

Introduction by Professor Sadie Morgan

The panel has consistently championed HS2's potential to be more than a railway. HS2 proposals should meet both the complex and challenging technical requirements for high speed rail and deliver the significant economic, environmental and societal returns the nation expects.

Capturing this potential requires HS2 design teams to take advantage of the project's catalytic role, creating strategies to identify synergies with existing contexts and opportunities to deliver further public benefits – many of which will come to fruition long after the railway begins operating. A robust approach to engaging stakeholders and local communities is critical to realising this potential and ensuring HS2 can deliver more than the sum of its parts.

The panel is enthusiastic about its role in supporting HS2 to help it deliver on the HS2 Design Vision. The projects and topics below aim to help highlight the positive steps HS2 Ltd is taking towards achieving that goal.

Sustainability

HS2 Ltd's ambition is to design and build the most sustainable high-speed railway in the world. It is aiming to help the UK to tackle climate change, improve air quality and reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, an ambition the panel strongly supports.

An Environmental Sustainability Committee has recently been established to help strengthen HS2 Ltd's approach. The committee will publish an annual environmental sustainability report, which is intended to be a stand alone, honest appraisal of how HS2 is performing. The panel welcomes the new committee, which it believes will help to support leadership on sustainability across the project, and to strengthen its governance within HS2 Ltd. The committee's annual report will also provide an opportunity to openly reflect on progress being made.

HS2 Ltd should also use the committee's report to drive future decision making. As part of this process, the panel asks HS2 to adopt a robust and progressive methodology for its materiality assessment. This will be a key element of the report, helping HS2 Ltd to address pressing environmental concerns. Looking beyond policy compliance to anticipate legislative changes will be essential if HS2 is to achieve its world-leading ambitions.



Green Corridor

HS2's success will depend significantly on the landscapes it creates and enables along its route. Landscape design is therefore as important as the effort put into the design of HS2 buildings and structures.

The HS2 Green Corridor prospectus and mapping tool, soft-launched in December 2020, provides more detail about projects HS2 Ltd is delivering, and how communities can benefit further by getting involved.

This initiative creates the potential for environmental projects funded by HS2 Ltd to be 'joined up' with local initiatives along the route, to become more than the sum of the parts.

The panel is enthusiastic about HS2's potential catalytic value and the Green Corridor concept provides a fantastic opportunity to embrace that potential.

Schedule 17

Schedule 17 submissions mark an important moment in the delivery programme for HS2. This is where planning authorities determine whether the designs due to be constructed should be approved. Ahead of Schedule 17 submissions being made, the Design Panel is invited to comment on the designs and provide a view on whether they meet the project's ambitions. Overall, the panel has felt that proposals it has seen have promised a high design quality.

At a recent meeting to discuss the Chiltern Tunnel South Portal, the panel was excited by the potential of the proposed reintroduction of calcareous grassland as part of the site restoration strategy. Design work will continue beyond Schedule 17 stage, and the panel has stressed that its support is dependent on design quality being maintained through to construction.



Proposals for the Chiltern Tunnel south portal and chalk grassland on the western valley slopes, HS2 Ltd

Euston Station

The panel has welcomed the government's decision to review the delivery arrangements for Euston. The Euston Station Design Partnership is a collaboration between the public and private sectors, working to unlock Euston. It brings together a range of stakeholders including HS2 Ltd, Network Rail, Transport for London and Camden Council - with the aim of establishing a shared vision and integrated designs.

The panel welcomes this change in the governance of plans for Euston, as a means of maximising public benefits, including the regeneration of the area, from the public's investment.

At recent meetings the panel has been asked to comment on emerging designs for the HS2 and Network Rail stations and wider development proposals. Collaborative working and clear design leadership will be critical as strategic design decisions are made over the coming months. The Euston Station Design Panel is keen to contribute to this process, and to help ensure the creation of a high quality new piece of city with an inspiring new rail terminus for London.

Design Panel refresh

We are undertaking a refresh of the HS2 Independent Design Panel's membership to ensure it continues to be well placed to support the project as it moves into the next phase of development.

Participation in the Design Panel is also a way for the next generation of talented designers to develop their professional profile, and we are keen to introduce fresh perspectives and to improve the diversity of the panel. The open recruitment process is expected to commence in March / April 2021.

Looking ahead

A key focus for the Design Panel's work in the coming months will be Phase 2a (which achieved Royal Assent in February 2021).

The panel has identified a number of lessons from Phase One, including the importance of ensuring public value is placed at the heart of the project's narrative and approach. The panel will continue to encourage HS2 Ltd to revisit the minimum requirements set during the Hybrid Bill Process. Post Royal Assent, there is an opportunity to engage in broader conversations with communities and stakeholders, to help the project realise its full potential.



Frame Projects
Secretariat to the
HS2 Independent
Design Panel

**HS2 INDEPENDENT
DESIGN PANEL**