



## Blue infrastructure

Blue infrastructure (water) has been a recurring topic in Design Panel meetings, with the panel consistently advocating a landscape driven approach to meeting HS2 requirements.

HS2 Ltd is developing guidance and design principles to support its supply chain in successfully integrating water within the broader design for HS2. At a meeting in October to discuss this, the panel welcomed the work done to date, and highlighted that the success of HS2's blue infrastructure will depend on thinking beyond the redline, across the boundaries between different elements of the project, and considering the wider landscape.

HS2 Ltd's approach to water can support the aspirations of the HS2 Design Vision, by demonstrating a "commitment to the natural world" (HS2 Design Vision, 2017).

The panel urges HS2 Ltd to be ambitious, driving a change in mindset by promoting wider conversations, both within the project and with communities along the route.

The panel encouraged HS2 Ltd to consider how it can promote the value of water in helping to create benefits for local communities and synergies with national policy - as well as helping to ensure that the landscapes it delivers can generate a socially and environmentally valuable legacy.

## Design Panel activities October and November 2021

# 4

- River Cole Viaducts
- Chattle Hill Box Structure
- Chesham Road Headhouse
- Birmingham and Fazeley Canal Viaduct

**Schedule 17 meetings**

# 2

- Balsall Common Viaduct
- Blue Infrastructure Design Approach document

**Workshop meetings**

# 1

- Euston Station

**Station meeting**

# 3

- November monthly team meeting attended by the Design Panel chair, vice chair, secretariat and HS2 Ltd
- Governance Advisory Panel meeting attended by the Design Panel chair, vice chair, deputy chairs and secretariat
- Design Panel quarterly senior executive meeting, attended by the HS2 Ltd senior executive, the Department for Transport (DfT), and the Design Panel.

**Governance meetings**

## Balsall Common Viaduct

Balsall Common Viaduct is a Key Design Element located just outside the built-up part of Balsall Common. It is a hugely significant structure, with implications for its community and the landscape, and a number of significant constraints.

At a meeting in November, the panel applauded the progress made since Hybrid Bill stage, and the attention paid to resolving the challenges presented in this location.

The panel supported the extension of the viaduct to resolve challenges in relation to access and flooding. Lengthening the viaduct also creates a benefit in terms of reducing the need for embankment material

The panel welcomed the attention paid to sculpting and faceting the structure, in particular the piers. This helps to give them a distinct character and a sense of craft, as well as reducing the amount of concrete required to build the viaduct.

A significant focus of the design work has been on integration with the wider landscape, including the creation of new access routes and planting. As design work continues, the panel suggests that the team considers opportunities to strengthen the existing landscape, particularly in areas which are important for glimpsed views of the viaduct.



Marwa Altai  
Architect  
Weston Williamson + Partners

## People's stories

Marwa is an architect with experience in the UK infrastructure sector, working on projects such as Heathrow Expansion and Euston Station. She started working on HS2 in 2017, and now leads a team of designers delivering projects within Phase One and common design elements.

“For Balsall Common Viaduct, a considerable amount of effort has been on enhancing human experiences and integrating the viaduct within the historic landscape - maximising visual permeability, connectivity, and the innovative use of materials.

The Design Panel has been incredibly helpful, providing a platform for multi-disciplinary discussions on aspects such as design quality, sustainability, and celebrating the context. We have also been able to take that experience and apply it to other parts of our work on HS2”.

## Deputy Chairs

In November, Xanthe Quayle (landscape architect) and David Ubaka (architect and urban designer) were appointed as the two new Deputy Chairs of the Design Panel. This was part of a wider refresh of the panel's membership. Deputy chairs play an important role, alongside the chair and vice chair, in helping to identify themes and issues arising from panel meetings. We are also delighted that the current deputy chairs, Martin Stockley and Annie Coombs, will remain as panel members and we would like to thank them both for the extensive contributions and advice they have provided over many years.



(from left to right) Xanthe Quayle and David Ubaka



Frame Projects  
Secretariat to the  
HS2 Independent  
Design Panel

**HS2 INDEPENDENT  
DESIGN PANEL**