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**HS2 Liaison Group**  
**Venue: The Forum, Towcester, SNC Offices**

**Draft notes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2018 at 2pm**

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**Representatives from the following organisations**

**were present:**

SNAG  
Andrea Leadsom MP  
Tommy Gilchrist – Andrea Leadsom’s Office  
Tasa Ikie – Andrea Leadsom’s Office  
Hinton-in-the-Hedges PM  
Aston le Walls PC  
Brackley Town Council  
Cllr Mary-Anne Sergison-Brooke – SNC  
Chipping Warden and Edgcote PC

CPRE  
Friends of Boddington  
Greatworth PC  
Radstone PC  
Culworth PC  
Thorpe Mandeville PC  
Boddington PC  
Evenley PC  
Sulgrave PC

**Apologies:**

Cllr Ian Morris - NCC  
Andrew Bowe - SNC  
Ingram Lloyd  
Maurice Cole

**In Attendance:**

Chris Wragg (CW) (Acting Chair) - NCC  
Esme Cushing (EC) – NCC (notes)  
Denis Winterbottom (DW) – SNC  
Nisha Mejer – HS2 Ltd  
James Tyler-Morris – HS2 Ltd  
Julie King – HS2 Ltd  
Uma Shanker – HS2 Ltd  
Steve Beech – Fusion  
Simon Matthews – Eiffage Kier JV

**1. Chairman’s Opening Remarks**

CW welcomed everyone to the meeting. The notes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

**2. Matters arising**

The actions from the previous meeting were addressed as part of the main agenda items.

**3. Community Engagement Update**

JK gave an update on Community Engagement. In summary:

- Pre-construction activities have started and before main construction can start there will be property that needs to be purchased and this needs to be dealt with showing compassion, care and empathy
- HS2 Ltd recognises the traffic impact and challenges that construction routes will have.
- Building capacity in Community Engagement: Nisha is permanent and embedded within the local area and is the main contact on a day to day basis
- The overarching Community Engagement Strategy outlines how HS2 Ltd is going to engage and there will be a Local Engagement Plan which will be tailored to local needs
- The main HS2 website will be ready within 4 to 5 months, but the commonplace websites with more localised information will be launched shortly
- HS2 Ltd are building their team on the helpdesk as teams need to be ready and able to answer questions posed or seek answers to the questions

- Health and safety programme for young people regarding the dangers of construction sites will be carried out in schools
- Very much aiming to work as one team (HS2 Ltd, contractors)
- Committed to attending this Liaison Group going forward

JK then invited thoughts from the group. The main comments were:

- If you Google the HS2 helpdesk phone number it still comes up with the old number not the new Freephone number
- Generally communication has not been a good experience
- Website is very useful, but social media/apps allows engagement much quicker and could be more interactive with updates etc.
- There are a number of planning applications that may result in additional traffic on HS2 construction routes – do HS2 Ltd have the ability to object to planning applications?
- When will further information be made available to local residents regarding lorry movements?
- Some members of the group said that they were happy with way relationship with HS2 Ltd has developed. However there has not been enough notice of some works in particular the lack of information regarding the Heave test
- Disappointing that after wanting to engage on website, the website is seemingly designed and ready to go and appears not to be fit for purpose as what has been shared appears to have a national focus rather than a local focus
- There was a concern from the group about wanting to engage with HS2 Ltd before the final design is 'locked down'

In response HS2 Ltd said:

- Social media can be a great tool. However, it relies on having the staff to resource it. It may be something that they look to include as part of a future Helpdesk contract. The commonplace website will provide an elements of interactivity and regular updates. They are also building an app that people can use to report issues straight to the helpdesk
- HS2 Ltd will speak to colleagues on why there was a breakdown in communication with regards to inputting into the website design
- They are looking to minimise traffic impact with elements constructed off-site and brought in. Information on lorry movements should be known by end of the year
- HS2 Ltd will be bringing plans to the local community but is having to get local authorities on board before engagement
- Enabling works will be completed by spring 2018. The Main Civils element will be phased.

***Actions: HS2 Ltd to investigate and report back on whether they can object to planning applications***

#### **4. Enabling works and main works update**

After an introduction from HS2 Ltd, Fusion and EK gave a presentation [slides were circulated on 15/03/2018].

The focus of the enabling works is to get ready for construction (ecology surveys, road improvements works). Scheme design is due in May 2018.

There are three elements in South Northants; Chipping Warden Relief Road, A361/Welsh Road and B4525/Sulgrave Road. Early designs were shared with the group.

Two meetings have been held with NCC regarding the relief road. There are still some outstanding issues the main ones of which are; speed limit, balancing ponds, acoustic barrier and highway boundary.

Detailed design is planned to be completed by April, mobilisation will be in summer 2018, with completion by March 2019.

Nisha is going to be holding monthly surgeries. Chipping Warden invited HS2 Ltd to attend April Parish meeting.

***Action - HS2 Ltd to investigate attending Chipping Warden parish meeting***

Greatworth PC highlighted their concerns regarding the number of HGVs that use the B4525 and that three HGVs have recently come off the road and they do not consider the design suitable to accommodate that traffic, particularly when Helmdon Road is closed as this will be the main route out of the village.

Just outside of South Northants, there will be some widening and pedestrian crossing safety measures at Wardington and also a re-modelling of M40 junction 11.

Brackley Town Council asked EK about progress of the design of the A43/A422 roundabout to accommodate the additional numbers of HGVs.

HS2 Ltd explained that they have been in contact with Highways England over the roundabouts along the A43, however they could not provide a specific update on the A43/A422 roundabout.

The group asked whether it would be possible for a full set of the latest drawings made public could be provided. The Hybrid Bill maps are the latest maps that have been made publically available.

There was a frustration from some of the group that HS2 Ltd was reactive and not proactive enough; that it is reacting to situations rather than involving the local community in the project who know the local details, and if they do ask then HS2 Ltd do not take any notice.

EK are working towards designing a scheme that allows them to set a target price by November 2018 (stage 1). Stage 2 commences in March 2019 and the first priority will be to clear route for earthworks etc. Having to work within the undertakings and assurances given. Currently they are investigating opportunities to use innovative pre-cast concrete design for some elements. Design will be sensitive to local surroundings but will be recognisable as a style common to HS2.

Key design elements of Lower Thorpe and Edgcote viaducts have been discussed with the Independent Design Panel and shared with Parish and District Councils and EK gave a brief overview of how the viaducts have been designed to reduce the visual impact. There will be further stakeholder engagement on these designs.

The group enquired whether risk assessments of derailments at Radstone for example had been undertaken.

***Action - HS2 Ltd to update the group on status of risk assessments of derailments***

The trial cutting at Wormleighton is being done to monitor and learn how the land behaves over a period of a year (including a wet and dry season). EK gave a short explanation about what was being done. The site will be accessed from Leisure Drive. 20-30 construction vehicles for a period of approximately two weeks to bring in the stone required to build the access route. Warwickshire County Council will approve the lorry route consent. WCC have agreed to consult NCC on the consent (HS2 Ltd do not have a requirement to do so, just to notify adjoining authorities).

Chipping Warden outlined their concern that they had not been informed about the trial cutting. EK are planning to come and see all the parish councils over the next few months with public exhibition in June/July.

## **5. Road Safety Fund**

NCC gave a brief update. Engineers from Northamptonshire Highways will be going out to drive the construction routes by mid April to look at the proposals put forward so far and to check that no other opportunities have been missed.

Parishes are encouraged to send through any further ideas for projects by the end of March. This is just to concentrate minds rather than a final cut-off date as the funding is available until 2026. Once a potential list of schemes have been identified NCC will apply to HS2 Ltd to draw down some funding for feasibility design and to devise a programme. Once there is more clarity on costs, further amounts of funding will be drawn down for detailed design and construction of schemes.

Evenley PC and Boddington PC raised concerns regarding the timeframe for implementation of the Road Safety Fund, Boddington PC in particular raised concern that the road safety improvements needed in Boddington before the trail cutting commences will not be possible. NCC explained that due to resourcing and the Section 114 notice the authority is facing challenges securing resource and that there are lead-in times for design and delivery. Evenley also expressed frustration regarding the timescales and outlined that they had been in discussion with Northamptonshire Highways for sometime and that there had been no progress and poor communication. After further discussion, HS2 Ltd agreed to investigate the possibility of assisting NCC with the concerns raised.

***Action: HS2 Ltd and NCC to speak further regarding delivery of Road Safety Fund schemes***

## **6. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Friday 1 June 2018 at 2pm at The Forum, Towcester.