

EH Subgroup Minutes

Meeting date	2 December 2020, 14:30 to 16:30
Meeting location	Microsoft Teams
Meeting title	Environmental Health (EH) SubGroup Meeting #34
HS2 contact or group	planning.forum@hs2.org.uk
Stakeholder	Environmental Health SubGroup to Planning Forum

External Attendees

Independent Chair

Planning Forum Chair

Nominated Undertaker Attendees

Air Quality Manager – HS2 Ltd

Environment and Town Planning Director – HS2 Ltd

Ecology Lead– Align JV

Senior Environment Manager – HS2 Ltd

Noise and Vibration Construction Lead – HS2 Ltd

Phase One Town Planning Lead – HS2 Ltd

Noise Assessment Specialist – HS2 Ltd

Air Quality Lead – HS2 Ltd

EH Subgroup Secretary – HS2 Ltd

EH Attendees

Buckinghamshire Council (BC1)

Buckinghamshire Council (BC2)

London Borough of Ealing (LBE1)

South Northamptonshire Council (SNC)

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC)

Buckinghamshire Council and Three Rivers District Council (BC3)

London Borough of Camden (LBC1)

North Warwickshire Borough Council (NWBC)

Warwick District Council (WDC)

London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (LBHF1)

London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (LBHF2)

London Borough of Camden (LBC2)

London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (LBHF3)

Staffordshire County Council (SCC)

Buckinghamshire Council (BC4)

Cherwell District Council (CDC)

London Borough of Ealing (LBE2)

London Borough of Brent (LBB)

Apologies

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)

Westminster City Council (WCC)

Item 1 - Welcome and Introductions

The Chair called the meeting to order, welcomed attendees and introductions were made.

The meeting was recorded to aid with minute taking so it was assumed everyone provided consent.

Item 2 - Review of Minutes from Previous Meeting

The September 2020 EH Subgroup minutes were sent out in an email 23rd November to the EH Subgroup and reviewed during the December 2020 EH meeting.

The Chair asked if any of the LA had any queries on the post meeting note circulated on Materials Management Plans as part of September Action 4A. No comments were provided.

The Chair asked for an update on September Action 11A. HS2 confirmed that the request had been submitted to the HS2 IT team and was being progressed and will contact the EH Subgroup when complete.

No issues were raised, the meeting and the September 2020 EH Subgroup minutes were agreed during the December 2020 EH meeting.

Item 3 - View from the bridge

The Chair welcomed HS2's Environment and Town Planning Director to discuss Headlines on HS2.

HS2 Environment and Town Planning Director summarised their role on the project to the EH Subgroup. Working within the Infrastructure Directorate of the business this team act as the technical authority for the company and advise on technical matters in the environmental area and town planning arena. Aspect of the role is in Parliament to help pass Bills through the Commons and the Lords, such as the Phase 2a Bill which is now at the final stages waiting for final reading.

The HS2 ID team get involved with Phase One with assurance, looking at procurement on Phase 2a at the moment and on Phase 2b planning the route to Manchester.

Environment and Sustainability is high on the agenda within HS2. An Environmental Sustainability subgroup of the board was set-up in the summer, taking ownership of strategic outcomes for environment on HS2. The carbon outcome is very high on the agenda and HS2 have been certified to PAS2080. HS2 will be rolling out a programme on carbon literacy across the project to ensure everyone is taking on the challenge to reduce carbon through construction and design.

HS2 will publish the Green Corridor Prospectus in the near future. HS2 want to encourage greater collaboration and partnership along the line of the route to achieve a greener outcome.

The HS2 Environment and Town Planning Director said that the EH Subgroup presents a great opportunity to have meaningful engagement. Over the last year HS2 have been through the governance review, got Notice to Proceed and now the Contractors and Integrated Project Teams are now formed. The Subgroup is vital for ensuring HS2 have the right outreach with the right expertise being applied particularly where there are issues at stake to ensure construction is working well across the HS2 portfolio.

HS2 due to its scale has a critical mass of activity it has the ability to shift how we do things and HS2 have seen some of the construction sites getting cleaner and greener over a period of time from the EWC starting to MWCC being on site now. There is a lot of exciting new technology being deployed to make construction easier and more efficient. HS2 have local carbon zero plant equipment out at site, a lot more electric equipment on site, hybrid equipment and HS2 are innovating in the race to get the heavy hydrogen vehicles in place. HS2 will make a significant difference in seeing new technologies coming onto construction sites.

Big learning opportunity from this group to apply in other construction sites in your area to deliver better locally. Soon will have 17,000 working on the scheme, HS2 will be vigilant and will be listening to the EH Subgroup carefully to get on top of any issues and encourage continued collaboration on this.

The HS2 Environment and Town Planning Director introduced an innovation that is moving the construction agenda towards an improved green environmental restoration outcome which will be discussed in Item 4 of the meeting.

The Chair asked whether the Environmental and Sustainability subgroup is a permanent group or a task and finish type of group. HS2 confirmed it is a permanent group and agreed with the minister there will be a year-end Environmental Sustainability report, likely in Autumn.

The Chair invited the HS2 Environment and Town Planning Director back to provide an overview of the first Environmental Sustainability report when produced at the EH Subgroup next Autumn.

Item 4 – Southern Portal Case Study

The Chair welcomed AlignJV Ecology Lead and HS2's Senior Environment Manager to present the Southern Portal works in the C1 sector of Phase One.

The Align Ecology lead introduced the geographical area covered as being the Colne Valley and Chiltern tunnel section of Phase One and provided a presentation on the habitat creation design work AlignJV have been carrying out for the Colne Valley Western Slopes area. The design has been developed by an integrated landscape and ecology team which sits within a wider multidiscipline environment team with important contributions from soil, geotechnical and drainage.

In the next five years Align plan to develop this area into something different. The design vision and aims of the project, shaping the new landscape, was summarised to the EH Subgroup; a responsive landscape which is resilient, fully integrated, rich in biodiversity and a place designed for the community.

A visualisation of one of the developments of the area was presented to the EH Subgroup showing the south portal of the Chiltern tunnel, showing the wood pasture habitat that would develop over time. Align discussed the main challenges to converting arable land to calcareous grassland.

Images of the habitat types and species the project is trying to encourage on site were shown, including woodland edge and scrub habitat, found in calcareous habitats such as the Chilterns area. A summary of the rewilding principles being applied and management regime by the project team which have been extensively engaged with the Wildlife Trust and Natural England was provided to the subgroup.

BC1 – raised a question on land ownership of this site which originally the intention was to return the western part of the site to agriculture. Queried who will retain ownership of that land in the future and how will the habitat be maintained if landowner has control of the site. HS2 responded to the question stating that currently going through the process of agreeing ownership and best way to maintain the land.

The Chair asked whether all the arisings from the tunnel will be contained within the site. Align responded confirming that all the arisings will be put back as part of restoration proposal and all soil will be reused on the site with the earthworks modelling taking account of this.

BC2 – was keen to understand more about how the Cranfield proposal resolved and optimised the design, as sounded key to managing the arisings. Align responded that the study will start soon and would be instructed as an innovation proposal jointly funded between HS2 and Align. Cranfield will be testing the material in the lab and out on site and report back before the chalk placement so Align can design that appropriately to guarantee delivery of the chalk grassland.

Item 5 – Phase One Update

The Chair welcomed HS2's Air Quality Manager to discuss High Speed Two Phase One updates.

A summary of Phase One progress was provided, completion of EWC and MWCC setting up and starting on the ground. Summary of works for each Phase One IPT was included within the presentation slide deck circulated to the EH Subgroup.

HS2 provided a summary of archaeological finds which had press releases, a link to the ministerial review was included in the presentation. Informed the subgroup that HS2 have released more viaduct designs and have had local consultation, including a link to the common place forum.

Briefly discussed achieving PAS2080 a global management framework, HS2 are the first transport sector to adopt that in the UK. Setting framework for how HS2 are delivering low carbon agenda. HS2 won a gold medal award for architectural design for Curzon Street station.

A programme summary for each IPT, EWC, Stations and on Network works was presented to the subgroup and included within the presentation slides shared with the EH subgroup.

BC1 – in response to the IPT update covering the EKFB IPT and the Wendover meetings which were held with the HS2 Head of Noise assessment to discuss operational noise assessment, raised that there will still be future meetings needed to progress further with Wendover. HS2 acknowledged this engagement will continue and there are future meetings planned.

Post Meeting note: In response to a query from BC1 on the medieval graffiti found a link to the press release has been included. <https://mediacentre.hs2.org.uk/news/medieval-graffiti-associated-with-repelling-evil-spirits-unearthed-by-hs2-in-stoke-mandeville>

LBE1 – asked for more information on the new sound insulation contractor appointed for Old Oak Common. HS2 confirmed that there is a new contractor on board to deliver the noise installation commitments made and will pick up from where the CSJV contractor left off. There will be re-engagement with everyone who is eligible for noise insulation including those who haven't yet accepted.

Item 6 – Planning Forum Update

The Chair welcomed HS2's Town Planning Lead, Phase One to provide feedback on the Phase One Planning Forum held on 26 November 2020.

During the overview of the Phase One project at the Planning Forum a slide was presented showing performance on submissions by four MWCC compared to the predicted numbers on the look ahead provided to the LA quarterly. This showed poor performance over the last two months so discussions were held on reasons for this.

There wasn't any specific feedback on Schedule 17 submissions themselves provided by the LAs. Principle issue raised by Bucks CC and supported by other LAs was the extent to which HS2 are undertaking pre-application engagement with Council members and should more be undertaken. The HS2 Town Planning Lead confirmed that there had been an internal meeting recently with the EKFB IPT on how this can be improved.

There were detailed comments from LAs for the provision of site photographs to allow LA to view what is happening at site while access is difficult during Covid-19 restrictions.

DfT have issue a draft update to the Schedule 17 Statutory Guidance to address outcomes from the recent Court of Appeal decision which was discussed at the last EH Subgroup. Currently the update to the Statutory Guidance is out for consultation with the LAs. No timescale on when DfT will reissue this until the comments have been received from the LA.

Common Design Elements for piers and parapets have been issued to the Planning Forum for final approval from the LAs. HS2 also issued a response to the Independent Design Panel comments on those CDE. HS2 response to the public engagement on the CDE has also recently been published on the common place website. The lineside noise barriers are still ongoing and running to a later programme to the other two CDE.

An update was provided to the Planning Forum on two recent Schedule 17 appeals. HS2 appealed the non-determination of the section of Colne Valley Viaduct within LB Hillingdon in May and the appeal decision issued on 18th November. The application was approved unmodified with no conditions, meaning Colne Valley viaduct has full Schedule 17 approval within BC and LBH. The second appeal decision relates to West Ruislip portal in LBH, which was given Schedule 17 approval subject to conditions, one requiring approval of a scheme for the reporting and monitoring of noise and vibration, identifying the type and location of monitoring equipment and the frequency and mechanism of reporting that information to the council and required that operation of the railway must be carried out in accordance with that approved scheme. HS2 appealed against the imposition of the conditions and the appeal decision was issued on the 18th November which removed the conditions.

All the appeal decisions are issued to the Planning Forum and might be of interest to the EH Subgroup. HS2 currently setting up a discrete site on the website in the Planning Forum area where all these decisions will be located. Once this has been done HS2 will provide a link.

The Planning Forum Chair confirmed that the LA were meeting on the 3rd December to go through the statutory guidance which has been issued in draft form and also the Planning Forum notes on piers and parapets CDE.

The Chair asked if there is a timeframe with a finalised proposal for the noise barrier CDE as it would be useful for the EH Subgroup to hear about the development in this area. HS2 confirmed there are a number of technical discussions in the project to finalise the design for the CDE and close out a number of operational and maintenance issues. There will be an update at the next Planning Forum in January.

Action 6A: HS2 to share the designs with the EH Subgroup when the noise barrier CDE proposals have been finalised.

Item 7 – Air Quality Update

The Chair welcomed HS2's Air Quality Lead to provide an update on air quality across the route.

HS2 Air Quality Lead summarised where the compliance dashboards are saved on the SharePoint site and requested for anyone currently experiencing access issues to these dashboards on SharePoint to contact them directly. The monthly monitoring reports continue to be published on the gov.uk site. Links to the raw monitoring data on data.gov have also been restored.

HS2 presented the Air Quality webpage, which was launched on the Clean Air day, link included within the presentation slides, along with a few photographs of where best practice is being implemented across sites (including wheel wash at OOC, PM10 dust monitor at the Align south portal site being powered by wind and solar renewable energy and a hydrogen generator being used in central London).

An update on on-going innovation projects was provided. It was noted that there would be a press release linked to the NRMM emission reduction project in the coming weeks. there will be a press release on the retrofit solution in the coming weeks. Clean Air Gas Engine (CAGE), innovate UK project has been fitted to a welfare unit and will be delivered to St James Gardens on the 3rd December. Also exploring opportunities to improve upon Euro VI HGV, and considering a hydrogen dual filling system, secondly looking to support the UK hydrogen strategy and how HS2 can be a catalyst to leave a legacy in the industry. In 2021 will be trailing and testing alternative fuels to quantify what the benefits are on the ground, within the construction environment.

LBHF2 – asked whether the hydrogen dual fuelling system would consider that hydrogen is used over diesel in residential areas and shift to the use of diesel on the motorway. HS2 Air Quality lead confirmed that it is a consideration.

The Chair asked whether one of the issues with hydrogen being the supporting infrastructure, technically could any vehicle be hydrogen or is the issue that you need to be able to refuel easily. HS2 Air Quality lead responded that it is a lack of hydrogen infrastructure and sustainably sourced hydrogen across the UK. Few sites within the M25 of London but very few between London and Birmingham. The project will look to aid the development of sufficient hydrogen infrastructure across the UK.

Post meeting updates:

- CAGE press release: <https://mediacentre.hs2.org.uk/news/hs2-trials-game-changing-clean-air-gas-engine-technology-to-dramatically-cut-carbon-on-construction-sites>
- NRMM emission reduction project results in first certified Stage V equivalent retrofit solution (for larger plant) certified by the Energy Saving Trust <https://mediacentre.hs2.org.uk/news/hs2s-world-first-emissions-retrofit-solution-cuts-emissions-and-carbon-and-will-save-millions-of-pounds>

Item 8 – Noise Update – E22 Background Noise Definition

The Chair welcomed HS2's Noise and Vibration Construction lead and HS2's Noise Assessment Specialist to provide an update on E2 Background Noise Definition.

Slides were presented at the E22 working group providing an overview of stationary systems and shared with the EH Subgroup during this item.

Information Paper E22 which requires the Nominated Undertaker to assess impacts of stationary systems against existing background noise levels, determined in accordance with BS4142:2014 was discussed and the objectives summarised.

Key considerations for determining background sounds were presented to the subgroup; location of the receptor, operation of the plant, daily/weekly variations in existing noise climate and meteorological conditions.

To ensure a consistent approach is adopted by all of the HS2 contracts to determining background sound levels HS2 have defined an approach for undertaking the stationary systems noise assessments, including a standard approach HS2 would like contractors to adopt when determining background sound levels. HS2 went through the approach; time intervals, measurement period, representative level, insufficient data and diurnal periods. An example of analysis of background sound level data was presented to the subgroup.

HS2 highlighted that the engineering delivery partner has already undertaken a number of background noise measurements at receptors in proximity to stationary systems in future locations. LA were initially consulted at the start of the proposal to discuss the purpose, methodology and proposed monitoring locations.

HS2 discussed low background sound levels and stated that they have provided guidance to contractors on the assessment of stationary systems against low background sound levels to ensure consistency.

SNC asked whether concrete batching plants are installed in construction compounds or located at isolated sites. HS2 responded that they are not considered stationary systems they are classed as construction sites. If it was on an isolated site it would be a constructed site in its own right.

LBE1 asked whether HS2 project would procure stationary systems with different noise specification, depending upon the background noise in the area. HS2 responded no, we would specify equipment for the job it was intended to do and the mitigation applied would be different in order to meet requirements of Information Paper E22.

Item 9 – Noise Working Groups Update

The Chair welcomed feedback from Local Authorities in attendance at the Noise Working Groups.

SNC provided feedback from the E22 noise working group to the EH Subgroup. Two sessions have been held, the first one being an initial introduction to Information Paper E22 and the second session covering background noise.

Questions discussed in these working groups included the use of a one hour sampling periods for the background sound level for both day and night time, determination of background noise baseline averaging from the sample and whether they would include other statistical data such as modal analysis, the use of 2017 data rather than more current data was also discussed and a question on how low frequency noise would be dealt with. For the majority of these points waiting for HS2 to provide a response.

HS2 confirmed that there is another meeting scheduled for January, date to be confirmed, but hoping to discuss any feedback on the background noise methodology and any other items in this session. EH Subgroup to share any additional queries through one of the E22 core members to ensure they can be covered in the follow-up session.

Action 9A: Include presentations from the E22 working group to the SharePoint site for future reference.

Item 10 – Ongoing Construction and S61 Experience

The Chair welcomed feedback from Local Authorities regarding the S61 experience and HS2 activities.

BC2 – formally requested that all applications for consent are given 28 days' notice whether a statement of intent or a Section 61 application. HS2's Noise and Vibration Construction lead responded that a full 28 days is not necessarily be required for a statement of intent on the basis that the contractors should have consulted with the LA on the works coming up and agreed what works are statement of intent well before that 28 day period is entered into to.

BC1 added to the discussion that the LA experience with contractor and subcontractors is sometimes there is a weeks' notice to access on site. Some agreement that SOI does not need 28 days but if unaware of this and not decided on whether this should be a SOI or a Section 61 it can add pressure if the LA do not know about the works early on.

The Chair highlighted the importance of regular engagement between contractors and LA which can help alleviate this issue and a programme of Section 61 mapped out could help assist with this. Please contact HS2's Noise and Vibration Construction lead to discuss directly with the contractor.

BC2 – light pollution from construction camps has been raised within Buckinghamshire. Following a site visit to a construction camp where complaints have been made about lighting it did appear lit up far beyond what was necessary for security after 11:00pm. Light pollution is included within the CoCP so it might be useful to discuss at a future meeting. To be included in a future agenda item.

LBHF2 mentioned new guidance on lighting issued in 2020 by the Institute of Lighting Professionals regarding reduction of obtrusive light.

Action 10A: Invite someone at HS2 to provide presentation/response to query on light pollution.

Item 11 – Action Log / Forward Plan / Meeting Agenda Items

Chair reviewed the action log.

July 2020 Action 10A – The Construction Commissioner has been invited to the EH Subgroup and a commitment made that from next year they will attend and agreed to include an item on the agenda. The Chair asked the LA what their experience of the noise insulation process is and how residents feel about it to feedback at the next meeting.

September 2020 Action 11A - SharePoint action is in progress with HS2 IT as discussed in Item 2 of these minutes.

Items for next meeting:

Presentation items for next subgroup:

- Lesson learned on noise insulation from the Construction Commissioner and potentially feedback from the contractors on noise insulation
- Light pollution and commitments within the CoCP

EH Subgroup to share any suggestions to the Chair or the HS2 Air Quality Manager.

The following proposed dates were discussed at the EH Subgroup and agreed to remain in the Microsoft Teams format for 2021.

Thu 4/2/21 - Fri 19/3/21 - Tue 8/6/21 - Thu 29/7/21 - Wed 6/10/21 - Thu 2/12/21

New Actions

- Action 6A: HS2 to share the designs with the EH Subgroup when the noise barrier CDE proposals have been finalised.
- Action 9A: Include presentations from the E22 working group to the SharePoint site for future reference.
- Action 10A: Invite someone at HS2 to provide presentation/response to query on light pollution.