

Note of meeting: High Speed 2 – Ministerial Environment Round Table

Date: Thursday 8th December 2016 - 12:45 to 14:25

Location: Department for Transport

Attendees:

Name	Organisation
Steve Trotter	Wildlife Trusts
Victoria Bankes Price	Woodland Trust
Ralph Smyth	Campaign to Protect Rural England
Ben Middlemiss	National Trust
Louise Staples	National Farmers Union
Marcus Chaloner	Canal & River Trust
James MacColl	Campaign for Better Transport
Jonathan Baker	Country Land & Business Association
Malcolm Hackett	England's Community Forests
Cllr Stewart Stacey	Local Government Association
Eugene Suggett	Ramblers
Dave Buttery (Chair)	DfT
Amanda John	DfT
Claire Gregory	DfT
Greg Ward	DfT
Helen Smart	DfT
Lee Bowerman	DfT
Mark Bailey	HS2 Ltd
Davinder Hothi	HS2 Ltd
Caroline Richards	HS2 Ltd
Louise Portelly	HS2 Ltd
Sadie Morgan	Independent Consultant
Apologies	
Cllr Martin Tett	Local Government Association
Kath Daly & Sue Holden	Chilterns Conservation Board
Kate Russell	Central Association of Agricultural Valuers

Dave Buttery (DB) opened the meeting by introducing himself, and welcomed the members of the Roundtable.

Agenda Item 1 – Review of actions from the meeting on 12th July 2016

The actions from the previous meeting were noted.

Agenda Item 2 – Design Panel update

Sadie Morgan, Chair of the Design Panel gave an update on progress made to date which included:

- 58 Design Panel review meetings have taken place to date, of which around 20% have been for Phase Two.
- Going forward it is likely that there will be themed panel meetings, as it will not be possible to do individual reviews of every design element.
- The Design Panel work is based on the themes of the Design Vision:–
 - People – design for everyone to benefit and enjoy.
 - Place – design to create a sense of space.
 - Time – design to stand the test of time.
- Procurement is one area where the Design Panel has had early influence, ensuring that Design is weighted more highly in the assessment criteria. The Colne Valley viaduct specimen design is also an early success of the Panel.

Some members asked how as stakeholders they could become more involved, and that once Royal Assent was achieved it would be important that stronger relationships were built as we move into the next design stage. It was suggested that key stakeholders could get together, for example at a workshop, implement a memorandum of understanding and use the workshop as a chance to raise key points of concern/interest. SM stated that she would be happy to Chair if this took place, and welcomed further engagement with the members on this. **Action: HS2 Ltd** to engage with the members to discuss this further and to better understand the purpose of such a workshop.

Agenda Item 3 – HS2 Phase 2a

Caroline Richards (CR) gave an update for Phase 2a. CR thanked the members for their consultation responses and stated that the consultation period has been completed and that the design will go through a further iteration considering consultee feedback. She added that it was intended for the hybrid Bill to be submitted by the end of 2017.

CR answered a pre-meeting question that came from the Country Land and Business Association (CLA) on what % of compensatory habitat is being

delivered away from the railway (i.e. outside the redline). She stated that this was not known at this time as the design and mitigation is still developing however in line with previous updates at this forum we are seeking to include mitigation outside of the main railway corridor where this provides us with an opportunity to mitigate the likely significant effects of the scheme, connect existing habitat and seek to minimise the loss of high quality agricultural land. The Woodland Trust wanted to know what mechanisms were in place to identify such areas and CR stated that they had good information from the farm interviews that have been conducted which was helping to make better informed judgements for where mitigation should be located and also that discussions were taking place with the relevant Wildlife Trusts regarding opportunities.

Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) mentioned the opportunity offered by conservation covenants, which could reduce project costs and disruption to landowners, while delivering better environmental outcomes. Legislation was needed however to deliver this tool. The CLA added that substantial benefits could be had, and could put HS2 Ltd in touch with a contact at Defra.

Andrew Jones MP arrived at this point and welcomed the members. He reaffirmed the Government's commitment to HS2 and emphasised the speed at which the project was progressing, not just Phase One but Phase 2a and Phase 2b.

However, he emphasised that in moving into this next stage of the project that HS2 will be good neighbours across the route and that disrupted people will be treated with respect.

The meeting continued with the Phase 2a update, and the NFU asked if the members would get to see the updated plans before the formal EIA report is deposited by the end of next year. CR stated that HS2 Ltd were looking to share emerging plans on a more informal basis before deposit. The NFU and CLA were concerned about affected landowners and that early engagement was key. CR re-iterated that we would seek to engage with landowners and MB added that good discussions were already taking place.

Agenda Item 4 – HS2 Phase 2b

Davinder Hothi (DH) gave a verbal update and presentation for Phase 2b, which showed the preferred route for both eastern and western legs. DH stated that the route has changed in parts and in some places this has been significant. We are consulting in those places.

DH stated that the consultation for the Crewe to Manchester, West Midlands to Leeds (Route Refinement) was launched on 15th November. The closing

date is 9th March 2017, and that early feedback on any key issues is welcomed. Looking to deposit Phase 2b during this Parliament.

DH covered the procurement process and explained that the route has been split into three large geographic packages, and gave a breakdown with timescales for contract award.

DH moved on to next steps, which included a series of public events between Jan 2017 and March 2017, obtaining land access and undertaking ecology surveys, and data collection.

CPRE were pleased with the announcement of an HS2 wide review of connectivity with the existing rail network, and asked what opportunities there would be for public engagement. DH stated that they have already been working with Transport for the North in South Yorkshire. Helen Smart of DfT said on engagement, that if this work led to proposals for significant changes, such as additional junctions, this would be likely to trigger a consultation that would include all stakeholders.

The NFU had dialed in to the meeting, and asked if a copy of the Phase 2b presentation could be forwarded. **Action: HS2 Ltd.**

Agenda Item 5 – Ecology Review Group

Mark Bailey of HS2 Ltd gave an update on progress made since the last meeting. He stated that they were looking at the draft monitoring strategy; an update on No Net Loss (NNL). On HS2 seeking NNL he stated that there will be opportunities for the Group to consider opportunities and further proposals along the route which could include suggestions from stakeholders.

The Woodland Trust asked about the frequency of the Group and emphasised that communication around the meetings was important, and requested that the Terms of Reference of the ERG be emailed to the other members. MB would see that this is sent out for information. **Action: HS2 Ltd**

DB stated that although the ERG was initially conceived as a monitoring group its role had grown, therefore, the group would need to consider what would be the right frequency of meetings at different stages in the project.

Agenda Item 6 – No Net Loss Report (NNL)

Dave Buttery of DfT spoke about the NNL report published by Natural England in October, and DfT and HS2 Ltd.'s response in November. He stated that HS2 Ltd would continue to work with Natural England on the metric.

DB noted that there had been petitioning on the issues raised in the NNL report and we are waiting for the House of Lords Select Committee conclusions on this issue. He noted that the Woodland Fund was in place and would be within the Ecology Review Group's remit. He also noted the intention for the Government 25 Year Plan for the Environment to address ancient woodland compensation. The Woodland Trust queried how the group could feed into Defra's work on this. DB stated that DfT were meeting Defra shortly and would provide an update to the group on how they could feed in. **Action: HS2 Ltd/DfT** to provide details to the group on how they could feed into the Defra work.

The CLA mentioned that the report is quite technical and would DfT/HS2 Ltd be responding. DB stated that HS2 Ltd had written a letter responding to the detailed points and will share it with the CLA. **Action: HS2 Ltd**

Agenda Item 7 - Community & Environment Fund and the Business & Local Economy Fund (CEF & BLEF)

Louise Portelly (LP) gave an update on progress since the last meeting, and introduced Greg Ward of DfT who is now the Funds Development Manager. The update included developments since the last meeting of the Roundtable:

- Indicative regional allocations for the funds were announced on 12th October and information paper C12 has been updated to reflect this.
- The Independent grant management body, Groundwork UK have now been procured through the Crown Commercial Services framework and started work at the beginning of December. HS2 Ltd and DfT will now work with them to publish detailed guidance documentation prior to the launch of the funds at Royal Assent.
- Interview process for panel members has taken place, there will be an announcement in the New Year.
- To fulfil an action from the last meeting, a survey was circulated to the members on 19th October. 13 organisations completed the survey. The results were circulated today in hard copy form. **[Electronic version will be circulated with the minutes]**

CPRE noted that while there were metrics to assess NNL for biodiversity, that there were no commitments in terms of offsetting impacts on landscape, heritage and greenbelt, and asked how we can improve those areas – opportunity, landscape and heritage benefits. DB noted that projects in these areas were all eligible for funding under the CEF and BLEF but perhaps there needed to be some thought about how benefits and positive outcomes were

reported. Louise Portelly and Greg Ward to work with Groundwork UK on this point and share thinking with DfT. **Action: Louise Portelly and Greg Ward.**

The Minister left the meeting at that point and in closing stated that he was looking forward to working with the members.

The Greenwood Community Forest Partnership (GCFP) asked LP if the funds were just for Phase One, and have we come to any conclusion how this will be run. LP confirmed that the funds were for Phase One and that detail on the funding model to be used is outlined in information paper C12.

GW said that the Groundwork UK regional bodies are on board – have knowledge of the area, and will inform the work of the independent Panel. Detailed guidance will be available prior to Royal Assent, and there is a communication plan in place. Case studies will become available on the Groundwork UK website as projects are confirmed.

AOB

CPRE noted that Royal Assent for Phase One is a big milestone, and asked how we see the Roundtable going forward. It was recognised as an important forum but all members should think about how it should work and add the most value going forward.

Members suggested that DfT/HS2 Ltd and the members conducted a survey to establish what the role of the group should be. DB echoed this, and said that it was important to find the right balance. **Action: DfT/HS2 Ltd**

Key Action Summary:

- 1) To engage with the members to discuss the purpose of a design workshop. **Action: HS2 Ltd**
- 2) The Phase 2b presentation to be circulated to the NFU. **Action: HS2 Ltd [Completed]**
- 3) The Terms of Reference of the Ecology Review Group to be emailed to the members. **Action: HS2 Ltd**
- 4) To provide details to the group on how they could feed into the Defra work. **Action: HS2 Ltd/DfT**
- 5) HS2 Ltd to forward their response to the No Net Loss Review to the CLA after the meeting. **Action: HS2 Ltd. [Completed]**
- 6) CEF & BLEF. The electronic version of the survey to be circulated with the minutes. **Action: DfT [Completed]**

- 7) CEF & BLEF. Louise Portelly and Greg Ward to think about how the benefits from the grants are monitored and propose to DfT.
Action: Louise Portelly and Greg Ward.

- 8) DfT and members of the Roundtable to produce a survey of ideas that will help to determine how the Roundtable can be best used going forward. **Action: DfT/HS2 Ltd**

Date of next meeting

Thursday 16th March 2017 from 13:30hrs to 15:00hrs in Great Minster House.