

HS2 IMPLEMENTATION ADVISORY GROUP - 17 December 2020

MINUTES

Present: Councillors: D Cole, T Dicicco, T Hodgson, D Howell, T Richards OBE, A Rolf and K Thomas

Officers: Nick Garnett – Senior Public Health Manager (Leisure and Physical Activity)
Derek Lawlor – UK Central Group Delivery Manager
Joe Suffield – Democratic Services Officer
Paul Tovey – Head of Highways Management

Representatives: Simon Casey – Senior Environment Manager, Phase 1 (HS2 Ltd)
Nicholas Cuming – Community Engagement Specialist (BBV)
Andy deBell – Stakeholder Manager (BBV)
Katrien Goossens – Community Engagement Lead (LM)
Jonathan Lord – Senior Engagement Manager (HS2 Ltd)
Fiona Woolston – Engagement Manager for the Interchange Area (LM)

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. QUESTIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

Ms Sheila Cooper made a deputation on the use of temporary works during the construction of HS2 and asked for clarification on what would be classified as temporary works. The Senior Engagement Manager for HS2 stated that HS2 would respond to Ms Cooper outside of the meeting.

Mr Richard Lloyd made a deputation on the temporary and permanent impacts of Public Rights of Way within the Borough as a result of HS2. Mr Lloyd requested that it was made clearer which footpaths were open within the Borough. The Senior Engagement Officer explained that the detailed design engagement would start soon, and any changes would be made within the parameters of the Act. Wider work would take place to improve accessibility and a map may assist with this.

Councillor Williams made a presentation on Heath Park and outlined that he felt HS2 Ltd had not provided an adequate compensation package for the park. Councillor Dicicco explained these comments would be covered in the relevant agenda item.

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A statement was read out on behalf of Mr Andrew Burrow to thank HS2 Ltd and partners for the collaboration on the temporary greenway in Balsall Common.

4. MINUTES

The matters arising from the previous meeting were as followed:

- The Senior Engagement Manager for HS2 had shared a document with the monetary value of the environmental impact of HS2.
- The Community Engagement Lead for LM had shared details of the information on the ecology webinars.
- The Senior Engagement Manager had shared updated construction noise monitoring reports and would share October reports as soon as they were available.
- The Senior Engagement Manager had contacted Councillor Thomas about her Community Engagement Fund (CEF) application.
- The Senior Engagement Manager had shared the press release from the A446 bridge move in advance of the meeting.
- The Head of Highways Management explained that discussions over the Castle Bromwich route were ongoing and would provide an update at the next meeting.

RESOLVED

The minutes of the meeting held on 29th October 2020 were approved

5. HEATH PARK UPDATE

The UK Central (UKC) Group Deliver Manager introduced the briefing note which outlined the current status of Heath Park in Chelmsley Wood.

The Senior Engagement Manager for HS2 gave the following information on HS2 Ltd's role in Heath Park:

- HS2 Ltd would review Heath Park to identify how they could reduce their construction impact on the park and ensure there was a positive legacy at the site.
- BBV had committed to keep one pitch available on the site.
- BBV had offered to provide community investment for areas affected by their construction, which they would support at Heath Park, through plans such as drainage work and to help reposition the pitch.

The Senior Public Health Manager provided information on the Playing Pitch Strategy:

- The pitches throughout the Borough were in a functional condition, and the Heath Park pitches had not been booked for this season because of the proposed works.
- The Strategy looks at all pitches within the Borough where supply generally outweighed demand. The Strategy in the North of the Borough would see investment to the Bluebell Recreation Ground pitches alongside a number of other priority areas.

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- There would be more of a focus on Bluebell Recreation Ground, as it would support the wider Heath Park offer, alongside attempts to access wider funding streams.

Members asked questions and made the following observations:

- A Member enquired whether they could liaise with the Community Champions programme to identify if there were local residents who may wish to engage and to identify funding streams which could help with the matched funding of the Community and Environment Fund.
- Members noted that it was important not to lose pitches within the Borough and steps should be taken to protect facilities at Heath Park. There were concerns that residents may be disadvantaged if a community group could not be organised. Councillor Diccio sympathised with the comments made and asked for this to be picked up in discussions outside of the meeting. Councillor Rolf explained CAVA may be able to support this and agreed to set up a meeting with relevant parties (which included Ward Members) to discuss a way forward.
- A Member queried whether the Babbs Mill Pitches could be used once the Wildlife Ways project had been completed. A response would be provided to the Councillor.
- A Member noted that it was important to involve local Ward Members and to report back to the Board on any future steps. They asked whether HS2 could comment on proposals that were previously brought forward for the park. The Senior Engagement Manager explained that they worked within the parameters of the HS2 Act.

The Board **RESOLVED** to:

- Note the steps taken to support Heath Park
- Support the proposed future engagement with the local community
- Continue to monitor the activity in relation to Heath Park and for Councillor Rolf to report back to the next meeting of the Board with an update on proposed activities moving forward after discussions with relevant parties.

6. ECOLOGY UPDATE

The Senior Engagement Manager for HS2 Ltd provided an overview of the HS2 (London to West Midlands) Act 2017. They outlined the powers this Act granted to HS2 Ltd, which were subject to certain approvals by local planning authorities and had legally binding undertakings and assurances.

The Senior Environment Manager outlined the ecological challenges posed and provided an example at the Diddington Lane Area. There was a lot of work which would take place in this location, such as stockpiles and construction compounds. HS2 Ltd were required to minimise their impact on their locality, which meant they were constrained in which permanent space they could use.

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In Solihull, the permanent space available was limited, which meant that it would be difficult to plant trees on a large scale. HS2 Ltd would plant on embankments as part of the environmental statement requirements.

There was a route-wide commitment for no net loss of biodiversity, but this would not be possible in the Diddington Lane Area. This meant it would need to take place in other areas along the whole route, but an attempt would be made to plant near to areas which would experience a loss of biodiversity.

The *Green Corridor Prospectus* had recently been produced which promoted the work of HS2 to maximise biodiversity along the route. This would create connectivity and linkage with wildlife around the route, to maximise the opportunity for habitats and wildlife. The Senior Engagement Manager offered to look at areas outside of the requirements of the HS2 Act to see if the Green Corridor could be extended by HS2 where there were gaps.

A Member commented that the press coverage of HS2 was often negative, and that more work should be done to promote the ecological work that had been undertaken. The member asked how many trees would be planted in Solihull and how HS2 could work with Solihull Council to create wildlife corridors. The Senior Engagement Manager responded that on the HS2 website there was the option to see what work would take place in a local area (<https://www.hs2.org.uk/building-hs2/hs2-green-corridor/>), and encouraged the Council to support the work due to take place.

Ms Sheila Cooper queried how the designs on the Balsall Viaduct and River Blythe floodplain were progressing in relation to environmental problems. The Senior Environment Manager explained the scheme design was delayed as extra time was required to consider the environmental challenges of construction on a floodplain.

Mr Richard Lloyd commented that canopy cover should be taken into account when trees were planted. Mr Lloyd asked for the details that were required for Schedule 17 applications. The Senior Environment Manager responded that 'no net loss' was calculated by hectare and experts had been involved to ensure that the trees that were planted would comply with the requirements of the project. The Senior Engagement Manager stated they would respond to the questions on Schedule 17 applications.

7. KEY ISSUES TRACKER

Updates were provided on the following items on the Key Issues Tracker by the Senior Engagement Manager for HS2. A number of the items would be covered in the HS2 Programme Update.

- Ref 2: Progress report on Heath Park to be included at the meeting planned for June.
- Ref 10: Updated air quality reports to be circulated to the Board as appropriate.

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- Ref 16: The third annual “meet the contractor” event took place recently alongside local events, which promoted the opportunities available for local business to benefit from contracts to support delivery of HS2.
- Ref 17: 10 projects in the Meriden area had received funding from CEF. A recent award was the Inclusive Sports Academy in Chelmsley Wood.

A Member asked whether Mr Lloyd’s request for a virtual platform could be included on the tracker and on the consultation process for the diverted public rights of way. The Senior Engagement Manager commented this would be confirmed.

Mr Richard Lloyd expressed his concern about the works on the Kenilworth Greenway as there were remains of Victorian engineering. The Senior Engagement Manager confirmed a response would be provided to Mr Lloyd.

8. HIGHWAY SERVICES UPDATE

The Head of Highways Management presented a summary of Schedule 4 applications. The majority of works were offline with a minimal impact on highway network. The two crossings for the Kenilworth Greenway on Waste Lane and the junction at Hob Lane had progressed and would be in operation soon. The roundabout at Park Lane was held up due to a Western Power diversion issue, but this should move forward in 2021.

9. PROGRAMME UPDATE FROM HS2 LTD

The Senior Engagement Manager for HS2 introduced the programme update.

The Community Engagement Lead for LM explained that the temporary Greenway diversion would be opened in late January or early February 2021. All road closures were now finished. Extra wood chips would be laid over the Christmas period to make sure the path was in good condition. They had collaborated with Berkswell Parish Council and other local organisations to give out free wood chip. They have also donated wood carved animals to ten schools and charities along the route.

The Engagement Manager for the Interchange Area for LM provided their latest update:

- LM staff alongside Birmingham Business Park had contributed over £500 to the Colebridge Trust social supermarket, *Around Again*.
- There had been ecological webinars in November, and they would seek to host more in 2021 in collaboration with HS2 Ltd.
- Enabling works in the Interchange Area focussed on the future road network; to ensure it was fit for purpose when the Interchange Station was opened. The steps taken were outlined in the presentation.
- LM would shut down all activity in the Interchange Area on 18th December. There would be a small amount of traffic management in this area over the festive period.

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- In 2021, they would need to complete a number of follow up works for the road networks such as drainage connections and the reinstatement of traffic carriageway lighting. This would be through a series of 24-hour lane closures on the M42 and A446 in January 2021.

Ms Sheila Cooper asked whether the surface of the Greenway would be woodchip. The Community Engagement Lead for LM explained that the temporary surface was woodchip, but the permanent surface would be suitable for all users. Ms Cooper then asked whether the parapets on the roundabout over the HS2 trace would be sufficiently high to prevent the distraction from the trains. The Engagement Manager for the Interchange Area confirmed there would be appropriate safety measures in place.

The Community Engagement Specialist and the Stakeholder Manager for BBV gave the following update on the main works:

- A number of compounds would be established in the Solihull area. Once these had been created, they would be the base for operation and would also be used as internal haul roads, which would reduce the requirements for traffic measures.
- The design and traffic management plans about the construction of the three bridges on the Solihull section of the route would be confirmed by the next meeting.
- In the Interchange Area next year, LM would hand over to BBV to start its phase of the ground works to bring together the new road alignments to the Interchange system.
- The A45 Overbridge design includes future proofing to enable it to be widened in the future. There was a number of utilities along this route, which would have to be investigated during the design phase to allow design finalisation.
- A material laboratory would be included in the new compound on Coleshill Heath Road. This would enable tests on materials such as concrete to be carried out. There would be 100 new jobs created at the site.
- In 2021, there was notification of test piling on Diddington Lane, which would involve temporary road closures. Residents and stakeholders were informed of this.
- It was still planned to use Hallmeadow Road as a haul route. Environmental considerations continued to be worked upon prior to any applications being made.

Members made the following comments and questions:

- A Member asked what communications would take place in relation to the use of Hallmeadow Road. The Stakeholder Manager for BBV explained that a lot of background work had taken place, such as conversations with Parish Councils. Future communications would take place with residents groups and parish councils as proposals were developed further.
- A Member commented on the tree clearance on the side of the A452 between Balsall Common and Hampton in Arden. She also noted there

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was a number of bottles that had been thrown into the clearance by the road, and asked if they could be removed. The Senior Engagement Manager for HS2 Ltd stated this would be followed up.

- A Member queried whether there would be capacity on the A45 bridges for a cycle lane. The Senior Project Manager stated a response would be provided at the next meeting of the board in March.
- A Member stated there was a concern among residents about the mud on Waste Lane. The Senior Engagement Manager for HS2 confirmed a response would be provided.

A Member shared the following comments and questions from Hampton-in-Arden Parish Council:

- They were glad to see the traffic calming measures from the HS2 Road Safety Fund was in the process of being implemented.
- They asked for an update on the design for the Interchange Area and the Stage 2 Safety Audit that would follow the detailed design. The Senior Project Manager explained that this stage of the process was quite late in the overall programme but it would include the road safety audit. The Engagement Manager for the Interchange Area for LM explained that they had liaised with Hampton-in-Arden Parish Council and would update them on the design process.
- They queried the progress of the plans for the construction of the HS2 line after the completion of the civil works. The Senior Engagement Manager for HS2 stated a response to this query would be provided outside of the meeting.
- They enquired about the amount of site clearance between Patrick Bridge and Balsall Common. The Senior Engagement Manager for HS2 stated an answer to this question would be provided outside of the meeting.

Mr Richard Lloyd asked whether Diddington Lane would be closed for pedestrians. The Stakeholder Communications Officer for BBV responded that pedestrian access would be open at most times and the road would only be closed when necessary.

Ms Sheila Cooper asked whether Euro 6 lorries would be used for this work. The Senior Project Manager for BBV confirmed that it was part of the specification for the main works.

The meeting finished at 8.45 pm