its surroundings. This new alignment has enabled us to enhance the design of the APM stop and the public realm around it, to improve the passenger experience."

Lisa Chaney, programme manager at the Urban Growth Company, said: "This realignment is subtle but critical because it allows for the future development of an adjacent area of land which is currently used for surface car parking. There is also the potential to deliver a new public plaza which will create an exciting sense of place and arrival. We've worked closely with HS2 to develop this proposal and it's been a really good example of innovation through collaborative working and making sure that this national infrastructure delivers regional benefits."

Once the proposal has been through the planning process, a decision will be taken at a later date by HS2, the UGC and the contractor appointed to build the APM as to which route will be constructed.

Interchange Station will be one of the best connected stations on the new high speed network in the Midlands. It is set to pave the way for huge growth plans at the Arden Cross site, which will be home to the station and is set to become a new mixed-use destination, supporting 30,000 jobs, up to 3,000 new homes and 70,000m<sup>2</sup> of commercial space.

These will form part of the UGC's vision for the UK Central Hub which will create an environment to support 70,000 jobs, 8,000 new homes and 650,000m<sup>2</sup> of commercial space, generating £6.2bn GVA per year and bringing 1.3m people to within a 45-minute public transport commute of the station.