

## **HIGH SPEED 2**

To: Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum

Date: 16 March 2011

Authors: Report of the County Archaeologist

### **A. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1 To advise members of the consultation on HS2 and its possible implications for Buckinghamshire's historic environment

### **B. PROPOSED ACTION**

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

- a) **COMMENT on issues raised by the HS2 consultation, especially the Appraisal of Sustainability**
- b) **COMMENT on the draft Bucks HS2 Historic Environment Appraisal (attached)**
- c) **AGREE to the Chairman preparing a response on the heritage implications of HS2 in consultation with members.**

### **C. RESOURCES**

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

### **D. SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

4. Philip Hammond, the Transport Secretary, launched the public consultation on High Speed Rail on the 28th February. It is one of the biggest public consultations ever undertaken, and will cover the Government's proposed strategy for a wider network linking London, the West Midlands and Manchester and Leeds, and the proposals for a route from London to the West Midlands.

The proposed wider network would deliver around £44bn of benefits and would cut 30 minutes off the journey between London and Birmingham and around an hour off journeys between London and Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow and Edinburgh. In addition, released capacity on existing lines such as the West Coast Main Line would offer the possibility of more frequent, fast commuter services from places such as Milton Keynes and Coventry.

The consultation document and the documents underlying the proposals such as the Appraisal of Sustainability, economic case report and engineering report have been published on the consultation website and will also be available, for example, at central libraries along the line of route.

The consultation will run until 29 July, and there will be roadshows in towns and villages along the proposed route between London and the West Midlands. People can respond to the consultation on the website at <http://highspeedrail.dft.gov.uk> or by completing a questionnaire form which can be found in the summary of the consultation document.

5. In October Buckinghamshire and the District Councils jointly hosted the HS2 Stakeholder Summit that looked at the possible environmental impacts of HS2 Ltd's proposals. Sir Henry Aubrey Fletcher again chaired the conference and speakers included Dominic Grieve MP, John Bercow MP, Sir Brian Briscoe (Chairman of HS2 Ltd), Phil Graham (Deputy Director, High Speed Rail, Department for Transport), Steve Rodrick from the Chiltern Conservation Board, Pete Raine (previously Chief Executive of Kent Wildlife Trust), George Lambrick (Historic Environment Consultant) and Mark Bailey (Natural Environment Team Manager, Buckinghamshire County Council) who talked about the BLIS project.
6. The Buckinghamshire Member Project Board agreed on 14 January that the Councils' key messages should be:

*The authorities in Buckinghamshire and Hillingdon have come together to oppose the proposals for High Speed rail as they are currently constructed.*

*We do not believe that the business case stacks up and therefore cannot support the route suggested by the Government and are actively working on a plan to strongly object to the proposals.*

*We are opposed to the current High Speed rail proposals as they are presently outlined and do not believe that they are in the best interests of the UK as a whole in terms of the benefits claimed in the business case.*

*We are not opposed to the need for higher speed rail per se and fully acknowledge the need for strategic improvement to the national rail infrastructure but cannot agree with the current proposals as the economic and environmental benefits are not at all credible.*

*We do not believe that all the other alternatives to achieve the transport capacity, regeneration and environmental benefits have been fully explored by the Government and with the billions of pounds that are proposed to be invested, we owe it to the nation to ensure these are fully explored.*

*The overarching campaign message is: "Is HS2 the right investment priority for the UK?"*

- 7 A Buckinghamshire HS2 historic environment workshop was held in November. This workshop informed a rapid desk-based appraisal of the HS2 'optimised route 3', a draft of which is attached for information and comment.
- 8 An historic environment technical group is being established as a forum for English Heritage and local authorities along the route to meet with HS2 Ltd and promote best practice.
- 9 HS2 Ltd has published an Appraisal of Sustainability, which only considered nationally designated sites. On historic environment impacts the AOS non-technical summary says:

*3.1.16 Refinements to the proposed route have ensured that no Grade I and II\* listed buildings would be demolished, although the setting of three Grade II\* buildings would be likely to be affected. Fifteen Grade II listed buildings would need to be demolished. Some listed structures in the Euston area would need to be relocated and the design of Euston Station and its associated over-site development would need to take into account the setting of Euston Gardens and the northern part of the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.*

*3.1.17 Three Registered Parks and Gardens would be physically impacted. However in each case further route refinement has been undertaken to limit the landtake and effects upon the settings of these features.*

*3.1.18 Two protected sites of archaeological importance would be physically impacted. These scheduled monuments, Grim's Ditch in the Chilterns and a Roman villa site in the vicinity of Edgcote would be subject to prior archaeological investigation and academic study, in line with Government guidance.*

Also attached is an extract on Cultural Heritage from the Appraisal of Sustainability.

- 10 The Forum may wish to make representations to HS2 on the narrow range of heritage assets and issues considered, especially the lack of recognition of undesignated heritage assets and some questionable assumptions regarding effects on designated assets in the county.

## E. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

HS2 Appraisal of Sustainability

<http://highspeedrail.dft.gov.uk/library/documents/appraisal-sustainability>

[http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/sites/bcc/transport/high\\_speed\\_2.page](http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/sites/bcc/transport/high_speed_2.page)

High Speed 2 and the Historic Environment of Buckinghamshire: An  
Initial Appraisal of Optimised Preferred Route 3 (BCC, March 2010)

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