

Note of meeting: High Speed 2 – Environment Round Table

Date: 20 May 2014 - 13:30 – 15:00

Location: Department for Transport

Attendees:

Name	Organisation
Ralph Smyth	Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)
Victoria Bankes Price	The Woodland Trust
James MacColl	Campaign for Better Transport
Paul Wilkinson	Wildlife Trusts
Eugene Suggett	Ramblers Organisation
Henry Russell	The Heritage Alliance
Rt Hon Robert Goodwill MP	DfT
Dave Buttery	DfT
Amanda John	DfT
Fozia Chughtai	DfT
Stephen Hennigan	DfT
David Williams	DfT
Peter Miller	HS2 Ltd
Tony Burton	HS2 Ltd
Mark Bailey	HS2 Ltd
Attiya Biviji	HS2 Ltd
Chris Stapleton	HS2 Ltd
David Pivac	HS2 Ltd

Key Action Summary:

- To follow up the points in relation to the Scotland study on whether intermediate speeds are being considered and whether recent roads announcements are factored into the modelling and provide an update for the next meeting. **Action: DfT**
- To provide any comments by email on revised Terms of Reference for the group. **Action: All**
- To consider if those members who did not attend meetings should be classed as observers or corresponding members only for the revised Terms of Reference. **Action: HS2 Ltd**
- To consider extending membership of this group to other organisations, e.g. CLA or NFU, or provide a clear rationale for not doing so and provide an update at the next meeting. **Action: DfT and HS2 Ltd**
- To correct the wording of the last bullet point in the revised Terms of Reference relating to petitioning. **Action: DfT**

- To inform members when the process for hearing route wide petitions is clear. **Action: DfT**
- To consider the concerns raised about negotiations and contact the group for a simplified list of issues for negotiation if required. **Action: HS2 Ltd**
- The group to contribute any thoughts and suggestion on who to include on the Panel to HS2 Ltd. **Action: All**
- To circulate draft minutes of this meeting for comment by attendees. **Action: DfT.**
- To arrange the date for the next meeting. **Action: DfT**

Minutes of Last Meeting

Dave Buttery chaired the meeting and welcomed attendees.

Review of actions from last meeting

All the actions from the last meeting had been closed or would be covered during the course of this meeting.

North of England and Scotland

Stephen Hennigan (SH) gave a verbal update to the group. The remit letter from DfT to HS2 Ltd setting out objectives for further work on Scotland was sent in November 2013 -

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/254493/131101-hs2-options-scotland.pdf

The work will be considering high speed options, upgrades to existing infrastructure, and or a combination of the two, looking at both East and West Coast rail corridors. The report should be completed by the end of the year. HS2 Ltd are working with Network Rail, the Department, the Scotland Office and Transport Scotland, liaising with local authorities as necessary.

CPRE queried whether intermediate high speed options were being considered at all – there were examples of this in Europe which allowed freight as well. This was an important point as the environmental impact of a lower speed High Speed Line could be significantly less and the corridor south of Carlisle passes through National Park. The full spectrum of options should be considered.

SH explained that only the full high speed specification or upgrading existing lines was being considered however, the possibility of intermediate speeds for new lines could be discussed with engineers.

CPRE also asked if the feasibility study for the A1 North of Newcastle had been taken into account. SH confirmed that discussions had taken place with Roads colleagues but he would check if the demand analysis had taken account of it.

ACTION: DfT to follow up the points in relation to the Scotland study on whether intermediate speeds are being considered and whether recent roads announcements are factored into the modelling and provide an update for the next meeting

Revised Terms of Reference

The revised Terms of Reference were tabled at the meeting and Mark Bailey (MB) highlighted the main changes. As members had not had a chance to consider these in detail, any comments were requested by email.

ACTION: All members to provide any comments by email on revised Terms of Reference for the group.

CPRE and The Heritage Alliance asked about the status of organisations, such as the National Association of AONBs and Greenpeace, that had not attended meetings and whether they should be recorded as observers or corresponding members only. MB agreed to consider this.

ACTION: HS2 Ltd to consider if those members who did not attend meetings should be classed as observers or corresponding members only for the revised Terms of Reference.

CPRE voiced the need for a clear reason for not allowing certain groups, such as the CLA or NFU, membership of the Environment Roundtable. The CLA had complained to a Parliamentary Select Committee that they were not able to attend these meetings. It was suggested that they could be observers or part of the proposed tree working group. Although the CLA were engaged with DfT and HS2 Ltd in other forums, DfT agreed that a clear and defensible rationale was required for membership and they would consider whether to invite these groups or have a clear rationale for not doing so. An update would be given at the next meeting.

ACTION: DfT and HS2 Ltd to consider extending membership of this group to other organisations, e.g. CLA or NFU, or provide a clear rationale for not doing so and provide an update at the next meeting.

CPRE also pointed out that the wording of the last bullet point, under Notes, was contrary to the Secretary of State's instruction and needed amending. DfT agreed to correct the wording.

ACTION: DfT to correct the wording of the last bullet point in the revised Terms of Reference.

Hybrid Bill – 2nd Reading and Petition Update

Dave Buttery gave an update explaining that 710 petitions had been received (at the time of the meeting). The petitions are all being published on the Parliamentary website. The Committee should start hearing petitions from July. There had been written representations on the process which the Committee will consider and respond to after the Queen's speech.

There would be a number of route wide petitions and the Committee would want to avoid people having to appear before them repeatedly. Ultimately it would be a decision for the Committee but one proposal was that there should be a mechanism of capturing route wide issues to prevent repeat appearances by the same people. Once DfT knows what the process is going to be, they will let the members know. The Committee will produce a forward programme of when people will attend.

ACTION: DfT to inform members when the process for hearing route wide petitions is clear.

The Minister arrived at this point and spoke to the group. He stated that as the project had now got to the point of 2nd reading and was definitely going to happen, we were in a better place to be more positive and get the best environmental deal in delivering the biggest environmental project in Europe. The Minister had a forthcoming meeting with the CLA, of which he was a member, and they were concerned that some land marked for mitigation purposes was prime agricultural land. The CLA argument was, why not use derelict land for mitigation purposes. However, the same solution could not be used all the way along the route. The Minister wondered whether mitigation could be offered for a particular lesser known species that needed protection. These were some of the issues he was interested in but he was keen to hear from the group.

CBT raised the issue of modal shift and the impact on carbon and climate change. They were concerned this had not been considered properly. There were linkages with the existing network and how to promote modal shift in an environmentally sustainable manner. The Minister was aware that there were a lot of potential opportunities and hoped that on balance, the project could be delivered in a more sustainable way.

CBT were also keen that there should be a proper fare strategy for HS2. The Minister agreed that it would have to be priced for everyone.

HS2 Ltd informed the group that they were now signatory to the infrastructure carbon review. As part of this they may consider low carbon tariffs for example and there may well be a carbon working group formed.

CPRE were in favour of the endowment fund proposal and this would be a key to better mitigation as it would give HS2 Ltd the ability to work with landowners further from the route to identify mitigation and compensation.

CPRE have just launched new mapping to show how HS2 would impact on the countryside - www.hs2maps.com

These would help to identify where there are opportunities to mitigate and improve the environment. CPRE were also keen to promote areas identified by Natural England as well. They would be happy to work with officials to identify brownfield, rather than Green Belt, sites that HS2 could unlock for development purposes.

Wildlife Trusts were concerned that for the, quoting the Minister, biggest environmental project in Europe, an ambition of no net loss for the environment was too low. The aim should be for a net gain. Although no net loss at the start would be good, the overall ambition should be for a gain. Right now it should be a case of let's get it right and a dedicated pot for environmental mitigation would be useful. The Minister stated that some of the gain would be delivered in time.

The Woodlands Trust raised the issue of negotiations. There had been a number of meetings with HS2 Ltd and the 1-day meeting had been very useful. However, they had not yet got anywhere with negotiations and it was important to be negotiating positively now as the project moves forward.

The Minister said that as a lot of mitigation had already been given prior to the Bill, we would have to think about how much more could be offered up front before the Committee stage.

The Woodlands Trust gave the example of the temporary land use in ancient woodland which would seem to be an easy issue to negotiate away but had not been received well by HS2 Ltd.

HS2 Ltd would look into this and come back to the group – if agreement can be reached on certain issues, then they would do so. HS2 Ltd agreed to come back with a list of areas where there was room for manoeuvre before Committee stage.

DfT agreed that negotiation was useful and it would not be helpful to have a petitioner present something to the Committee that could easily have been cleared up easily beforehand. We needed and wanted the group to be in active negotiation with us.

The Minister cited the example of the Ramblers Association who were going to petition but most of their points would already have been met. The Ramblers Association agreed but stated that were still 22 points remaining but they were hopeful that they could be negotiated away.

CPRE said that besides itself having difficulties, some local authorities were also saying that they were finding it difficult to move things forward in negotiating. CPRE were concerned that HS2 Ltd were not clear on where there might be potential to negotiate away petitions.

DfT said they were aware that some agents were creating the impression that things aren't being handled well. The Minister agreed that some local authorities had also wished to improve relationships.

HS2 Ltd asked if it was obvious in petitions which of the issues raised could be cleared away easily. The Woodlands Trust replied that they had but it was quite difficult to make it clear in the petition. HS2 Ltd agreed to discuss and if needed, ask each of the group for a simplified list of issues which could be taken off the agenda before the Committee stage.

The Heritage Alliance said that the heritage organisations would submit their own separate petitions.

ACTION: HS2 Ltd to consider the concerns raised about negotiations and contact the group for a simplified list of issues for negotiation if required.

Additional Provisions (APs)

Dave Buttery explained that APs would be required for a change to the bill or to extend the land required, e.g. if the Euston changes went ahead, that would lead to an AP. There would also be a new petition period. Some negotiations with a range of stakeholders would lead to a number of small changes which may require APs. Any APs would need an environmental statement and thus will involve a lot of work. The aim would be to try and assemble as many changes as possible in one AP.

Design Panel

Tony Burton provided an update on the Design Panel. Discussions had been held with everyone in this group. An advert was placed on 19 May for a Chair for the Design Panel.

The Design Panel would have a broad remit with up to 25 people from the full range of disciplines. The Panel would report to HS2 Ltd with regular contact with the Secretary of State. The aim was to draw on the country's best available talent. Work on this would continue over the next few months and hopefully conclude in the autumn. This was a long term commitment and would cover both Phase One and Two and so it was important to get it right. HS2 Ltd encouraged the group to think about who could contribute to the Panel.

ACTION: The group to contribute any thoughts and suggestion on who to include on the Panel.

The Heritage Alliance thought this was very encouraging. The Wildlife Trusts questioned how independent and influential the panel would be.

HS2 Ltd explained that an independent secretariat would be established and it would be helpful to have the group's thoughts on how the panel should

operate. There were already a number of checks and balances included in the bill.

CPRE asked if the holding to account role that the panel might have was included in the bill itself.

HS2 Ltd said that the Secretary of State had made the commitment to set up a Design Panel and they would consider whether it should be a commitment in the bill.

ACTION: HS2 Ltd to consider whether there should be a commitment in the bill for the Design Panel.

Information Papers – Awareness Raising

Dave Buttery explained that there were now 62 papers on the HS2 website and they just wanted to ensure that the group were aware of them and were looking at them.

CPRE commented that the papers were not dated and it was hard to see which ones were new or updated – could lead to important information being missed. An RSS feed of papers was requested, similar to what is available on gov.uk sites including the DfT's. HS2 Ltd agreed that it was an unclear process and they were looking into how this could be improved.

Phase Two Update

Fozia Chughtai updated the group on the Phase Two consultation – this had closed at the end of January with over 10,000 response. The responses were currently being considered, along with the recommendations from the Higgins Report. An announcement would be made in the autumn.

CPRE asked if the bill currently before Parliament would have to be extended to include the possible acceleration of the route to Crewe. DfT confirmed that the bill would not be extended and if it was decided to accelerate the route to Crewe, a separate bill would have to be laid.

Next Meeting

The next meeting would be held in August/September 2014 - date to be confirmed.