

Note of meeting: High Speed 2 – Environment Roundtable

Date: Wednesday 10th February 2016 - 13:30 to 15:00

Location: Department for Transport

Attendees:

Name	Organisation
Katherine Hawkins	Wildlife Trusts
Victoria Bankes Price	Woodland Trust
Ralph Smyth (RS)	Campaign to Protect Rural England
Ben Middlemiss	National Trust
Louise Staples (LS)	National Farmers Union
Kate Russell (KR)	Central Association of Agricultural Valuers
Tav Kazmi	Canal & River Trust
Cllr Martin Tett (MT)	Local Government Association (LGA)
Tom Harlow	Country Land and Business Association
James MacColl	Campaign for Better Transport
Dave Buttery (DB) (Chair)	DfT
Joseph Odiari	DfT
Barry Austin (BA)	DfT
Amanda John	DfT
Sarah Tyler	Defra
Mark Bailey	HS2 Ltd
Peter Miller	HS2 Ltd
Louise Portelly	HS2 Ltd
Davinder Hothi (DH)	HS2 Ltd
Caroline Richards	HS2 Ltd
Richard Adam (RA)	HS2 Ltd
Tony Burton (TB)	HS2 Ltd
Nick Mitchard	ARUP
Cathy Elliott (CE)	Independent Consultant
John Grimshaw (JG)	Independent Consultant
Apologies	
Cllr Stewart Stacey	Birmingham City Council
Eugene Suggett	Ramblers
Malcolm Hackett	Greenwood Community Forest Partnership

Dave Buttery (**DB**) opened the meeting by introducing himself, and welcomed the members of the Roundtable. He also welcomed Cathy Elliott (**CE**), the newly appointed Chair for the Community & Environment Fund and the Business & Local Economy Fund.

Agenda Item 1 – Actions from the meeting on 4th November 2015

Key Action Summary:

Action 1: HS2 Ltd to respond to NGOs suggestions to improve the usability of the Register or Undertakings and Assurances.

Action 2: HS2 Ltd to circulate the Landscape Design when published, and share examples of where the Design Panel had made a difference so far, if possible.

Tony Burton (**TB**) said that these were still being worked on and an update will be provided at the next meeting. **Action HS2 Ltd**

Action 3: HS2 Ltd and DfT to provide updates on what they are doing for cycling at the meeting on 10th February 2016.

Update: The latest update was given on 10th February 2016 under Item 5.

Agenda Item 2 – Update Phase Two

Davinder Hothi (**DH**) mentioned that as per previous updates, an announcement on Phase 2b is still anticipated later this year. He went on to say that on 30 November 2015 the Secretary of State for Transport confirmed the HS2 preferred route from Fradley in the West Midlands to Crewe (Phase 2a), and that it was the intention to build this section six years earlier than planned (by 2027). Accelerating this part of the route will bring benefits to the North sooner and build on the excellent connectivity which already exists at Crewe, supporting growth and jobs more quickly and creating the right conditions for the Northern Powerhouse.

DH introduced the Phase 2a team (Caroline Richards and Nick Mitchard), who ran through a presentation.

James MacColl stated that part of the value of this project is to reduce carbon, integrating with existing rail network. **DB** said there is a lot of work going on to put this together across the different rail interests within DfT.

RS asked if a short note could be produced on the lessons learned from Phase 1 and how these are influencing Phase 2, and could it be shared with the members of the roundtable. **Action HS2 Ltd**

Cllr Martin Tett (MT) said that it is important that there is community engagement in order to learn lessons externally from stakeholders. **DH** said that technical seminars have been undertaken across Phase Two and will continue where two-way communication on lessons learnt is being encouraged in order to inform the approach to Phase Two.

Kate Russell (**KR**) wanted reassurance that stakeholders would still be engaged recognising their differing requirements. Nick Mitchard reassured the Roundtable on the approach with respect to the engagement strategy being developed around the different type of stakeholder groups.

KR noted that from a farmers perspective it was key that they were able to engage with HS2 Ltd staff that could make design decisions that would then be maintained.

Mark Bailey pointed out that providing absolute commitment at an early stage in design would be very difficult due to a number of influences, but recognised the benefit in early access and engagement with farmers.

Robert Goodwill MP joined the meeting and touched on tree production. He asked if the Woodland Trust could look to see what progress had been made to develop disease resistant strains of elm and ash, and if it was possible for cuttings to be taken from the ancient Cubbington Pear tree and planted at community areas along the route. Victoria Banks Price said she would look into disease resistance and report back. He said that it would be good to get the elm tree re-established. **Action Woodland Trust**

AGENDA ITEM 3 – Community & Environment Fund and the Business & Local Economy Fund (CEF & BLEF)

Robert Goodwill MP welcomed Cathy Elliott (**CE**), the newly appointed Chair. CE said she was looking forward to the role and would welcome input from the Roundtable.

Cathy briefly introduced herself and the envisaged role of the Panel.

Louise Staples (**LS**) asked if there would be an opportunity for everyone to attend another CEF & BLEF workshop. **CE** said this would be looked into. **Action HS2 Ltd**

Tav Kazmi of Canal & River Trust asked if projects covering the wider canal network would be considered. **DB** said that routewide projects could be considered but that each project would be assessed on its merits.

CE asked for any examples of best practice that the Roundtable members had for similar community funds. **Action for Roundtable members**

AGENDA ITEM No.4 – Update on Design Panel

Tony Burton (**TB**), a consultant working with HS2 Ltd and member of the Design Panel, gave a brief update on the work of the Panel.

LS asked how the Roundtable feeds ideas into the Design Panel, and how the Panel supplied information to the Roundtable. **TB** said that the main focus for influencing HS2's design should be HS2 Ltd as the Panel's role was to advise HS2 Ltd. The Design Panel will welcome feedback via the Roundtable.

RS mentioned 3 things:

1. There is a need for a communication strategy so the Design Panel process is more transparent, particularly in relation to its advice.
2. The Landscape Design is late in being published and he asked the Minister to encourage its early publication.
3. Neither Schedule 16 [now 17] nor the associated statutory guidance mentions the Design Panel let alone the weight to be given to its advice.

MT and other members expressed a desire for greater clarity on the process through which HS2 will be developed, where the Design Panel fits in and when local communities and other stakeholders will see plans to which they can respond.

DB acknowledged the issue and agreed that HS2 Ltd should present the design process at the next Roundtable meeting. **Action: HS2 Ltd**

Ben Middlemiss reiterated that the members want to understand the process. He asked how the Design Panel work is prioritised.

TB stressed that the Design Panel is independent and so will set its own priorities. This will be done by Sadie Morgan (Chair) and it would be informed by HS2 Ltd.'s programme and also where the Design Panel felt it could add most value. He indicated that the Panel would welcome views from members of the Roundtable on where it should focus.

Agenda Item 5 - Cycling

There were updates from Barry Austin (**BA**) of DfT, John Grimshaw (**JG**), a consultant for DfT and from Richard Adam (**RA**) of HS2 Ltd.

BA gave a brief overview of the Government's plans for meeting its manifesto commitment to double the number of journeys taken by bicycle. To reaffirm its commitment to cycling and walking, the Government allocated over £300m to cycling and walking until 20-21. Further details will be published in the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy, which is going out for consultation in Spring with an aim for it to be published Summer 2016.

JG gave an update on the feasible study for cycle routes along the corridor of HS2 and HS3.

RA gave an update regarding changes relating to cycling that had been made to HS2 as a result of the Select Committee process.

LS asked about the need for compulsory purchases as a result of the feasibility study. **JG** replied that he'd hoped most land would be sold voluntarily but there will be more options.

RS asked when Information Paper E5 "Roads and Public Rights of Way" will be updated with cycling aspects. **RA** replied that it is nearly ready and now needs to go through relevant governance.

RS then gave an example of the Birmingham Interchange section and felt that this had huge potential, which was being wasted due to a lack of cycle connections on three sides of the station site. He said that this was potentially a good example that could potentially be identified as part of the National Cycling & Walking Investment Plan. **RA** and **JG** said that they are working with a range of stakeholders and cycle connectivity is firmly under consideration.

RS mentioned Schedule 16 of the Bill, and that it does not allow local authorities to require HS2 plans to be modified to include cycling provision. **RA** said that layouts for cycling routes are covered by Schedule 4 and 31 Part 1, with consent / approval being given by the highway authority, rather than Schedule 16.

AGENDA ITEM No.6 – HS2 Data Publication Strategy

RS said that the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) have a strategy to publishing a large amount of open data this year, and there are potential synergies with the Data Publication Strategy HS2 has committed to publish by Royal Assent.

AOB

LS wanted to know the timescales for the Bill going forward. **DB** said that the timetabling of the Bill was a matter for the House and so could not be confirmed at this point. Select Committee was due to produce its final report on 22 February. The Bill would then go into its Public Bill Committee phase. Report and 3rd Reading would follow, possibly before Easter or just after. The Bill would then go to the Lords. The target date for Royal Assent remained the end of 2016.

Key Action Summary from 10th February 2016:

Action 1: HS2 Ltd to respond to NGOs suggestions to improve the usability of the Register or Undertakings and Assurances.

Post meeting update: The register will stay in its current format. It is easy to read, use, and search, and the data is freely available to anyone who wants to import it and re-analyse it.

Action 2: HS2 Ltd to provide a 2 page non-technical summary on how Phase 1 is influencing Phase 2, and share with the members of the roundtable.

Action 3: Woodland Trust to look to see what progress had been made to develop disease resistant strains of elm and ash, and to see if it was possible for cuttings to be taken from the ancient Cubbington Pear tree.

Action 4: HS2 Ltd to look at setting up a CEF & BLEF workshop for members to attend.

Action 5: Roundtable members to provide any examples of best practice they have for similar community funds.

Action 6: HS2 Ltd to publish the Landscape Design as soon as possible and share with the members.

Date of next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 22nd June 2016 between 13.30hrs and 15.00hrs in Great Minster House. This date was emailed to the members post-meeting.