

Case Study #3

Landscape Design
Approach

HS2 INDEPENDENT
DESIGN PANEL



Landscape Design Approach

This is the third of a series of case studies about the work of the HS2 Independent Design Panel

In July 2016 HS2 Ltd published its Landscape Design Approach, which is one of a suite of design guidance documents expanding on the principles of the HS2 Design Vision for specific areas of work. Given the scale and importance of landscape to the project, this document has been produced to demonstrate HS2 Ltd's approach to the development of the landscape design along the line of route.

Three review meetings were held by the HS2 Independent Design Panel in March, April and May 2015 to discuss the draft document. Since then the Landscape Design Approach has become a technical standard and is mandatory. It is part of the suite of

documents issued for tender and the awarded contractor has to comply with it (or a subsequent revision). In July 2016 the panel also met to discuss HS2 Ltd's approach to engagement on landscape design.

Process: the Independent Design Panel provides support in a number of ways, from a full review to individual mentoring. In this case an initial full panel meeting with five panel members was followed by smaller meetings with two or three panel members. The consultants and HS2 Ltd were also at each meeting. Following a presentation by consultants there was a discussion with the panel.

Project headlines

- One of a suite of design guidance documents.
- Its purpose is to guide and direct the landscape design approach for HS2.
- Panel comments led to changes in approach and text.
- Now a mandatory technical standard.

Panel Comments

In general, the panel was positive about the Landscape Design Approach, and at the most recent meeting congratulated HS2 Ltd on the published document. The panel encouraged HS2 Ltd to be ambitious in its vision for landscape along the route - recommending that this should be designed to stand the test of time for at least 500 years.

Some of the comments made by the panel, which have informed the final document are outlined below.

1. A holistic approach to landscape design

The panel encouraged HS2 Ltd to take an integrated and holistic approach to landscape design. The final document achieves this by setting out guidance for temporary, rural and urban landscapes associated with the new railway.

The construction of HS2 will take a number of years, which creates an opportunity for temporary landscape designs that are context driven, functional and aesthetically pleasing. Temporary landscapes could for example be ecological, art based or informative. There may also be scope to allow visitors to view and be informed about the project and its construction operations.

In rural areas, the aim is to sensitively integrate landscape design along the route of HS2 with its surrounding context. This could lead to either the conservation, enhancement, restoration or transformation of landscape areas. The need to respect and enhance nationally, regionally and locally designated landscape areas is also acknowledged.

In urban areas the document sets out HS2 Ltd's ambition to create vibrant, high quality public realm - destinations rather than spaces to pass through. This will include places that allow people to wait, meet and socialise and where aspects such as microclimate, permeable surfacing and sustainable water systems are well considered.

2. Design leadership and methodology

The panel emphasised the importance of design leadership and robust management processes to fulfill the landscape design potential of HS2.

HS2 Ltd has responded by including a section on methodology in the final document. This sets out a series of logical steps, from understanding the context to developing detailed designs - including stakeholder engagement as a critical part of the design process. The document also includes a diagram explaining how it relates to other HS2 guidance and standards.

3. Engagement on landscape design

Following publication of the HS2 Landscape Design Approach document in July 2016, a meeting was arranged to discuss engagement on landscape design. The panel challenged HS2 Ltd to be ambitious in its approach to engaging with a range of government and non-government organisations, to help maximise the landscape design benefits of the project.

The panel recommended that the strategy for community engagement needs strengthening to match that prepared for statutory agencies. It argued that following Royal Assent of the Hybrid Bill, HS2 Ltd should seek to shift its approach from consulting to engaging - for example by setting up local field centres as part of temporary works sites.



Illustration from the HS2 Landscape Design Approach document - A21 Lamberhurst Bypass land bridge.