

# HS2 IMPLEMENTATION ADVISORY GROUP - 10 March 2020

## MINUTES

Present:	Councillors: D Cole, T Diccico, T Hodgson, D Howell, T Richards OBE and A Rolf
Officers:	Derek Lawlor – UK Central Delivery Group Manager Paul Tovey – Head of Highway Management Joe Suffield – Democratic Services Officer
Representatives	Andy deBell – Community Engagement Manager (BBV) Katrien Goossens – Community Engagement Lead (LM) Jonathan Lord – Senior Engagement Manager (HS2) Diane Booth – Head of Environment, Area North HS2 Ltd

### 1. APOLOGIES

Councillor Adeyemo submitted his apologies.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 3. QUESTIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

Sheila Cooper made a deputation on behalf of the Warwickshire Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE).

Sheila Cooper raised the following points:

- The Oakervee Review highlighted that the project should be an effective use of taxpayer money. The CPRE in Warwickshire were concerned about the impact on the natural environment and the climate.
- The CPRE in Warwickshire quoted from the Oakervee Review the impact of construction on communities. There was a concern that within the Solihull borough there were a lot of HGVs, which damaged the natural environment and the wellbeing of affected residents.
- The Oakervee Review stated HS2 must be open, transparent and supportive of local communities. Ms Cooper requested that this needed to be adhered to, and the confidentiality agreement between Solihull MBC and HS2 be cancelled.

Councillor Ken Blanch from Hampton-in-Arden Parish Council made a deputation and raised the following points:

- When would there be confirmation about the recycling centre on the A45 over whether it would be relocated?
- Whether all of Diddington Lane and Meriden Road would be used as a haul route instead of the A45? Also, whether Diddington Lane would be used to alleviate routes on nearby roads.
- If the Diddington Lane and Kenilworth Road junction could be considered in the next round of safety audits.

Jonathan Lord responded with the following points:

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- There would be a written update provided about the recycling centre, with a decision to be made soon.
- The haul route question was covered in the main presentation
- The safety audit would be conducted but has yet to be undertaken.

### 4. MINUTES

The Advisory Group received the minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

It was noted that there was an error on agenda item 6. Footpath N4216 should state M216.

Matters arising from the previous meeting:

- In relation to a request for a ban of HGV's on Old Waste Lane, the Head of Highways Management explained that this had been discussed with the individual and the points raised would be taken to the HS2 Traffic Liaison Group.
- The diversion of footpath M216 had received two separate applications which had been approved.

#### **RESOLVED**

The minutes from the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

### 5. HS2 KEY ISSUES TRACKER

Updates were provided on the following items on the Key Issues Tracker:

- Ref 1: The haul routes would be determined once notice to proceed had been confirmed.
- Ref 2: Heath Park - Solihull MBC would wait for the Play Pitch Strategy to be finalised before a joint engagement strategy between Solihull MBC and HS2 later in the year.
- Ref 13: There had been around 450 responses to the Common Design Elements (CDE) consultation. This would be fed into a report on the CDE and would contribute to the design. There would be public engagement on the Key Design Elements (KDE) within the borough in the summer
- Ref 16: There would be events with small and medium enterprises (SMEs) led primarily by BBV in the summer once notice to proceed has been confirmed.
- Ref 17: Royal British Legion in Berkswell had been awarded £18,500 from the Community Engagement Fund which funded repairs to the roof and provided a new kitchen.
- Ref 18: The latest stage of the HS2 road safety fund investigation was to consult stakeholders, which included Parish Councils. This would be brought to the 17<sup>th</sup> March CPH Environment and Highways Decision Session.
- Ref 19: It was agreed that there would be a move to a street manager notification system which would show all schedule 4 applications, as well as coordinated and consolidated information on the different road works which would take place.

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A Member thanked HS2 for their ecological mitigation strategies but requested that it was better promoted and encouraged involvement with local residents.

Members enquired whether the Community Engagement Fund application process could be made simpler. The Senior Engagement Manager for HS2 explained he would pass on the feedback and encouraged Members to promote the fund to residents.

### 6. HIGHWAY SERVICES UPDATE

The Head of Highways Management explained there was lots of ongoing work. This included temporary access to Park Lane with single lanes in operation on the A452. Also, there would be vegetation clearance around the NEC which would be conducted during off peak hours or overnight.

Members expressed concern with the concrete barriers by the Park Lane Roundabout which were not easily visible at night. The Head of Highways Management explained he would look into this, but it complied with necessary traffic management requirements and there was a 30mph speed limit on the road.

A Member asked when it would be confirmed that the vegetation clearance would take place, which was detailed in the report. In response the Head of Highways Management highlighted that the report only detailed traffic management, not when the vegetation clearance would take place.

### 7. PROGRAMME UPDATE FROM HS2 LTD

#### Archaeology

The Community Engagement Lead for LM raised the following points:

- The archaeological digs had focussed primarily on the Coleshill region just outside of the borough. This area was chosen as it would be the biggest site, with a lot of potential, which particularly focussed around the moat. It would be intended that the moat would be made accessible through organised events for the general public. There had been a lot of discoveries to date, and the understanding of the site constantly changed. There had been signs of people who lived at the site from the Bronze Age until the present day, and played a vital role in the history of Solihull.
- There would be community engagement to ensure that local residents were made aware of these discoveries. Chiefly, this would be done through an archaeological hub in The Core in Solihull, where there would be displays and presentations about the findings. This would include an interactive VR headset of the Medieval Manor.

The following comments were made in response:

- Members praised the work that had been undertaken, however requested that the positive aspects of the HS2 scheme were more effectively promoted to the public.
- A Member asked whether the artefacts would remain within the local area. In response, the Senior Engagement Manager for HS2 explained that there would be discussions between HS2 and the Local Authorities over where to keep the artefacts. This would be influenced by the HS2 artefact storage strategy. An update would be provided.
- A Member enquired how the artefacts and the site would be kept safe. The Community Engagement Lead explained that information about discoveries would be kept from the general public until a full excavation had been

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completed, and enlisted the help of local archaeological societies to support the process.

- Sheila Cooper asked whether the site was on the line of the HS2 route and what would happen once the dig had been completed. The Community Engagement Lead responded that the site was around the line of the HS2 route, but could move dependent on what was found. Also, there were techniques to protect findings and ensure important discoveries were not impacted by HS2.
- A Member asked whether Chelmsley Wood Library could be used to host the hub and future events. The Community Engagement Lead highlighted that The Core was a central location for the whole borough and surrounding areas, but other events could take place at the library.
- Richard Lloyd asked if an overall map of the site could be distributed which showed what investigation had been undertaken. The Community Engagement Lead stated that the work had been phased and not every trench had been decided, but would look into his request.

### Environmental Mitigation

The Senior Engagement Manager provided the following update:

- There were mitigation sites on the route and near the line of the route. It was explained that these sites would not have to be within the borough to compensate for the impact on the line. The vegetation clearance had made a negative impact, but the mitigation work would compensate for this. They would be well established by summer when it would be possible to visit some of them. There was an acceptance that this needed to be promoted better.
- HS2 aimed to plant 7 million trees and create 9KM<sup>2</sup> of woodlands, which would provide 30% more habitats than those affected by the HS2 works. The sites in Solihull would be Chelmsley Wood, River Blythe, the Interchange Station, Park Lane and Beechwood.
- The mitigation sites would be established before the clearance took place to calculate the no net loss.

The following questions and comments were made:

- Members asked if the trees were native species and would it be expected that some would die. It was confirmed that an assessment took place to ensure that as many trees as possible would survive and were resilient to the environment. A formula was used to determine how many trees would be needed to ensure the survival of the maximum number of trees.
- A Member enquired how long HS2 would be responsible for the maintenance of the sites. In response, the HS2 Head of Environment explained that HS2 had the longest maintenance programme for any mitigation site, which was 50 years.
- A Member questioned whether a net gain could be targeted because of the impact of the loss of ancient trees. The HS2 Head of Environment highlighted that HS2 aimed to make no net loss but through green corridor opportunities aimed to achieve net benefit is possible.
- A Member asked whether the mitigation sites would be accessible to the public, and could they be publicised better. The Senior Engagement Manager stated that they were not all safe to access for the public or could be classified as trespassing upon other people's land. However it was accepted that this work needed to be promoted more effectively.

### Notice to Proceed Update

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The Community Engagement Manager for BBV provided an update on the notice to proceed. It would be expected that this would be received soon, however the mobilisation work had already started. This included work to create compounds and haul routes. BBV continued to work on a planning application for Hallmeadow Road as an alternative route to the one that runs through the middle of Balsall Common on the A452. Also, the design process has been ramped up as BBV approach NTP. A further stage of environmental work took place as BBV completed its construction work – landscaping and planting were provided as the final part of the civil construction works. The following points were also raised:

- Once notice to proceed had been received a more detailed programme of the affected areas would be published.
- Changes to public rights of way would involve advanced engagement with local residents who used the path and any changes will be communicated to these people.
- The environmental statement limited the impacts allowed by the use of highways. For example, BBV would use strategic roads such as the A452 as much as possible to restrict impact on village roads. Further clarity on this point would be provided.

The following comments and questions were made:

- A Member requested that the information about the recycling centre was disseminated as soon as it was available because of its widespread impact.
- Sheila Cooper asked for proposals for Hallmeadow Road as traffic congestion was common there. In response the Community Engagement Manager explained that it depended on how long it would take to conduct the environmental screening and the subsequent planning application.
- A member of the public asked whether there would be engagement work around River Blythe. The Community Engagement Manager stated that there would be community engagement such as with the KDE's, where there would be public engagement activities in the summer.

### 8. COLESHILL MANOR SITE VISIT

Members were invited to a site visit on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020 to Coleshill Manor to receive a presentation on archaeological work undertaken by Wessex on behalf of HS2 in the area. This was substantively covered in the Programme Update.

The meeting concluded at 7.25 pm