

Case Study #12

HS2 INDEPENDENT
DESIGN PANEL

The vision for Leeds is that HS2 will be more than a new station and a high speed rail link - it should provide a new civic building for the city and a gateway to the region. The station is therefore being designed to create new connections between the city centre and areas to the south of the station, playing an important role in fulfilling the regeneration and growth ambitions of Leeds City Council for the South Bank area. The station will provide new links across the River Aire with a new bridge, two entrances south of the river and routes under the existing railway viaducts, as well as a major new public space addressing the city centre.

Process: Design Panel meetings to discuss Leeds Station began in 2015, before the appointment of the design team, Arup+. Four formal review meetings have been held, with more planned as the project continues to progress. These sessions have explored a wide range of issues, including the vision and masterplan for the area; the needs of the people who will use all aspects of the development; connections, access and movement; station architecture; under-viaduct spaces; transport and parking; public spaces; commercial development; environmental sustainability; and public art. Future reviews will look to further consider the intergration of HS2 and Leeds along its route to the east.



Leeds Station

This is the twelfth in a series of case studies about the work of the HS2 Independent Design Panel.

Project headlines

- Leeds HS2 Station will play a significant role in unlocking regeneration ambitions for the South Bank area, and will provide a new civic building for the city
- A design team was appointed in February 2017, Arup+ (a team including Foster + Partners and ERM, led by Arup)
- Leeds Station will form part of the Phase 2b Hybrid Bill submission in 2020
- The collaborative approach being taken by Leeds City Council and HS2 Ltd was 'commended' at the HS2 Independent Design Panel awards in November 2018
- The station is due to open in 2033

Panel comments

Some of the comments made by the panel, which have informed the Leeds Station design approach, are outlined below.

1. Station form

The panel has encouraged the design team's 'one station' approach, intended to ensure that the HS2 station works seamlessly with the existing railway station. However, it has urged the Joint Working Group (comprised of HS2 Ltd, Leeds City Council, West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Network Rail) to take opportunities to separate the structures of the two stations within this ethos. This will help to ensure that there is generous space for passenger interchange between the stations, and that the drama and civic presence of the new HS2 station building can be celebrated through a distinct design. Pulling the new HS2 station away from the existing station also helps maximise permeability in the area. This approach is now being pursued, creating a new public space and supporting HS2's integration with the classic rail station and the surrounding area.

2. Catalyst for growth

The panel supports the shared ambitions of both HS2 Ltd and Leeds City Council that HS2 should act as a catalyst for improving the areas of the city surrounding the station. The positive, collaborative relationship between HS2 Ltd and

Leeds City Council, which has developed as part of the project, is a critical factor in grasping this opportunity - and was 'commended' as part of the HS2 Independent Design Panel Awards in November 2018.



Annie Coombs (Deputy Chair of the Design Panel), Lee Hosking (Arup+, Leeds Station) - HS2 Independent Design Panel Awards November 2018, HS2 Ltd

The panel has encouraged them to continue working together to explore the enormous development opportunities, including those already in the pipeline, to ensure that the station contributes to creating a new piece of the city. This includes careful consideration of how HS2 can also contribute to proposals and ambitions along the route's approach into Leeds.

3. Bridging the river

The panel has encouraged the inclusion of pedestrian access as part of an HS2 viaduct over the River Aire bringing the high speed railway lines into the new station. It has also supported Leeds City Council's request

that the HS2 station should have a southern entrance, near Meadow Lane. A new entrance and pedestrian route over the River Aire, integrated into the station, will provide much-needed access to the South Bank area, currently difficult to reach on foot and a hostile pedestrian environment. This will - crucially - unlock the potential for HS2 to contribute to the long term growth of Leeds. To help make it a exciting addition to the city centre, the panel has encouraged the team to apply key lessons from projects such as New York's 'High Line'.

This connection will depend on public access to a barrier-free route so that those not travelling by rail can also cross the bridge. The panel has therefore continued to warmly welcome and advise on HS2 Ltd's ambition to use innovative, barrier-free ticketing systems.

4. New public spaces

The panel has focused on the need for the HS2 station to deliver wider improvements to the spaces and routes around it. The 'dark arches' and the spaces beneath viaducts can form a significant piece of new public realm as part of the station project, and will need to work seamlessly as part of the city. The panel has advised on developing a detailed understanding of the 'dark arches', and the exciting potential they present - working seamlessly as part of the city. It has recommended involving artists to help explore options for the 'dark arches', and for a new Station Square, on the south side of the River Aire.