

# Case Study #4

**Mentoring  
sessions**

**HS2 INDEPENDENT  
DESIGN PANEL**

The HS2 Independent Design Panel has been established at an early stage, so that panel members can give strategic advice, as well as taking part in more formal reviews. Mentoring sessions are an important part of the panel's work - allowing panel members to influence early design decisions and the way HS2 Ltd works towards meeting the aspirations of the Design Vision.

This case study examines the mentoring sessions that have taken place over the panel's first year and the people who have been involved.

**Process:** two types of mentoring sessions have been arranged for HS2 Ltd staff: focused mentoring sessions to address specific issues; and open invitation lunchtime talks followed by informal mentoring.

Focused mentoring sessions have been arranged where panel members have expertise directly relevant to particular aspects of challenges faced by HS2 Ltd - for example, to help inform procurement of design teams.

Open invitation lunchtime talks, followed by informal mentoring sessions have so far been given by: Ben Terrett, on a 'user needs' approach to service design; Luke Pearson on product design; and Daisy Froud on community engagement.



## Mentoring sessions

This is the fourth of a series of case studies about the work of the HS2 Independent Design Panel

### Project headlines

- Mentoring sessions allow Design Panel members to share their expertise and experience with HS2 Ltd staff.
- Lunchtime talks bring a wide range of HS2 Ltd staff into contact with the panel.
- Mentoring in small groups or one to one provides a forum for informal advice.
- More focused mentoring on specific issues, such as procurement of design teams, has also been arranged.
- These sessions have been popular and well attended by HS2 Ltd staff.

# Mentoring sessions

Three examples of mentoring initiatives involving the HS2 Independent Design Panel are described below.

## 1. Community engagement

The panel has provided mentoring on community engagement both through focused sessions at the request of HS2 Ltd staff, and lunchtime talks followed by informal mentoring.

HS2 Ltd has been working to establish a strategic approach to engagement, building on consultation during the Hybrid Bill process. In mentoring sessions with the team responsible for this, the panel has challenged HS2 Ltd to define the objectives for its engagement work more clearly. The panel highlighted the need to set honest, realistic expectations for public involvement and influence.

At a lunchtime talk, panel member Daisy Froud (pictured overleaf) spoke about her experience devising tools and strategies that allow multiple voices to contribute to design processes. For HS2 Ltd, there will be a need to facilitate large scale engagement – and she emphasised the need to understand the most important issues for each specific community.

## 2. Procurement of design teams

Mentoring sessions have been arranged on a variety of procurement processes – to appoint design teams to work on stations and civil engineering elements of the railway.

The panel has encouraged HS2 Ltd to think innovatively about its requirements, for example to encourage the involvement of smaller firms in bidding teams, maximising creativity. Issues of value for money have also been addressed, with the panel noting that carefully defining the scope of design work – making clear what is fixed and where there is flexibility for creative design thinking – will allow for more accurate pricing.

Caroline Cole, Deputy Chair of the panel, was also invited to run a training workshop for HS2 Ltd staff preparing to assess the design aspects of tender submissions. Caroline shared her experience of judging design awards, and managing high profile competitions for projects such as the Nine Elms to Pimlico Bridge.

## 3. 'User needs' approach to service design

A lunchtime talk and informal mentoring session for HS2 Ltd staff was given by Ben Terrett, Design Director at the Co-operative Group, and previously Director of Design

at Government Digital Services. Ben's talk focused on the potential for a 'user needs' approach to service design.

At a stage when HS2 Ltd is involved in setting out its requirements for every aspect of the railway, 'user needs' could be used to describe operational requirements in a very direct and unambiguous way. For example 'as a mum with kids, I want to know the most direct route to the platform, so that I don't get lost'. This is much clearer than a statement such as 'there is a requirement for clear signage'.

The informal mentoring session following Ben's talk was attended by HS2 Ltd staff responsible for: railway operations; architecture; systems integration; project management; and design management.



Panel member Caroline Cole, at a workshop on assessing the design aspects of tenders