

Note of meeting: High Speed 2 – Environment Round Table

Date: 10th September 2014 - 13:30 – 15:00

Location: Department for Transport

Attendees:

Name	Organisation
Ralph Smyth	Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)
Victoria Bankes Price	Woodland Trust (WT)
Ingrid Samuel	National Trust (NT)
Melanie Coath	RSPB
Eugene Suggett	Ramblers Organisation
Peter Birch	Canal & River Trust (C&RT)
Cllr Martin Tett	Local Government Association (LGA)
Andrew Shirley	Country Land Association (CLA)
Kate Russell	Central Association of Agricultural Valuers (CAAV)
Louise Staples	National Farmers Union (NFU)
James MacColl	Campaign for Better Transport (CBT)
Robert Goodwill MP (RG)	DfT
Dave Buttery (DB)	DfT
Mark Norton	DfT
Amanda John	DfT
Mairi Warrington	DfT
Stephen Hennigan (SH)	DfT
Lee Bowerman (LB)	DfT
Joe Odiari (JO)	DfT
Dan Taylor (DT)	DfT
Rebecca Stockbridge	DEFRA
Mark Bailey (MB)	HS2 Ltd
Tony Burton (TB)	HS2 Ltd
Louise Portelly	HS2 Ltd
Shilpa Amin	HS2 Ltd
Elen Bradley	HS2 Ltd
Emily Lightowler	HS2 Ltd

Key Action Summary:

- **Action:** DfT to send minutes from future meetings within 2 weeks.
- **Action:** DfT and HS2 Ltd to consider and feedback on how, where possible, the communication of assurances can be made more accessible.
- **Action:** DfT to circulate briefing on the Rail Link Countryside Initiative (Community Fund) for HS1

- **Action:** DfT to circulate the minutes of the Tree Working Group with these minutes.

Dave Buttery (DB) chaired the meeting and welcomed attendees.

Review of Actions from Last Meeting

Cllr Martin Tett (LGA) said that he wasn't at the last meeting, and minutes from the previous meeting had not been distributed until the 4 September. LGA felt it would be helpful to receive minutes in a more timely fashion to inform responses at the next meeting. DB apologised for their lateness and confirmed that in future a 2 week turn-around would be adhered to.

Action: DfT to send minutes from future meetings within 2 weeks.

Actions from the last meeting on 20th May were:

- To follow up the points in relation to the Scotland study on whether **(a)** intermediate speeds are being considered and **(b)** whether recent roads announcements are factored into the modelling and provide an update for the next meeting. **Action: DfT**

Stephen Hennigan of DfT provided the answers:

Answer to Question (a)

- The remit includes looking at High Speed options designed to the HS2 specification of 225mph as used with Phases 1 and 2, to ensure that all Phases of work are treated equally and to test the feasibility of a 3 hour journey time.
- It is important to remember however that we are at an early broad options stage looking at feasibility of options and not at proposing particular routes. Further work on specific options that might be taken forward would look at lower speeds in order to adapt to the topography.
- Environmental considerations are taken into account, along with cost, constructability and benefits. In later stages of design, we would consider changes to alignment based on increased design and intelligence. As options progress, we would consider all options (including the potential to reduce speed) to avoid features of strategic significance which may include environmental sites. However, this would follow the same process of identifying the benefits and costs of doing so.
- Additionally the remit includes options that are upgrades to existing infrastructure which will not be High Speed.

Answer to Question (b)

- As is standard practice in such work, the demand modelling includes only committed schemes.
- The modelling therefore does not include any plans for dualling of the A1.

- It is important to remember however that we are at an early broad options stage looking at feasibility of options and not at proposing particular routes or comparing to possible improvements in other modes. Further work on specific options that might be taken forward would look in more detail at other modes such as roads improvements.
- To provide any comments by email on revised Terms of Reference for the group. **Action: All – Comments received.**
- 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 – They will be members.**
- 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 – Membership extended.**
- To correct the wording of the last bullet point in the revised Terms of Reference relating to petitioning. **Action: DfT – Amended.**
- To inform members when the process for hearing route wide petitions is clear. **Action: DfT – Answer: We don't yet have a clear plan from the committee on route wide issues, so there is nothing to tell at the moment.**
- To consider the concerns raised about negotiations and contact the group for a simplified list of issues for negotiation if required. **Action: HS2 Ltd – Being done.**
- The group to contribute any thoughts and suggestion on who to include on the Panel to HS2 Ltd. **Action: All – Thoughts received.**
- To circulate draft minutes of this meeting for comment by attendees. **Action: DfT – Done.**
- To arrange the date for the next meeting. **Action: DfT – Done.**

Petitioning

Ralph Smyth (CPRE) raised concerns about the communication of assurances given to petitioners in advance of, or as a result of, Select Committee. CPRE felt that assurances should be communicated in a more digestible manner as the smaller NGOs were finding it hard to assimilate all the information due to resource constraints. DB agreed that this was challenging and required more reflection.

Action: DfT and HS2 Ltd to consider how, where possible, the communication of assurances can be made more accessible.

LGA was supportive of the Community Fund and noted that it could play a significant role in relieving antagonism felt along the line of route where there was no benefit from connectivity. Mark Bailey (MB) of HS2 Ltd explained that consideration is being given to the scope of the fund, and the positive impact it could have on 'Environment' and 'Business'. Ministers are considering the fund. If Ministers took the proposal forward there would be a process of engagement with NGOs to define the terms of the fund. There was also general consensus that others around the table welcomed a fund.

DB continued with the following agenda items:

Design Panel

Tony Burton (TB) of HS2 Ltd gave a verbal update to the group. The Design Panel will be responsible for: management and governance of design; dealing with strategic questions raised by design; direct design review and the procurement of design support. It will report to the HS2 Ltd Board. HS2 Ltd aim to have a Chair of the Design Panel in place by the end of 2014. This will be followed by recruitment of the Panel members. The Design Panel will have around 20 members. A secretariat will also be established.

HS2 Ltd is currently preparing a design vision for HS2. This will be a public statement of the design values and principles that will be applied to the HS2 project, and will give the panel criteria to assess against and support HS2 Ltd in being an effective design client.

LGA questioned whether the design vision would be sympathetic to the need to reflect locality, and blend local styles with HS2 design. TB assured LGA that this would be essential to the success of the vision. He also stressed that the Design Panel would engage with local planning authorities during the design process. LGA expressed some scepticism about this engagement, and questioned what would happen when friction occurred during the engagement. DB explained that negotiation and compromise would be required from both parties. He added that, having learnt lessons from Crossrail, there would be a pre-application process, negotiation and an appeal process.

LGA also asked about timescales for designs, and explained that the lack of progress so far raised issues for petitioners. Finally he questioned the scope of design, asking whether it included design of both physical building and design of areas of environmental mitigation. TB confirmed that the Design Panel and design vision would consider all aspects of design.

The Group expressed their concerns about the lack of sight of the design vision and the lack of opportunity to comment on it. There was additional concern about the length of time it had taken to get to this point after the announcement had been made 2 years ago at the CPRE Annual Lecture.

CPRE questioned how good design could be entrenched in HS2, noting that no provision had been made for this in the hybrid Bill. DB raised the point that the Select Committee is very concerned by design, and there would be considerable opportunity to discuss this in Parliament.

At this point the Minister arrived and welcomed everyone. He welcomed the CLA, CAAV and NFU to their first meeting, and explained that he was pleased that they had now joined the group.

The Woodland Trust (WT) raised the scope to position offsetting outside of the line of deviation. The Minister pointed out that positioning offsetting too far away from the line of route would fail to have the desired impact.

HS2 Growth Taskforce

Dan Taylor (DT) provided an update on the HS2 Growth Taskforce. He explained that the Government had produced a response to the Growth Taskforce's report 'Get Ready' in July 2014. The response brought together contributions from central government, local government and HS2 Ltd. A number of work streams were being taken forward, including the development of HS2 Growth Strategies for station cities; and the establishment of local delivery bodies.

CPRE noted a particular interest in the local delivery bodies and suggested that these bodies should be encouraged to focus on brownfield sites when looking at regeneration potential. DfT responded saying it was up to each body to consider local potential. CPRE also highlighted the importance of community engagement in the development of plans for future rail services. DT noted that the 'Your Future Railway' work, which will be taken forward by Network Rail, will look to ensure that community views are captured and factored into strategic planning for future rail services.

LGA asked what account had been taken of areas along the line of route that did not benefit from increased connectivity. He voiced an interest in the benefit that connections with the High Speed Rail College could have for local colleges. The Minister Robert Goodwill, agreed that this would be beneficial and re-emphasised that we were very keen for existing providers to act as 'spokes' to the new college 'hub'. The decision on the hub location had not yet been made but once it had the team delivering the hub would take forward the creation of links with existing providers.

There was further discussion between LGA and the Minister on the use of local supplies. The Minister explained that he was keen for local suppliers to have an opportunity to benefit from the HS2 opportunity. DT added that HS2 Ltd is developing its procurement strategy and would be running 2 supply chain conferences in October to make sure industry had a chance to contribute. He also highlighted that opportunities were not linked to specific locations and companies should think early about how they might be able to win HS2 contracts.

Presentation by Canal and River Trust

Peter Birch (C&RT) gave a presentation on the objectives and impact of its work, outlining the threats and opportunities of HS2 to its infrastructure and remit.

The Minister asked for details of the C&RT's petition and particularly for clarification on the issue with Fradley Junction. C&RT explained that productive discussions were taking place with HS2 Ltd and progress was being made with this concern.

C&RT also reemphasised its interest in managing land where environmental mitigation had taken place.

Tree Working Group – Feedback

MB explained that he had led the meeting and discussed the remit of the Working Group. He affirmed that HS2 is keen to meet with key specialist organisations at the earliest point possible to facilitate early engagement on HS2 strategies and approaches currently in development. A draft strategy (Planting Procurement Strategy) has been prepared for the procurement of trees and the Working Group Members were asked to make comment on the proposals in that working document. MB highlighted that the aspiration is to use UK seed and UK grown, which represents a substantial opportunity for the tree industry. Smaller growers could particularly benefit from this. There were also further discussions around resilience and planting density. NT feel reassured that this engagement has taken place and LGA agreed that they were very supportive of the process.

LGA's petition makes reference to additional tree planting and LGA asked for details about when further discussions around this will happen. MB explained that further dialogue on additional planting would take place further down the line, as the project is not yet at the detailed design stage.

Kate Russell (CAAV) asked for examples which demonstrate that discussions have been had with affected landowners on issues such as additional tree planting which will require further land-take.

MB concluded by explaining that this was first type of engagement of this kind with NGOs, and he felt it had been successful.

CPRE asked if the minutes of this meeting could be circulated with the minutes of this meeting. - **Action: HS2/DfT**

North of England and Scotland, and HS2 Phase Two

Lee Bowerman (LB) of DfT gave an update on HS2 Phase Two. The consultation responses are being analysed and a number of alternative proposals for Phase Two have been received. All responses will be fully considered. HS2 Ltd is analysing the responses received, will consider any potential route refinements and make a recommendation to Ministers for a final preferred route proposal. LB also mentioned Sir David Higgins's other proposals on Phase Two and flagged that the Government will respond to the consultation by the end of 2014.

Stephen Hennigan (SH) gave an update on Scotland. From when HS2 first opens, Scotland will benefit from high speed services. The Y network allows for seamless transition of trains on to the East and West Coast main lines and is expected to slash the journey time between Edinburgh and Glasgow to London by up to an hour.

CPRE asked if the proposed dualling of the A1 north of Newcastle was being taken into account during the planning of the route. SH remarked that only schemes that had already been committed to could be taken into account. CPRE voiced concerns about a lack of foresight about potential interactions, and felt it was disappointing that the impact of schemes was not considered until they had been committed. CPRE also queried whether the Phase Two work and the East-West Connectivity work would be properly integrated as Leeds and Manchester were currently terminus stations that might not fit well with East-West proposals. Jo Odiari (JO) noted that both issues were being considered by Sir David Higgins and that he was alive to the interactions.

LGA welcomed the news about slow running speeds and continued by asking whether priority would lie with Scotland or East-West Connectivity in the north. DB replied that Ministers were yet to have enough detail of either scheme to have identified a priority. JO commented that, when making these decisions, Ministers faced a considerable task.

Ingrid Samuel (NT) queried the timing of Ministerial response to all of these schemes. The Department assured her that there would be announcements on all three issues before the end of the calendar year, and these were likely to be around the time of the Autumn Statement (which has been announced as 3 December 2014).

Next Meeting

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 9th December 2014 (changed from 4th December) at 13.30hrs – cascaded to all NGO members after the meeting.