

Community Forums are intended to provide an opportunity for local representatives to raise issues of importance to them and to reach consensus on preferred mitigations for HS2 Ltd. Attendance at a Forum does not indicate support by these groups for the scheme.

HS2 Ltd hosts and attends Community Forums, and has undertaken to record and publish issues, actions and requests raised during these events on their website. The matters raised by forum members are their views, and publication by HS2 Ltd should not be construed as acceptance or agreement with the sentiments expressed.

The Chalfonts and Amersham Community Forum

12 July 2012

DRAFT Minutes ~~Note~~ Amended 20 August

Forum Attendees

Chair – JA Consulting

Members –

51m

[Amersham and District Residents Association](#)

HS2 Amersham Action Group

Amersham Town Council

The Amersham Society

Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society

Chalfonts No to HS2

Chalfont St Giles Parish Council

~~Chalfont St Giles Residents Association~~

Chalfont St Peter Parish Council

Representative of Cheryl Gillan MP

The Chilterns Conservation Board

The Chiltern Society

Little Missenden Action Group

Shardeloes

Whielden Street Residents

HS2 Ltd Representatives –

Martin Wells, Area Stakeholder Manager

Simon Mace, Area Engineer

Simon White, Area Environment Manager

Terry Stafford, Area Stakeholder Adviser

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair and attendees introduced themselves. An alternative agenda from that circulated by HS2 Ltd was considered by the Forum and it was agreed to use that as the basis for the meeting.

Apologies were given on behalf of Chiltern District Council, Chalfont St Giles Residents Association and The Chesham Society. Apologies were sent before the meeting from The Chiltern Countryside Group.

2. Meeting Note Minutes and Actions

The Little Missenden Action Group asked that ~~comments~~ 3 points made by email to Martin Wells on 30 May ~~be included~~ had not been included in the minutes for the previous meeting. ~~This was agreed~~ Full and accurate record of what was decided at Forum meetings is required. (Action 10)

The forum asked that Amersham Town Council and Chiltern District Council be removed from the list of attendees at the previous meeting. (Action 12)

~~Subject to these amendments~~ The minutes of the last meeting were agreed in principle, after incorporating these changes, and the final version ~~and the final version~~ will be approved at the next meeting.

From this meeting onwards it was agreed that the minutes would be circulated within two weeks. (Action 11), and they would not be published on the HS2 Ltd website until the final version had been agreed.

The forum asked that names of the HS2 Ltd representatives be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. (Action 13)

3. Terms of Reference

The Little Missenden Action Group recommended that the forum consider the same Terms of Reference that had been tabled at the Central Chilterns Community Forum. This was currently subject to discussions on the final text with HS2 Ltd, but both parties were confident that agreement on a mutually acceptable version should be possible. The Forum decided to consider accepting those terms of reference once the wording had been agreed. (Action 14)

The forum agreed that invites should be extended to representatives from other organisations not present and that the forum should provide HS2 Ltd with some relevant contact details. (Action 15) HS2 stated that the boundaries between forums are for ease of managing numbers.

4. Community Engagement Programme

“Chalfonts No to HS2” read from a document entitled “Statement from Buckinghamshire Community Forums to HS2 Ltd”. This set out their principles for engagement and concerns about consultations on HS2 (including the recent one covering the environmental impact assessment). ~~The Forum asked for this statement to be~~ to the note of the meeting. The statement was that “any comments/responses that we make are on the understanding that we do not accept the business case, the environmental case, the capacity forecasts, or the issue of solving the north/south divide contained within the DFT HS2 proposals” should be incorporated into the minutes of each meeting.

HS2 Ltd responded to comments and questions in the statement:

- HS2 Ltd agreed to make the forum members' opposition to the scheme prominent in the meeting notes. (Action 16)
- HS2 Ltd explained ~~the~~ reasons for the delay to the Property Compensation consultation and the Safeguarding announcement ~~as~~ were set out in the statement to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Transport.
- HS2 Ltd said that discussions on the issues of the cost for technical work between local authorities and HS2 Ltd were ongoing.
- HS2 Ltd said that a high level forum for HS2 was being considered.

"Chalfonts No to HS2" agreed to provide HS2 Ltd with an electronic copy of the statement to be included in the minutes. (Action 17)

5. Update from HS2 Ltd

HS2 Ltd provided an overview of the bilateral meetings which had taken place between themselves and local stakeholders within the Country South area since the first round. HS2 Ltd reiterated their offer of bilateral meetings to all those who wished to discuss in further detail any issues relating to the scheme, [in advance of future meetings so members can liaise with attendees.](#)

The National Society for Epilepsy in Chalfont St Peter was identified by Chalfont St Giles Parish Council as one such group that would benefit from a bilateral meeting. The Society's facility in the area, though not directly affected by the line of route, had highly sensitive medical equipment that may be susceptible to conditions during construction and operation of the railway.

Chalfont St Giles Parish Council agreed to provide contact details and HS2 Ltd agreed to approach with the Society to offer a meeting. (Action 18)

HS2 Ltd provided an overview of the engagement and design programme which outlined the current focus on the initial preliminary design of the project. This focused on the alignment and the main structures that need to be built in order to make the railway happen such as viaducts, tunnels, cuttings, embankments, stations, depots, bridges, roads and road realignments. HS2 Ltd also stated that details of the scheme design could change throughout the project lifespan; including during and after the hybrid bill phase. [It was pointed out that HS2 are asking the Forum to engage in consultation for which they have provided no information. HS2 said they have to demonstrate they have acted reasonably so there will be environmental planning forums](#)

HS2 Ltd also provided a suggested timetable for discussing various issues at Community Forums which would fit with the work being undertaken by HS2 Ltd and would give people the opportunity to feed into that as information became available. [Whilst forums would be free to discuss the issues they choose, the ability of HS2 Ltd to fully respond, accelerate or alter that work programme accordingly would be limited. However, HS2 Ltd made clear that, as well as responding to proposals, forums also had the opportunity to influence scheme development from an early stage if attendees were able to be explicit about issues and concerns that could be taken into account.](#)

The forum felt that HS2 Ltd's timeline might not suit the people who would be affected by the project, who may want to discuss different issues at different times. The forum also felt that HS2 Ltd would need to provide more detail on its plans before the [draft hybrid Bill stage](#), so that the forum had an opportunity to respond.

[HS2 listed spoil movement, tunnel linings, track bed, land take for maintenance sites in particular among the issues that have to be decided before the hybrid bill stage](#)

~~HS2 Ltd explained that the suggested timetable for discussing issues at the forums was largely driven by the internal programme to which they were working. Whilst forums would be free to discuss the issues they choose, the ability of HS2 Ltd to fully respond, accelerate or alter that work programme accordingly would be limited. However, HS2 Ltd made clear that, as well as responding to proposals, forums also had the opportunity to influence scheme development from an early stage if attendees were able to be explicit about issues and concerns that could be taken into account.~~

The forum expressed the view that HS2 Ltd needed to do more to build trust with communities, particularly after earlier consultations which it was felt had damaged relationships. HS2 Ltd said that they had chosen to hold forums as a means of building those relationships.

Concern was [also](#) expressed by forum members that HS2 Ltd was withholding information from forums, and the recent announcement –of the location of the Heathrow spur was given as an example.

HS2 Ltd explained that some information was not currently available as it was required for later stages of the programme. In other cases, like the Heathrow spur, it was complicated by the need to not prejudice decisions that had still to be taken by the Secretary of State for Transport on Phase 2. Care also had to be given to the issue of creating uncertainty or blight by releasing information before proper consideration.

However, HS2 Ltd felt that the recent announcement on the locations of the Heathrow spur demonstrated that they had listened to concerns expressed at community forums and had taken action to address them. The release of these locations was undertaken well ahead of the original programme of Autumn 2012 to release such information.

Specific engineering and environmental updates were then provided by HS2 Ltd.

The engineering update focussed upon;

- The initial preliminary design phase
- Details of the consultants currently working for HS2 Ltd and work they are carrying out
- Review of baseline engineering information
- Land access negotiations
- A full aerial survey taking place in conjunction with the collection of data

- from organisations such as the Environment Agency and Highways Agency
- The work of the Professional Service Contractors (PSC's) who are currently looking at rights of way and road alignments

The environmental update focussed upon;

- an update on the draft EIA Scope and Methodology
- Baseline data collection; and,
- Site surveys

HS2 Ltd were asked how they saw the role of the forum given that representatives would not necessarily have professional expertise to provide technical advice on some aspects (such as road realignments). HS2 Ltd confirmed that technical knowledge was not necessary as what was being sought was local knowledge and perspective. HS2 Ltd offered to provide access to expertise in the form of the engineers and environmental officers that attended the forums.

~~HS2 Ltd were asked when more information would be known about construction methods, how excavation material would be removed, and detailed design work determining track bed and tunnel lining materials would be known.~~

HS2 Ltd explained that the current work was concentrated on the level of detail that would affect the land required to build and operate the railway, and the associated documentation that would be provided for the hybrid Bill such as the Environmental Impact Assessment..

HS2 Ltd would consult upon its Environmental Impact Assessment in spring 2013, at which time more information would be available. This consultation would inform the production of the Environmental Statement for the [draft hybrid](#) Bill.

The forum asked if the route was fixed. ~~HS2 Ltd said that it might be subject to slight changes depending on information gathered from ongoing surveys, design refinement etc. However, they were not seeking to make significant changes to the alignment.~~

The forum wanted to know the ways in which it could influence [the route, mitigation and design, pointing out that there were no Community Forums called together for the Environmental Impact Scope and Assessment and HS2 had lost at least one response to it](#) . HS2 Ltd [welcomed local knowledge and experience, for example gave on examples of road realignments, landscaping proposals, rights of way, including temporary and permanent closures, noise mitigation and noise barriers, and the appearance of tunnel shafts could still be influenced.”can be designed to fit into their location”](#). [HS2 Ltd said that the route might be subject to slight changes when they are in receipt of high quality topographical survey results they will be able to see if the current route will still fit into the landscape as planned. However, they were not seeking to make significant changes to the alignment. HS2 also stated](#)

The forum said that it is essential that any changes were communicated to local people first, and that they believed that this had not been the case when changes were made following the consultation. HS2 noted these comments

6. Design principles, issues and concerns

The Amersham Action Group presented a statement of key design principles and a statement of key design issues, which they agreed to provide to HS2 Ltd electronically to be appended to the note of the meeting. (Action 19).

It was agreed that the Forum would work with HS2 to plan items for future meetings discussions and such issues were listed

~~HS2 Ltd reported that before the meeting they had received a set of questions about ventilations shafts which had provided some useful information and to which they would respond.~~

The first item identified by HS2 was rights of way affected by the proposal

~~The Amersham Action Group presented a prepared statement on the forum's desired design outcomes, which they agreed to provide to HS2 Ltd to append to the note of the meeting. (Action 19)~~

The Chiltern Society said that 28 footpaths in ~~the Chilterns~~ the Forum's section would be affected by HS2; 19 could be reinstated, 7 would need footbridges built and 2 could be permanently damaged. ~~would be affected by HS2, and presented a~~ list of where each one was and how it would be affected was presented.

~~The forum asked how long the tunnel would take to construct. HS2 Ltd said the current estimate was seven years, and that the tunnel for the Phase 2 part of the route will be likely to take as long.~~

HS2 Ltd reported that before the meeting they had received a set of questions about ventilations shafts which had provided some useful information and to which they would respond.

The forum referred to the significant underestimation of spoil to be removed and requested requested more information about how excavation material would be moved and expressed concern if this were to be by lorry. HS2 Ltd said that strategy for removing excess material had yet to be determined and agreed to provide more information when available. (Action 20)

The forum asked how long the tunnel would take to construct. HS2 Ltd said the current estimate was seven years, the first year being taken up by establishing the construction site

The Chair suggested the forum submit its specific local concerns in as brief a form as possible, and asked that HS2 Ltd keep a record of these. The issues were as follows:

- Excavation material – how it is moved and stored, and where it will go
- Footpaths and rights of way, their historical significance, use and damage during and reinstatement after the construction phase ~~— their reinstatement and historical significance~~
- Work camps – where they would be, the impact of the workforce on local security, and the hours of construction
- Where service and access roads would be, and whether they would be permanent or temporary

- Road realignments [proposed by HS2 for this area of the route](#)
- Impact on aquifers
- The locations of power supply sources for the railway [in this area](#)
- Vibrations [effect and depth of tunnels in this area](#)
- Impact on historic buildings' foundations ~~in Old Amersham and elsewhere.~~ [throughout the section of the forum](#)
- Impact on the River Misbourne/ Shardeloes Lake
- Noise impact at tunnel portals [and noise mitigation in particular \(Chair advised that HS2 have offered to bring a noise expert to speak at a future forum\)](#)
- Where access shafts would be and their impact, [especially vibration and noise emanating](#)
- [Security for and viability of communities during construction](#)
- [Hours of working during construction](#)

[In the light of the lack of consultation on the altered route for Amersham, HS2 were asked to report back if the route has to be changed as a result of geological surveys. HS2 agreed to notify Forums of any route and design changes](#)

8. AOB and date of next meeting

Isobel Darby agreed to be the single point of contact for forum members to collate issues and agenda items for the next meeting. (Action 21)

Martin Wells and Terry Stafford of HS2 Ltd agreed to share their email addresses with the forum. (Action 22)

The next meeting would take place on Wednesday 26 September, with the following one during the week commencing 26 November. HS2 Ltd agreed to confirm the precise dates as soon as possible.

Actions

[Actions are numbered consecutively from each meeting to allow them to be tracked. This note record those added to the list from this meeting]

10. HS2 Ltd to incorporate comments from the Little Missenden Action Group in the minutes of the meeting of The Chalfonts, Amersham and Little Missenden Community Forum.

11. HS2 Ltd to circulate a draft set of minutes to attendees within two weeks.

12. HS2 Ltd to remove Amersham Town Council and Chiltern District Council from the list of attendees in the ~~note~~ [minutes](#) of the previous meeting.

13. HS2 Ltd to record the names of its representatives in the minutes of the meeting.

14. HS2 Ltd to incorporate comments into Terms of Reference.

15. Attendees to provide HS2 Ltd with name and contact details of any organisations they felt should be represented at the forum.
16. HS2 Ltd to make the forum members' opposition to HS2 Ltd more clear in the meeting minutes.
17. "Chalfonts No to HS2" to provide HS2 Ltd with electronic version of the Statement from Buckinghamshire Community Forums.
18. Chalfont St Giles Parish Council to provide contact details for the National Epilepsy Society, and HS2 Ltd to offer a meeting to The society.
19. Amersham Action Group to provide HS2 Ltd with electronic version of the statement for inclusion in the ~~note~~[minutes](#).
20. HS2 Ltd to provide information when available on how excavation material would be removed.
21. Isobel Darby to be the single point of contact for forum members for collating issues and agenda items.
22. Martin Wells and Terry Stafford of HS2 Ltd to share their email addresses with the forum.

END