### Key Issues –
As a project of country-wide importance, the largest issue was the sheer size and scale of the project. The scope and methodology of the EIA was publicised and consulted upon in 2012; identifying 13 topics for analysis at a Community Forum Area (CFA) level and three topics for analysis at a route-wide level.

In addition to the overall scale, unique issues to the EIA undertaken for HS2 included:
- Massive number of interfaces to address: Parliamentary agents, DfT, HS2, Design engineers, Stakeholders, other EIACs
- Highly demanding programme to meet governmental requirements
- Consultation – needed to be transparent, efficient, and meaningful
- Managing expectations of the client, internal teams, stakeholders and public
- Number of land parcels involved across route, necessary for resource surveys
- Resourcing for technical specialties
- Impact assessments and outcomes vary widely between urban and rural areas

### Purpose of the project
High Speed Two (HS2), Phase 1 is a new railway network proposed by the Government to provide a link between London and the West Midlands. Beyond the high speed network, trains will connect with the existing West Coast Main Line, the East Coast Main Line and the existing High Speed One (HS1). The purpose of the project is to address future growth and capacity constraints while supporting economic growth in a sustainable manner.

### Description of the project
Phase 1 of HS2 will result in construction of a new railway line approximately 230km (143 miles) long, served by trains running at speeds of up to 360kph (225mph). The route was divided into 26 CFAs. Atkins was responsible for EIA of the Country North segment (7 CFAs), stretching over an 83km (51mile) area running through predominantly rural areas. Construction was assumed to begin in 2017, with operation commencing in 2026.
Lessons learnt
While there is an inherent understanding of the scale of an EIA of a linear project spanning over 80 miles, the true scale was not recognised until deposit of the Hybrid bill documents. The Atkins-produced EIA for the Country North segment comprised over 7,500 pages of reports and appendices and over 1,200 pages of maps. This effort required over 660 staff members and consultants.

A substantial consideration of HS2 was the Consultation. The formal consultation process began in 2009 when the proposed route was consulted upon (ending 2011). In 2012, an initial property consultation was held. The scope and methodology report (and revisions) were consulted on in 2012, leading to an undertaking of the EIA in 2012/2013. The draft ES was consulted upon in summer 2013; the final ES in winter 2013.

What these dates do not convey are the hundreds of informal consultations held with MPs, local authorities, action groups, individuals, as well as farm/agricultural surveys conducted; results of which contributed to the EIA.

Atkins specialists were particularly successful for having taken an active role in developing unique mitigation (the use of green bridges to reduce impacts to bats); developing useful and creative assessment methodologies to address a distinctive project (frequent consultation with Environment Agency; Natural England); and introduction of new technology (use of electronic tablets to decrease mapping and reporting time during ecological surveys).

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