



Schedule 17 stage designs for Lower Thorpe Viaduct (HS2 Ltd)

## Lower Thorpe Viaduct

Lower Thorpe Viaduct will be located within the hamlet of Lower Thorpe, Northamptonshire, in a narrow valley close to several properties and heritage assets, and a series of historic ponds.

In previous discussions with HS2 Ltd, the Design Panel has highlighted its support for the low key design approach, driven by the landscape context, and drawn attention to the potential to create more visual and ecological connections by opening up the area under the structure.

In April 2021, the panel met with HS2 Ltd to understand the progress made since the previous meeting (2018) and to comment on the Schedule 17 stage designs, which will be submitted to West Northamptonshire Council in Summer 2021.

The panel congratulated the team on the progress made and commented that the proposals are an exemplar of simple, recessive but confident design, supported by a clear and compelling landscape design narrative.

It stressed that the landscape proposals will play a crucial role in the overall success of the viaduct. It is important that they incorporate a compelling design narrative both in relation to water management, and the viaduct's response to its historical setting. Detailed design will also prove crucial in ensuring the high quality of the proposals is maintained throughout construction and delivery.

The panel noted areas for further development, including refinements to the noise barriers and piers, defining the impact on adjacent properties, and finding opportunities to engage with the local community in a meaningful way.

## Design Panel activities April and May 2021

# 3

- Lower Thorpe Viaduct
- Edgcote Viaduct
- Amersham Headhouse

**Schedule 17 meetings**

# 8

- HS2 Landscape Design Approach
- Washwood Heath Depot
- River Cole Viaducts & Chattle Hill Box Structure
- Birmingham and Fazeley Canal Viaduct
- Balsall Common Viaduct
- West Coast Partner's draft Passenger Proposition
- Chesham Headhouse

**Workshop meetings**

# 2

- Old Oak Common Urban Integration Study
- Old Oak Common Station - public realm and station design

**Phase One meetings**

# 3

- April and May monthly team meetings attended by the Design Panel chair, vice chair, secretariat and HS2 Ltd
- Design Panel quarterly senior executive meeting, attended by the HS2 Ltd senior executive and design teams, the Department for Transport (DfT), and the Design Panel.

**Governance meetings**

# Landscape Design Approach

The HS2 Landscape Design Approach (LDA) was first published in 2016. Since then, the HS2 programme has moved on considerably, and lessons have been learned from the project to date. Phase 2a also received Royal Assent in early 2021, and new government policies and guidelines have been released.

HS2 Ltd is now revisiting the LDA to capture these changes and to ensure it can guide future design work. In April and May, the panel held a series of workshop and mentoring sessions with the team. The panel welcomed the update, and stressed the importance of embracing the opportunity to increase levels of ambition in the document. It encouraged the team to move beyond current and emerging legislation to set exemplar standards, including embracing a net biodiversity gain approach.

The panel also supported the use of the LDA to reinforce expectations that design will be landscape-led, including the role landscape should play in future procurement processes and in the onboarding of the HS2 supply chain.

The panel highlighted the need for a comprehensive and powerful communications strategy to ensure the LDA messages become part of HS2 Ltd culture, understood at all levels of the organisation. The document provides an important opportunity to celebrate HS2's positive impact.



Proposals for the Chiltern Tunnel south portal and chalk grassland on the western valley slopes, HS2 Ltd



Amy McAbendroth  
Senior Landscape Architect,  
Arup

## People's stories

Amy is a Senior Landscape Architect at Arup, acting as the Landscape Lead for the Landscape Design Approach update 2021. She has worked closely with HS2 Ltd to shape the structure and content of the updated guidance, drawing on feedback from HS2 Ltd stakeholder engagement events and Design Panel workshops.

“This has been an insightful document to work on as it explores the design process, brings together case studies from many HS2 landscape schemes, celebrates achievements and captures lessons learnt on the project to date. I have found the workshops with the Design Panel valuable in helping to strengthen the guidance, providing clarity in the key messages, and encourage a more progressive and ambitious approach to this update. The role of landscape in addressing pressing issues, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and carbon, is a core thread running through the document. I hope the updated guidance inspires and helps to guide a landscape-led approach to the design of HS2.”

## Design Panel refresh

In April and May, we advertised for new panel members, and received just over 100 applications from across the design and construction industries. This is a fantastic response, and demonstrates strong interest in supporting HS2 Ltd to deliver the design quality the nation expects. Frame Projects, secretariat to the HS2 Independent Design Panel, along with the chair and vice-chair of the panel, and HS2 Ltd, are assessing applications and aim to appoint new panel members in June or July.



Frame Projects  
Secretariat to the  
HS2 Independent  
Design Panel

**HS2 INDEPENDENT  
DESIGN PANEL**