

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 Central Chilterns Community Forum

11th July 2012, 7.00 – 9.15pm

Great Missenden Memorial Centre

Draft note

Forum attendees

Independent Chair Becci Vidal

Representatives of:

- Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society
- Buckinghamshire County Council
- Buckinghamshire Local Access Forum
- Chesham Society
- Chesham Town Council
- Chiltern District Council
- Great Missenden PC
- Great Missenden Parish Revitalisation Group
- Great Missenden Stop HS2
- Little Missenden Action Group
- Little Missenden PC
- Little Kingshill Village Society
- Office of Cheryl Gillan
- Potter Row Action Group
- South Heath HS2 Action Group
- Speen Area Action Group
- Stop HS2
- The Chilterns Conservation Board
- The Chiltern Countryside Group
- The Chiltern Ridges HS2 Action Group (CRAG)
- The Chiltern Society
- The Lee Parish Council[S and J1]

- **Response to comment S&J1 – Please can anyone adverse to the circulation of their name and contact details to forum attendees please contact me in advance of the forum. Based upon this information, circulation of names and contact details will be added to R3 action log.**

• Residents x 4 [S and J2]

- **Response to comment S&J2 - Only 4 people assigned themselves as purely 'residents'. All other attendees aligned themselves to a specific organisation.**

Martin Wells, Country South Area Stakeholder Manager – HS2 Ltd.

Simon White, Country South Environment Manager – HS2 Ltd.

Simon Mace, Country South Area Engineer – HS2 Ltd.

Charlotte Brewster, Country South Community & Stakeholder Advisor – HS2 Ltd.

David Meecham, Press Officer – HS2 Ltd

Ilona Cowe, Stakeholder & Community Strategy Lead – HS2 Ltd

1. Welcome and Introductions

A round robin of introductions took place. Due to the presence of the Bucks Free Press, the Chair asked attendees if they were content for the reporter to remain. No objections were received. Attendees requested that an audio recording be made of the meeting. HS2 Ltd clarified that it was against company policy to be recorded at meetings and additionally pointed out HS2 Ltd staff would leave the meeting if it was recorded.

2. Meeting Note and Actions

An agenda prepared by the local members present who represented the Central Chilterns Community groups, was tabled at the beginning of the meeting, it differed from the agenda tabled by HS2 Ltd. A vote was taken to determine which agenda should be used for this meeting. Those representatives of groups attending the meeting voted to proceed with the Central Chilterns Community group's agenda.

Those attending the meeting stated that this was the first meeting of the Central Chilterns Community Forum and to review of minutes of a previous meeting held in Wendover in March would be inappropriate. The group therefore voted to disregard this section of the agenda.

3. Presentation of Statement from Community Forum

Steve Rodrick, Chief Officer of the Chilterns Conservation Board gave a presentation highlighting the context of the Chilterns AONB and its importance, not only locally but also nationally, for recreational purposes. He pointed out that the Chilterns is a special area and illustrated this by reminding HS2 Ltd that the Chilterns is a nationally designated AONB and as such has a conservation board. The Chilterns Landscape must be viewed by HS2 Ltd as one entity and all issues explored collectively. A premium should be placed on the land within this area and as yet this has not been reflected by HS2 Ltd. There is a statutory duty laid on HS2 Ltd and it should not be as hard as it is to get, for example, information from HS2 Ltd about their approach.

HS2 Ltd clarified that they recognised the AONB status of this area and offered to host a meeting discussing pan-Chilterns issues.

Michael Jepson then provided a statement which the forum requested should be included in all sets of minutes. This included a statement about the impact of the post-consultation changes on the local community. HS2 Ltd clarified that they would be happy to include the opening statement provided. This opening statement is included in Appendix B.

Simon White (HS2 Ltd) raised the question why the current proposals were worse for the AONB which led to suggestions that he did not fully appreciate peoples' concerns. It was agreed that the concerns over the post-consultation detrimental changes would be explored under Item 7.

Actions

- HS2 Ltd to organise a pan-Chilterns meeting

4. Terms of Reference and Membership of Community Forum

A revised Terms of Reference (previously sent to HS2 Ltd) were tabled by the forum. HS2 Ltd confirmed that they were broadly content with them but there were some elements of the current draft that would need to be addressed before they could adopt them. HS2 Ltd expressed the view that it should be possible to reach a mutually acceptable conclusion. HS2 Ltd proposed that discussions about the terms of reference be explored outside of the meeting with a representative of the group. This was agreed.

It was also agreed that all those present should be allowed to continue to attend future meetings.

Action

- Revised terms of reference to be discussed and finalised by next meeting

5. Scheme Development & 6. Community Forum Influence

HS2 Ltd provided an overview of the bilateral meetings that had taken place since the first round of Community Forums between them and local stakeholders within the Country South area. HS2 Ltd reiterated their offer of bilateral meetings to all those who wished to discuss in further detail any issues relating to the High Speed rail 2.

The forum requested that further information should be provided by HS2 Ltd about the content of bilateral meetings at all future forums. HS2 Ltd agreed to consider this for future meetings, and whether permission to share information could be sought from the third parties. However, it was noted that some bilateral meetings could include confidential matters and therefore involve discussions that were not available to the Community Forums.

A question was asked about the prospect for significant changes to the alignment of the route. HS2 Ltd clarified that they had been asked to take forward the scheme as outlined by the Secretary of State in her announcement in January. HS2 Ltd stated that some changes may be made as a result of the scheme refinement, including the use of more accurate topographical data that is being collected. However, HS2 Ltd reiterated that they would not be anticipating large scale movements of the route.

In answer to a specific question about whether HS2 Ltd would consider a proposition that was being prepared by stakeholders for additional tunnelling in the area at no extra cost HS2 Ltd confirmed that such a proposal submitted by the community would be considered.

HS2 Ltd were asked from where their information on land ownership would be obtained, HS2 Ltd confirmed that they had information from the Land Registry.

Actions

- HS2 Ltd to share key points arising from bilateral meetings at each Community Forum.

Timeline

HS2 Ltd provided an initial overview of the engagement and design programme which outlined the current focus on the preliminary design of the project. This focused on the alignment and the main structures that need to be built 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.

HS2 Ltd also provided a suggested timetable for discussing various issues at Community Forums which would fit with HS2 Ltd's working timetable. This would give Community Forums an opportunity to feed into the HS2 Ltd schedule. Specific engineering and environmental updates were then provided.

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

It was noted that the HS2 report lasted double the agenda time allocated. HS2 Ltd was asked by the forum to observe the time scales outlined in the agenda. It also requested that briefing notes be provided by e-mail in advance of the forum meeting date. HS2 Ltd agreed where possible to provide sufficient information to the forum before the meeting to enable constructive dialogue to take place.

Dr Marilyn Fletcher drew the forum's attention to emerging Government thinking around the natural environment. These featured within the Natural Environment and Tourism white papers. In particular, she drew attention to the fact that the Government says AONBs are "national treasures" in its June 2011 Natural Environment White Paper. It was requested that HS2 Ltd not only explore the direct impact of the route on the countryside, but also the impact on tourism in the area.

A question was asked whether HS2 Ltd were adhering to the ecosystems services methodology. HS2 Ltd responded that they were in the process of collecting information to enable them to create an environmental statement consistent with Department for Transport requirements, but would confirm application of ecosystem services to HS2.

A question was asked about the baseline data being collected before the appraisal scope and methodology had been finalised. HS2 Ltd explained that the baseline data would need to be collected as a starting point for the assessment and standard approaches to this are being used.

Questions were asked if forums can influence decision making with respect to HS2. HS2 Ltd stated that they were keen that stakeholders used the opportunity to set out local issues of importance in relation to the scheme that these could be used to inform considerations about the design – examples suggested for this round of forums were rights of way and road realignments. However, it was stressed that, as HS2 Ltd were developing the scheme announced in January, Forums shouldn't expect to be able to influence significant departures from that in terms of, for example, route alignment. *Note added post meeting. Extract from letter of J Greening to D Liddington dated 19 July 2012 "Whilst the corridor of the line is now set the line of the route is not and I would like to reassure your constituent that there are plenty of opportunities ahead to influence the design."*

Attendees sought clarification on this point given the earlier statement that HS2 Ltd would be willing to consider a proposal for more tunnelling if it was at no extra cost. HS2 Ltd clarified that they were not looking to make any significant changes to the scheme but would consider such a proposal when received.

Actions

- HS2 Ltd to provide briefing notes on the engagement and design programme in advance of forum meetings.
- HS2 Ltd to confirm the position in relation to the application ecosystem services methodology.

7. Issues Identification

A presentation of overarching design issues was read by Dr Simon Hook. This covered key elements, comments and concerns the forum wanted included such as the use of fully bored tunnel, lower alignment, reduced speed in the AONB, noise emitted from HS2's bespoke classic compatible trains, whether trial runs had been carried out considering safety concerns over train frequency. He informed HS2 Ltd that a statement about Chilterns-wide mitigation measures was in preparation and this will be sent to HS2 Ltd when it was complete. He informed the meeting a paper would shortly be submitted on an Optimum Environmental Line Speed in the Chilterns AONB.

Attendees expressed concern that the route changes included in the announcement by Justine Greening, Sec of State for Transport, in January 2012 that HS2 would go ahead had been detrimental to the Chilterns AONB. With regard to communities, South Heath was particularly impacted. Simon White, HS2 Ltd, asked for clarification of which particular changes people had in mind, which led to suggestions that he did not fully appreciate peoples' concerns.

Cllr Shirley Judges gave a presentation on rights of way across the Chilterns and presented HS2 Ltd with a draft dossier for consideration.

A general discussion then ensued regarding practical matters associated with managing the forums such as the issues register [S and J3] and management of the website.

Response to comment S & J9; The issues register is the table contained within Appendix A which outlines the key concerns and issues faced by communities within the Central Chilterns area.

Questions were posed regarding the Environmental Impact Assessment scoping and methodology consultation and when responses to the consultation would be available online. HS2 Ltd said that a final version of the report taking account of the comments received would be available online in the summer of 2012. The forum felt this was unacceptable and a more definite date must be given by HS2 Ltd.

It was suggested by the Chair that all presentations to be delivered during meetings should be circulated before the meeting.

It was agreed that the notes of the meeting would identify all those present, and that only the final agreed minutes would be published by HS2 Ltd.

The Forum asked for the name of this Community Forum to be changed to “Central Chilterns” and for this to be reflected on the HS2 Ltd website immediately. The forum pointed out that the website was not up to date in that it did not show the new forum that had been set up in the Chilterns. HS2 Ltd explained that the request had already been made for the site to be updated. HS2 Ltd was also asked to build a register of key concerns for the forum regarding the route.

Actions

- All anticipated presentations should be circulated to the forum as part of the agenda pack at least two weeks before the date of the meeting.
- Simon Hook to send Chilterns-wide mitigation measures to HS2 Ltd when complete.
- HS2 Ltd to begin to build issues register of key forum concerns regarding the route
- HS2 Ltd to ensure the new forum name is included on HS2 Ltd website
- HS2 Ltd to only include final versions of documentation on HS2 website

8. Identification of Questions for HS2 Ltd

A presentation was given by Dr Marilyn Fletcher which reiterated the importance of the Chilterns AONB to those who use the area recreationally and the impact of HS2 on people’s enjoyment of the area. She commented upon the significant number of viewpoints within the area and asked how HS2 Ltd intended to ameliorate the noise levels caused by HS2 in this presently tranquil area. HS2 Ltd outlined that they were in the process of identifying the location of significant vistas and noise mitigation measures would be explored and developed through the forum. In response to a question, HS2 Ltd’s Simon White pointed out that trees offer little with regard to noise mitigation but are very effective in mitigating visual impact.

Cllr Seb Berry asked for further information about road closures, namely the B485 – as well as a comprehensive list of all the anticipated road closures as a result of the project. HS2 Ltd outlined that a finalised list would not be available in time for the next meeting, but that they would provide what they could in time for the next meeting.

Clarification was sought over the term 'design freeze'. HS2 Ltd explained the term did not mean that the design was fixed without means of influencing it. Rather it describes the need to take stock of the scheme to provide a base-line.

Actions

- Simon Hook to provide consolidated list of questions to HS2 Ltd
- HS2 Ltd to respond to all table questions (sent to HS2 Ltd) within 1 calendar month
- HS2 Ltd to provide further information about anticipated road closures

9. AOB

The forum requested more flexible meeting times – with the opportunity to run over should the need present itself. HS2 Ltd highlighted how there needed to be consistency along the route and the offer of two hours per meeting remained. Following discussion it was agreed that there should be flexibility should the meeting slightly run over that time, rather than an abrupt finish.

Shirley Judges stated that this was the first meeting of the Central Chilterns Community Forum and to ensure consistency with other forums requested that an additional forum meeting should be scheduled for this forum.

Action

- HS2 Ltd to schedule a further meeting for this forum.

Next meetings – tbc, following identification of a more suitable venue to accommodate the expected number of participants.

Tuesday 25th September 2012, Little Kingshill Village Hall

Action Summary:

1. HS2 Ltd to organise a pan-Chilterns meeting
2. Revised terms of reference to be discussed and finalised by next meeting
3. HS2 Ltd to consider sharing key points arising from bilateral meetings at each Community Forum
4. HS2 Ltd to confirm the position in relation to the application ecosystem services methodology
5. All anticipated presentations should be circulated to the forum as part of the agenda pack at least two weeks before the date of the meeting.
6. Simon Hook to send Chilterns-wide mitigation measures to HS2 Ltd
7. HS2 Ltd to begin to build issues register of key forum concerns regarding the route
8. HS2 Ltd to ensure the new forum name is included on HS2 Ltd website
9. HS2 Ltd to only include final versions of documentation on HS2 website
10. Simon Hook to provide consolidated list of questions to HS2 Ltd
11. HS2 Ltd to respond to all table questions (sent to HS2 Ltd) within 1 calendar month
12. HS2 Ltd to provide further information about anticipated road closures
13. HS2 Ltd to schedule a further meeting for this forum.

Appendix A

Grid of over-arching issues and concerns discussed at forum meeting

Government Policy	Road realignment	Noise & Vibration	Rights of way	Infrastructure	Heritage / Cultural	Socioeconomic	Environment
Natural Environment White Paper 2011 says AONBs are "National Treasures"	Impact of construction	Impact of Post consultation changes	Impact on bridleways	Route alignment *	Impact on Chilterns Gateway Project <u>This should be in RoW (see ref)</u>	Impact on Tourism	Impact on Vistas
	Concerns of severance		Impact on Cycle paths	Optimum Environmental Line Speed	Impact on Grim's ditch	Impact on Health & Wellbeing	Impact on Habitats
			Impact on Footpaths			Impact on local businesses	AONB status (and value)
			Re-routing of RoW			Compensation	Government commitment

NB Note Chilterns Gateway Project £1 million Boost to Cycling

Tourism <http://www.chilternsaonb.org/news/90/19/1-million-boost-to-cycling-tourism.html>

* To include design principles

Appendix B

Statement by Community Forum members for inclusion in all records of the Central Chilterns Community Forum meetings

1. Forum Members are resolutely opposed HS2
2. Consequently, participation in the Community Forum discussions regarding possible mitigation is not to be taken as any agreement to or acceptance by Forum Members of HS2 or of the current HS2 proposals.
3. If, notwithstanding discussions and objections, HS2 is to proceed along the existing proposed route or otherwise through the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, despite its statutory designation as a nationally protected landscape, then mitigation should be to the highest international standards. Mitigation should be particularly concentrated on and addressed to ensuring the greatest possible protection of the Chilterns AONB; and in particular its tranquillity and natural beauty,
4. The most effective and preferred form of mitigation for this section of the route is therefore considered to be a fully bored tunnel throughout the Chilterns AONB.
5. DfT/HS2 Ltd is reminded that in presenting the HS2 proposals for consultation, the budgeted cost for the section of HS2 between Mantles Wood and Wendover was £250-300 million more than that now budgeted cost for the revised, more damaging, proposals, which were announced only after the consultation; and despite this being a nationally protected area of countryside at the heart of the AONB. This expenditure should be reinstated in the budget and applied to further mitigation, including the full tunnelling option, for this area.
6. Presentations at Community Forums should not be taken as final statements on any topic.
7. Community Forum members will not be able to make decisions on any propositions put forward by HS2 Ltd. Proposals will be referred for discussion to the communities and organisations they represent.