

HIGH SPEED 2

To: Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum

Date: 22 September 2010

Authors: Report of the County Archaeologist

A. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1 To alert members to the potential implications of the proposed HS2 project for Buckinghamshire's historic environment

B. PROPOSED ACTION

- 2 **The Forum is invited to:**

NOTE the report and the planned Environmental Summit.

REQUEST a report on the heritage implications of the HS2 consultation to the March 2011 meeting.

C. RESOURCES

- 3 Undefined at present but likely to be a major commitment over many years.

D. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4. On 11th March the Government published the High Speed 2 report. It is part of a Command Paper on high speed rail which Lord Adonis announced to Parliament. The Department for Transport is the sponsor/promoter of the scheme. The report identifies a preferred route for a high speed railway line from London to the West Midlands and some of the other options that were considered. The preferred route goes through the west side of Buckinghamshire. The route skirts close to some villages and towns and will have an impact on the Chiltern Hills. The Coalition Government has shown a commitment to High Speed Rail though including it in the Queen's Speech, the government will "enable the construction of a high-speed network". No timetable for the work or details on routes were given. The announcement only said the Bill would be introduced in "due course". On the 24th June changes by the Coalition Government to the remit of HS2 Ltd were published. This has put back the date for public consultation from Autumn 2010 to the New Year
5. Buckinghamshire and the District Councils have recently jointly hosted the HS2 Stakeholder Summit that concentrated on the overall Business

Case for HS2. The Chair was Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher and speakers included John Bercow MP, Steven Baker MP, Christian Wolmar (transport journalist and broadcaster) and HS2 Action Alliance. Another summit is being organised for 15th October 2010 to examine the environmental impacts of the HS2 proposals. An independent speaker has been identified to outline the historic environment issues based on in-depth experience of HS1 and other major infrastructure projects. The possibility of convening an HS2 historic environment technical working party for the whole is being considered.

6. A wide range of historic environment impacts can be anticipated:

- direct physical harm to historic buildings, landscapes and sites;
- noise and visual effects on the setting of heritage assets and
- severance of historic landscapes.

Rapid GIS-base appraisal of the preferred route indicates that many potentially serious impacts can be identified, for example:

- Amersham: cutting and tunnel entrance north of the town could affect the setting of the conservation area.
- Fleet Marston: cuts through Roman Akeman Street beside a large Roman settlement.
- Great Missenden: cuts through Grims Ditch (SM) and adjacent to Jenkins Wood medieval enclosure.
- Hartwell: cuts through Hartwell grade II* historic park, 350m from Hartwell House (grade I) and might destroy grade II listed Glebe House.
- Hyde End: cuts through Hyde Farm, a grade II listed medieval building and nearby prehistoric and medieval artefact scatters.
- Twywell: route lies 120m from the grade I listed parish church and even closer to the grade II vicarage.
- Shardloes Park: 1.2 km cut through the grade II* historic park to the north of the A413. Also adjacent to a Roman settlement.
- Stoke Mandeville: passes through the site of St.Mary's Church and deserted village
- Waddesdon: affects the setting of the village conservation area and historic park.

Maps will be presented at the meeting. In addition to the above, there will also be substantial effects on historic landscape character and on archaeological remains, including as yet unidentified sites.

7 It is understood that the consultation in the New Year will be accompanied by an 'Appraisal of Sustainability' with a full Environmental Impact Assessment to accompany the Draft Hybrid Bill which would give authority to construct the line. It should be noted that

the Hybrid Bill would in all likelihood disapply heritage legislation. The Forum may wish to respond to the 2011 consultation.

E. BACKGROUND PAPERS

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/highspeedrail>.

http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/sites/bcc/transport/high_speed_2.page

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