

Meeting minutes

Chiltern AONB Review Group Meeting # 21

Meeting date Thursday, 14 May 2020

Meeting location Teams Meeting

Meeting time 10:00-13:30

| Members (those who make the quorum of the forum) | Attendees (presenters/additional attendees) | Apologies |
|---|--|-----------|
| Review Group Chair RGC | EKFB | |
| Buckinghamshire Unitary Authority | Fusion | |
| HS2 Ltd | | |
| Chiltern Conservation Board CCB | | |
| Natural England NE | | |

Signed Approved

Chair Tom Hinds

Date 21 September 2020

1 Introductions

1.1 Members of the Review Group (RG) and other attendees introduced themselves

Action: None

2 Review of Minutes & Action Tracker

2.1 Point raised on 4.3 from previous minutes and whether meeting had taken place between EK & AVDC. Noted that meeting hadn't but it was no longer needed.

2.2 Minutes approved.

3 Actions Tracker

- 3.1 HS2 to keep open point 16 of tracker
- 3.2 Frith Hill portal still being designed, Align to provide visuals to group once developed.
- 3.3 CCB also asked whether a further visualization could be provided going north from the tunnel portal.

Action: Align to be aware of 3.2

4 Organisation overview

- 4.1 HS2 gave an overview of the current re-organisation including the fact that the current representation on the RG would change and they would inform the chair about the replacement ASAP. Comment from other members that continued HS2 attendance is needed and as the TOR state it is **HS2 who will undertake the secretariat role.**
- 4.2 HS2 further updated on the achievement of Notice to Proceed (NTP) and the contract is now moving into stage 2 which is the main civils of the project.
- 4.3 Update that Buckinghamshire from the 1st April has become a unitary authority. RG currently includes members from the previous council structure. The board will continue to have at least 2 members from the authority and Bucks will have further discussions on who needs to attend.
- 4.4 Currently no responsibilities have changed within the council that impact the RG. Question around whether voting rights on RG are affected.

Action: HS2 to inform chair of new representation to the RG

Action: HS2 to perform secretariat function to RG as per TOR

Action: RG to consider whether any voting right changes are needed due unitary authority changes

5 EKFB Programme update

- 5.1 Ferrovial and BAM have joined the EK joint venture to form EKFB. Both parties will add further depth and experience to the joint venture
- 5.2 Move to NTP in April 2020, this means a move to detailed design and that this could be ongoing till 2021. EKFB provided some slides which will be sent to the RG, include a very brief programme.
- 5.3 EKFB have worked with the design panel on several Key Design Elements within the contractual area. Further shared a brief slide on the Schedule 17 programme. Short term programme is very much about preparatory works such as compounds and temporary

works design. There are further works that will take place on drainage works around the South Heath cutting.

- 5.4 Update on Small Dean viaduct. Focus on Detailed Design Principle 10. Focus on the challenge of how to integrate structure into the landscape. Design is still ongoing at the abutment area and visual appearance still subject to discussion. Larger challenge around the spatially constrained interface between HS2, Network Rail and the A413. CCB raised issue around the boldness of the abutment visual appearance.
- 5.5 GM12 footbridge – EKFB ran through changes to the design of this footbridge. EKFB were not satisfied with the original design of the structure. This has now been simplified to improve its appearance. Time and effort have gone into the internal shape of the bridge. CCB and NE commented that it was a much improved design. Comment from NE on how the finished floor structure of the bridge will link into the approach characteristics of the landscape.
- 5.6 An overview was given on the South Heath cutting landscape design. Focus on the area from the tunnel portal to Leather Lane. The size and scope of the ATS at leather Lane has been reduced and this has meant a further look at the design around Leather Lane including keeping the hollow way features in the landscape. Further comments around how the parapet design at Leather lane bridge form into the local landscape and how this should look and work. Further conversation around the relationship between the bridge and the false cutting.

Action: EKFB to provide slides to the RG

6 Review Group Paper

- 6.1 Secretariat to be provided by HS2 as per the TOR.
- 6.2 **Note for all RG members to provide materials 1 week in advance as per the TOR.**
- 6.3 Detailed Design Principles – there was a discussion around the need to demonstrate and record how the design complied with these (e.g. via a scorecard matrix).
Action- EKFB would discuss with Align with a view to making a proposal to the RG about how best to demonstrate adherence with the DDPs
- 6.4 When the Schedule17 Designs are completed, it is recommended the RG commission a review of the mitigation/enhancement needed to form the basis for the Additional Projects needed in light of the finalised detailed design - circa £2m in funding available.
- 6.5 The RG continue to approve and actively seek projects brought forward outside of the Act limits, circa £285k in funding available for these types of projects.

- 6.6 The RG agreed with the approximate split of £2m for longer-term projects (post finalisation of design), with the remaining £285k being available for projects in the meantime that were outside Act limits and so wouldn't be affected by design development.
- 6.7 There was some discussion about what form the post-design 'review' should take, and when, whether it was one review or a series of smaller reviews to fit in with the Sch17 timetable, who it should be led by and who should pay for it.
- 6.8 The AP Fund administrators to provide to the RG members: AP progress update and spending at each RG meeting.
- 6.9 HS2 to provide budget updates to the RG members at each RG meeting. It was accepted that these budget updates needed to remain as standing agenda items.
- 6.10 The RG should review RG membership for Additional Projects to encourage more development leads to bring projects forward.
- 6.11 It was agreed that the RG needed to think about how best to engage with wider partners in order to get their input into additional projects (e.g. as with the Ridgeway Partnership). However, it was not felt that this necessarily amounted to amending the formal membership of the RG.

Action: EKFB agreed to give some thought to a review might best fit with the schedule 17 timetable.

7 Budget and Additional Project updates

- 7.1 Due to time pressures, it was agreed that written updates were sufficient for this meeting. The Additional Projects budget update had been circulated in advance by Bucks Council. An update on the Additional Projects had been circulated in advance by CCB.

Action: HS2 Ltd would circulate the admin budget following the meeting

8 A.O.B

- 8.1 Fusion works at Bottom House Farm Lane. CCB introduced this issue which had only recently come to light. Creation of a haul road, farm access road (and associated drainage) linked to construction of a tunnel vent shaft had caused much local concern. It required the removal of large sections of a very well-established hedgerow during nesting season, and appeared to be a significant change from what had previously been proposed.
- 8.2 HS2 Ltd joined the meeting to explain HS2 Ltd.'s position on these works. (They explained how the decision to remove the hedge, and the timing of doing so, had not been taken lightly, but that after extensive review, it was the only feasible option due to the various

spatial (and time) constraints. They also explained how it was consistent with the effects reported in the relevant Environmental Statement.

- 8.3** There was considerable disquiet expressed by a number of RG members that the chosen solution appeared to be engineering-led, rather than landscape-led. There were a large number of questions regarding how this decision had been arrived at, including whether the following options had been considered: (a) splitting the lanes of the carriageway either side of the hedge, or (b) installing the drainage underneath the carriageway.
- 8.4** Noting that it may now be too late to make any changes, the RG urged HS2 to review whether more could be done to avoid or minimise removal of the hedgerow.

**Action: HS2 agreed to report back to the group on this.
HS2 Presentation to be circulated following the meeting.**

Next meeting

The next AONB RG meeting was scheduled for September 10th 2020.