

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.

Central Chilterns Community Forum
17th September 2013
Draft Minutes with Forum amendments (SH, 7-Oct-2013)

Attendees

Independent Chair – Caroline Gowing

Representatives of:

Buckinghamshire County Council
Bucks Free Press
Bucks Local Access Forum
Chesham Society
Chesham Town Council
Chiltern District Council
Cholesbury Action Group
HS2 Amersham Action Group
Little Kingshill Village Society
Great Missenden Stop HS2
Hyde Heath Infant School
Hyde Heath Village Society
Little Missenden Action Group
South Heath HS2 Action Group
Speen Area Action Group
The Lee Parish Council
The Chilterns Conservation Board
The Chiltern Countryside Group
The Chiltern Ridges HS2 Action Group (CRAG)

Neil Cowie, Country South Area Manager – HS2 Ltd
Martin Wells, Country South Area Stakeholder Manager – HS2 Ltd
Charlotte Brewster, Country South Community & Stakeholder Advisor – HS2 Ltd

1 – Welcome

The chair welcomed forum members to the meeting and the following apologies were given:

- Les Giles
- Cllr Peter Jones
- Sarah Raffety
- Michael Jepson

- Carol Rainsford
- Mike Johnstone
- Vivien Salisbury

2 – Minutes & Actions of previous meeting

Minutes – Whilst most of the minutes of the previous meeting had been agreed, there were still some areas of disagreement. HS2 Ltd and the forum representative responsible for the minutes had discussed a means of resolving the outstanding issues prior to the meeting and it was agreed that these would be circulated for members to see prior to them being formally accepted.

It was requested by a member of the forum that the minutes from this meeting [on 17 September] be resolved as soon as possible by e-mail, with each party spending no longer than 2 weeks in making comments. This was agreed.

Actions – Simon Hook requested on behalf of the forum that a number of actions marked as ‘on-going’ be given completion dates. HS2 Ltd explained that deadlines for completion dates would most likely be the formal Environmental Statement, but that they would consider the forum’s request and provide further commentary where possible.

Mark Ladd asked what procedures would be used for following up requests from forum members given that there are no further Community Forums. The Chair proposed HS2 should cover this later in the meeting (which did not happen)

Attention was then brought to action 31, about which the Hyde Heath Village Society felt insufficient information had been provided. HS2 Ltd explained that the proposal would be further discussed in the design update, and that it had already been addressed in the draft Environmental Statement. Tony Bobroff asked why HS2 Ltd could not answer these questions now. Neil Cowie relied that the design had been updated but he would not answer because then he would have to for all footpath changes. Martin Wells reiterated that all these point would be in the formal Environmental Statement.

Simon Hook asked whether any mitigation measures that had been suggested by this community had been adopted into the scheme. Martin Wells replied they had explained the process that had been followed regarding passing information to the DfT and that if we had allowed him to give his presentation on the Hybrid bill this would have explained the situation. However, beyond that HS2 Ltd explained that they did not want to get drawn into specifics prior to the publication of the Environmental Statement.

The forum again expressed their frustration that this long explanation did not answer this simple request by Simon hook

HS2 Ltd explained that as the project moved on to the next stage the focus of activity would need to change to dealing with directly affected parties so that the Forum could be clear that HS2 had had the opportunity to read them.. As such, the current engagement team would move to working directly with petitioners. HS2 Ltd also stated how a new communities team would ensure that there

continued to be a flow of information to wider groups (such as those forum members that may not be petitioners).

3 – Project round up since March 2013

HS2 Ltd reiterated that the design update for this round of Forums would not take the same form as at previous meetings, due to imminent tabling of the Hybrid Bill along with the Environmental Statement. Instead HS2 Ltd proposed only to give advance notice of current thinking on some of the elements that forum members had shown an interest in previously. Forum members expressed their frustration at this.

A forum members asked whether during the parliamentary process it would be possible to discuss other routes. Martin Wells explained that the Hybrid Bill contained the proposed design for the preferred route and that following the Second Reading stage, parliament would be discussing the detail of how that scheme should be delivered. He also stated that the question about tunnel(s) is ultimately for parliament to decide. This would also be the stage setting out the parameters for petitioning.

The Chair asked whether there were opportunities to discuss alternatives to the route? Martin Wells replied that it is straightforward; you can try to raise what you like but the Select Committee will set parameters on what can be petitioned.

Simon Hook stated that the Draft Environmental Statement was an appalling document full of holes and mistakes and could only be seen as an information gathering exercise by HS2 Ltd to allow them to prepare the formal ES. He presented Martin Wells with the DES response from CCCF and those submitted to Temple group so that the Forum could be clear that HS2 had had the opportunity to read them. HS2 Ltd sought confirmation that all of these responses had already been submitted given that the consultation had now closed. It was confirmed that this was the case.

Marilyn Fletcher asked whether there would be further opportunity to consider a lower design speed for the scheme given the Secretary of State's recent comments about the focus being on providing capacity. HS2 Ltd responded that the Secretary of State's remarks were completely consistent with the stated aims of the project, and didn't mark any change in policy. As such, forum members should not assume that aspects of the scheme, such as the design speed, were being revisited. Marilyn insisted that the SoS had changed the emphasis such that speed was not the current rationale for HS2.

Stan Mason asked for an explanation of the benefits of raising the alignment and producing spoil rather than a tunnel and no spoil. Neil Cowie replied that it saves money and reduces spoil

Questions were then asked about how comments upon the draft ES had fed into the formal ES. HS2 Ltd stated that staff had been working through responses to identify key issues in addition to the analysis work being carried out by Dialogue by Design. Mark Ladd responded that this does not answer the question and asked again how consultation responses will be integrated into the formal ES. Neil Cowie said that HS2 are looking at the responses but made no further comment.

4 - Property re-consultation

Property Compensation Consultation – Charlotte Brewster gave an overview of the new property compensation consultation covering a range of proposals with the exception of social housing and settlement deeds. HS2 Ltd Stated that the consultation would be advertised in a variety of public venues and would be open until the 4th December.

Charlotte outlined the compensation package as follows:

Express Purchase – HS2 Ltd described the Government's proposal within the consultation document to accept blight notices from eligible property owners whether or not the property would be needed for construction or operation of the railway, provided the property was wholly within the safeguarded area. There would be no requirement upon the owner to demonstrate reasonable endeavours to sell their property.

Long-term hardship scheme – for those that had to move but were unable to do so due to HS2. The proposed scheme would assess a number of factors such as property type and location. The required marketing period of the property under this scheme would be 6 months.

Sale and rent back - The sale and rent back scheme would apply to those whose homes needed to be demolished to build and operate the railway. HS2 Ltd described how there would have to be a value for money assessment to ascertain the cost needed to get the property to a lettable standard and a tenant credit check before it could take place.

Charlotte then went on to describe an alternative approach to the sale and rent back scheme, which had arisen as a result of a small number of properties purchased under the EHS for Phase One rented to their former owners. HS2 Ltd outlined how this experience suggesting that rental of properties to their former owners need not be restricted to those properties that HS2 Ltd expected to demolish. It was proposed, that as an alternative HS2 Ltd should manage all of the properties that they buy and include an option of renting back to the previous owner-occupier where it is economic to do so.

Charlotte then updated the group about a new proposal called the rural support zone, an area developed to recognise that blight may be felt more by those living in rural areas. It was suggested that it would cover the area from the LB Hillingdon / Buckinghamshire County Council boundary up to the HS2 / West Coast mainline junction at Water Orton. It would have a geographical limit either side of the railway. Two alternative schemes had been proposed within this area:

A discretionary voluntary purchase scheme – That would be available to people who lived up to 120m from the centre of the proposed line but outside the safeguarded area: providing property owners with full un-blighted market value for their property.

A property bond – That was defined as a specific and binding promise of a well-defined, individual settlement, which the property owner would be entitled to redeem in specified circumstances. If the bond recipient sold the property to a third party, the bond could also be transferred.

Charlotte described how there were 2 broad types of property bond: 'time based' which involved the purchase of a property at a defined time and 'value based' which would be a promise to to

compensate for any difference between the price an individual property achieves in the open market, and a specified price which that property would be likely to achieve in the absence of the relevant major development.

Charlotte explained that no property bond scheme had yet been introduced by any national or local Government organisation in the UK before. They went on to explain how Deloitte had been commissioned by the Department for Transport to advise on the design an optimal bond scheme balancing policy objectives. The government were consulting on a scheme that took account of the Deloitte report. It would be geographically bound and time based, but the Department were keeping options open with regards to some of the specifics of how that scheme might operate. Although Deloitte had proposed 120 meters for the length of the zone from the line, the Secretary of State had not decided on this yet.

HS2 Ltd stated that the Great Missenden Consultation event would take place on the 15th October at Missenden Abbey and that hard copies of documentation could be accessed by calling – 0300 0123 1102.

Members asked how the consultation events would be advertised. HS2 Ltd stated that they would be advertised in public venues such as sports centres, shopping centres and citizens advice bureaus. They would be sent to all 3 tiers of local government in Buckinghamshire. Publicity would also be sent to all those living within 1km of the line of route and to those who responded to the consultation previously.

Members expressed concern about the lack of compensation provided to those not benefitting from the scheme. Forum members felt that if HS2 linked to existing rail infrastructure in Buckinghamshire, people in the area would see some benefit which would be reflected in their house prices.

5 – Community Issues

Land Interest Questionnaires

Sue Brown described how she had received a Land Interest Questionnaire, which provided little information about what was proposed on their land. A question was posed regarding why land interest questionnaires had been issued and what their purpose was.

HS2 Ltd described how that as part of design development there had been a number of additional areas of land that had been identified as being of interest and might be required by HS2 Ltd. Some were some distance from the route – for example a number were associated with National Grid works such as the re-stringing of pylons and others were for additional landscaping for temporary use and changes for areas of ecological mitigation.

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HS2 Ltd explained that the enquiries were part of their work to produce the book of reference required by parliament for the scheme. Neil Cowie explained that the book of reference is a complete list of all that HS2Ltd has an interest in. The forum wished it to be noted that they found it unacceptable that details of the proposed works on people's land had not been provided in the

letters that affected parties had received. A forum member asked when do land owners find out what land is of interest to HS2 Ltd. Martin Wells replied there was a number that could be rung. Sue Brown stated that she had rung and got shunted around to various HS2 Ltd staff none of whom had provide an answer.

The Chair stated that the reasons for land interest should have been included in the letter and person on the end of the phone should have been able to deal with you. Martin Wells said that he would deal with problem.

A further question was raised as to why there was no information on the website to cover land interest. Martin Wells accepted that there should be information on the website.

Seb Berry asked how many additional properties in this area were covered and how much additional land would be required? Neil Cowie replied that he could not remember and that it will in the formal ES.

Seb Berry said that this was unacceptable and that a local MP was first person to pick up that a further 500 properties would be required. It's a simple question; HS2 Ltd must know how much extra land is required, they have this information and should share it. Martin Wells noted the comment and said that it will be something no doubt raised during the Hybrid Bill process.

Marilyn Fletcher asked that if land is required for community compensation purposes that this would presumably be included in the Hybrid Bill? Martin Wells stated that HS2 can't ask to buy land not needed for the project to be included in Hybrid Bill. He said that compensation has a different meaning in this context.

Jim Conboy asked how do we influence plans for traffic management? Neil Cowie replied that main forums comes later when HS2 Ltd will talk to local authorities and the outcome will be in the formal ES. He would expect parish councils to be involved. Sarah Raffety commented that it was a shame that HS2 Ltd haven't liaised with local authorities yet. It was reported that CPRE maps show that villages/towns some distance from the line will be affected and the Forum asked what efforts HS2 Ltd will make to ensure that those communities are aware and have opportunities to be involved in discussion? HS2 answered this by Martin Wells saying that this was getting into parliamentary process. HS2 Ltd. did not have to consult on the draft ES. Parliament will consult on final ES.

The Chair asked the question is what's the process? This was not answered.

Sarah Raffety asked how will HS2 Ltd make sure that these communities are aware that there is going to be a consultation? Martin Wells replied that it is down to parliament.

Patricia Birchley noted that the A413 had been resurfaced recently and that the whole area was grid-locked. How will theHS2 Ltd keep traffic moving? Neil Cowie declined to answer the question but note that this was subject to discussion with local authorities. Martin Wells added that the evidence base will be in the ES.

The forum regrets that no discussion of Traffic Management in the AONB during the construction phase has been possible during the course of these meetings.

Community Compensation Fund

Shirley Judges expressed the Forum's concerns about the damaging effect of HS2 on the local area. Forum members would expect a community compensation fund to be established by HS2 Ltd. . They had heard that fracking communities had been promised £100,000 each and the HS1 community fund had supported a number of community facilities. She stated that residents of South Heath had developed a 'wish list' of facilities they would desire to be funded by HS2 Ltd.

A discussion then ensued about whether any land that could be used for community facilities purchased by any such fund should feature within the hybrid bill. HS2 Ltd explained that it was at too early a stage in the process for this, and such land would not be included in the Hybrid Bill.

A question was posed regarding the best manner by which to influence transport plans during the construction phase. HS2 Ltd stated that conversations will continue to take place with the local highways authority and further details will come out when the formal ES is consulted upon. They would expect parish councils to get involved in discussions also. A further question was then posed regarding the manner in which the formal ES would be consulted upon. Considering that communities further away from the line of route would be affected, how was HS2 Ltd. proposing to ensure that these communities had the opportunity to respond to the ES consultation?

HS2 Ltd stated that they would expect the consultation would be widely advertised however it would be run by Parliament, not by HS2 Ltd. Questions were then posed about what HS2 Ltd was doing to ensure that the A413 would not become gridlocked during construction. HS2 Ltd replied that it was not a straightforward answer, but that further information would be present within the formal ES. They stated that management plans for the area would be subject to discussions with the local authority.

Mrs Judges deposited her Community Compensation Fund paper with Charlotte Brewster and other HS2 Ltd. staff for inclusion as an appendix to the minutes.

Temple Group Responses

A question was posed about what Temple Group was doing with the responses to the community facilities questionnaires they had distributed.

HS2 Ltd pointed out, for the community impact assessment in the hybrid bill, responses would be collated and used to ascertain whether any significant effects had arisen, what they might be and what mitigation could be put in place.

This information would be found within the formal ES. The forum felt that very basic questions were being asked which could have been answered by the documentation already provided by members of the community. Those from Chesham were concerned that they were not being included in such an assessment. HS2 Ltd were informed that Hyde Heath was partially within Chartridge parish council and hence should have also been included by Temple (note subsequent investigations have found that Chartridge parish council boundaries do not include Hyde Heath) .

Noise Measurement

Members of the forum asked for an update on current noise monitoring activities. HS2 Ltd described how further baseline information was currently being collected and the noise model was being re-

run. They outlined how there was work taking place to identify what additional noise measures needed to be included in the scheme, but it was likely to be a mixture of landscaping and noise barriers. Members of the forum were concerned that actual noise wasn't publicised as soon as it became available. Sandra MacDonald said that at the DES event that peak noise levels were not included as they were too large (high) and asked why this information was not on the website. Neil Cowie referred her to the formal ES. Sandra then asked why this was not covered in the draft ES. Neil responded that only average noise was required for assessment purposes.

Health and wellbeing

A presentation was then given which expressed concerns about the impacts of HS2 upon health and wellbeing, as well as community frustrations about the lack of opportunity to comment upon the Health Impact Assessment. Sandra MacDonald referred to a survey conducted under the aegis of the Chiltern Conservation Board among residents living close to the proposed line in the AONB. Analysis was not yet complete, but of the 286 respondents 87.8% felt that their health had been adversely affected with 16.4% seeking medical help. She wished to know more about what HS2 Ltd were proposing to do to research and monetise any anticipated effects. She also stated that, although there had been a reasonable amount of research carried out exploring links between the effects of aircraft and road noise upon health, there was currently little research into the effects of high-speed noise. She went on to express concerns about the impact of construction workers in the area upon local medical services, and the potential for traffic congestion to obstruct emergency service vehicles, particularly A&E ambulances carrying seriously injured patients to Stoke Mandeville Hospital. She declined the Chair's invitation to pose questions to HS2 Ltd. staff at the meeting, but said she would be submitting a list of questions to Charlotte Brewster for written answers.

Sandra submitted her paper for inclusion as an appendix to the minutes.

6 - Design development update

HS2 Ltd gave an overview of some of the changes between the draft and final ES. There had been no change in the HS2 alignment in this area, but that there had been changes to the landscaping, ecological mitigation, noise mitigation, access, traffic movement and movement of materials. Specifically:

- **Access to Mantles Wood** – There would be no change to the proposed access to Mantles Wood, as alternative measures had been developed to deal with the large volumes of excavated material in this area.
- **Chesham Road Construction Compound** – HS2 Ltd explained how there would be a slight change in location of the Chesham Road construction compound which would be moved slightly further east – although it would still stay on the west side of HS2.
- **B485 Alignment** – A slight alteration of the road diversion will take place here to sever less of the land and to replace the T-Junction at King's Lane with a roundabout.
- **Noise mitigation** – Noise mitigation has been looked at with a view to enhancing the mitigation indicated in the draft ES. The extent of bunding and landscape mitigation was currently being explored.

- **Sustainable Placement area** – HS2 Ltd outlined how after considering the impact of moving material from local cuttings HS2 Ltd had developed an approach to lessen the impact on the local roads network by dumping 800,000m³ on farmland close to the proposed route. Whilst some of this material would be transported via the trace and some used for mitigation bunds, there would still be a surplus. Rather than transporting it on the local road network, HS2 Ltd would be taking additional land for the sustainable placement of this material, which would subsequently be re-landscaped.

Neil Cowie was asked where the spoil heaps were to be placed but he declined to answer

The Chair then called for the last three questions before closing the meeting

Firstly, a member of the Forum then raised the question why he had just received a notification to acquire much more land from him for the spoil rather than just the safeguarding zone land and how he would be compensated for the division of his land. HS2 Ltd replied he had a legitimate right to respond to the formal ES.

Steve Roderick then stated that HS2 Ltd had known about the plans to dispose of the spoil on land within the AONB and had not had the courtesy to raise this with the Conservation Board. He said that it was totally unacceptable that an area deemed to have the highest level of national/international protection should be subject to this impact and he regarded Neil Cowie's comments as amazingly shallow. He understood that Martin Wells had announced that this was the last meeting. He was very glad. The forum meetings were a waste of time. It is very clear that dealing with HS2 Ltd would have to be at a much higher level.

Patricia Birchley made a statement, proposing a vote of no confidence in the forum meetings, which was unanimously supported by forum members.

However, the Chair closed meeting when a coffin symbolising the burial of the Chilterns AONB was brought into the meeting room while Mrs Birchley's statement was being made, and Martin Wells made a hasty exit.

Appendices - to be attached