

Case Study #10

HS2 INDEPENDENT
DESIGN PANEL

The vision is for Interchange Station to become part of a newly-created place - emerging as a unique and place-specific response to its 'Urbs in Rure' setting. Currently within the Green Belt, the revised Local Plan will enable the development of a new housing and commercial space, retail and leisure quarter on land around the HS2 Interchange Station. The station, due to be completed in 2026, will act as a 'catalyst for growth'.

Process: Design Panel meetings have been held before and following appointment of the Stations Design Service Contractors (SDSC). An Interchange Station Design Ambition document was produced, which has been critical in underpinning design thinking and discussion. Including the dialogue at a visioning workshop held in October 2017 which explored landscape and architectural uniqueness, and how the station and place will evolve over time. A design ambition workshop was held in mid-2018 which defined core criteria for the station and surrounding areas. Mentoring sessions have provided the SDSC with additional support since their appointment in spring 2018. These sessions have explored a range of issues - including the creation of a strong sense of place and a rich landscape experience, supporting the design work on the station plan, structure and envelope, and integration of the proposed Automated People Mover (APM).



Project headlines

- The Interchange Station will play an important role in underpinning the masterplan for the wider area.
- The Interchange Station Design Services Contractor team was appointed in March 2018 - led by ARUP, Arup Associates, and Churchman Landscape Architects.
- Schedule 17 submission is planned for 2019.
- The invitation to tender documents for the procurement of the design and build contractor is anticipated after Spring 2019, with the contact awarded approximately May 2020.
- The station is due to open in 2026.

Panel comments

The HS2 Independent Design Panel has been supportive of reframing the station as the anchor of a new 'Garden City' masterplan, rather than simply a Parkway station. Designing a new station that not only responds sympathetically to its context but also stimulates and supports new and exciting development. This is a complex endeavour, but significant progress has been made - particularly by the current station design team.

1. Character and Placemaking

As design work on the station has developed, the panel has supported the team in creating a station that goes beyond its functional definition as an interchange and parkway facility - to a civic station, at the heart of a new urban development. The key challenges in managing this transition have been managing 'twin track' design work on the station itself and the masterplan for the new settlement.

The panel has supported the SDSC to identify a solution that can help drive the future character of the surrounding place. It has applauded the powerful and evocative designs being developed by the SDSC - welcoming the way environmental and place-based considerations are at the core of design thinking and decision making. Safeguarding this design quality

through value engineering and construction challenges will be critical.

2. Landscape and green infrastructure

Key factors in the design work have been ensuring that landscape is genuinely integral to the scheme. The naturalistic surroundings of the wider area are an important contextual cue for the station design and understanding the existing landscape has been essential to embedding the design of the Interchange Station in its context and contributing to the emerging character of the wider area.

The panel has given advice on how best to realise the concept of integrating development, including the station, within a blue and green grid to create a high quality environment around the station. For example, the panel has recommended greater clarity on the integration and influence of water in the landscape, so that its management can enrich the landscape design and avoid incongruous solutions at a later date.

3. Orientation and permeability

For the Interchange Station to effectively support the development of a new community, its orientation and the location of its entrances are critically important. With its place at the heart of the settlement, ensuring the permeability of the station contributes to

movement in the wider area will be critical.

The SDSC has sought additional mentoring sessions with the panel, which have proven successful. These have given panel members an insight into design team thinking and decision making, including considering the merits of four different station layouts - while encouraging proactive and open dialogue between the panel and design team.

4. Parking and transport connectivity

With connectivity proposals such as an Automated People Mover (APM) and Metro link being considered alongside enhanced cycle and pedestrian connections, there are exciting opportunities to embed sustainable transport habits from the outset. The panel has supported work to ensure the APM and Metro stops are well integrated and form part of a holistic approach - which also gives thought on the arrival experience of pedestrians and cyclists. Viable and enjoyable sustainable transport options will help reduce private car reliance - critical in the context of the significant car parking number initially envisaged at Hybrid Bill stage, approximately 7,000 parking spaces. The panel has also been supportive of the approach the team is taking developing 'car parking fields' - it has suggested the team continue to evolve how it will integrate parking - including through a phased approach.