

WMCA Board

Date	23 July 2021
Report title	HS2 Regional Enterprise Board
Portfolio Lead	Environment, Energy & HS2 - Councillor Ian Courts
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Report has been considered by	Strategic Leadership Team Programme Board

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The WMCA Board is recommended to:

- (1) Approve the revised refresh and rebrand of the HS2 Regional Enterprise Board.
- (2) Approve the revised terms of reference for the HS2 Regional Enterprise Board (to be circulated separately).

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to outline the proposed changes that will be taking place to enable the refresh and rebrand the HS2 programme managed on behalf of the West Midlands region, and to present a revised 'terms of reference' for the HS2 Regional Enterprise Board.

2. Background

- 2.1 In 2015, following the submission of the first HS2 Growth Strategy and the subsequent formation of the WMCA the HS2 Growth Delivery Board (GDB) was formed and used as the main means by which the challenges and opportunities that would be presented by HS2, were dealt with at a regional level.
- 2.2 Over the last couple of years, the main focus of the GDB has been to engage with key regional stakeholders in unlocking some of the major challenges faced in unlocking the development potential of the respective sites in the region.
- 2.3 However, as we enter the next phase of delivery of the HS2 programme, a more focused approach is needed to ensure that we embrace, fully, all of the opportunities that HS2, as a significant catalyst for growth, presents to this region.
- 2.4 It is therefore appropriate to take a fresh look at all aspects of this programme and to ensure that we focus on the key opportunities that this brings. So far, we are yet to really embrace the full and fruitful opportunities that HS2 provides. We are yet to see significant number of highly skilled and trained local people emerge from the training being put in place. We are yet to see significant numbers of local businesses truly benefit from the economic impacts provided by HS2 and we are yet to see any significant contribution to our regional environmental targets for WM2041.
- 2.5 We will therefore realign the HS2 Regional Enterprise Board to focus more directly on the following areas of activity:
- **Economic opportunity** – focus on business opportunities to help local and regional businesses to succeed
 - **Education opportunity** – focus on enhanced training and development of skills for local people
 - **Employment opportunity** – target key employment opportunities that are created not just by the construction of HS2 but as part of the wider regeneration aspirations of the region and by the attraction of new industry
 - **Environmental opportunity** – focus on the potential of 'natural capital' and how we can use this in partnerships with HS2 and partners to achieve our WM2041 targets
 - **Engagement opportunities** – linking both people and organisations to the wider opportunities presented by HS2 across this region and help change the narrative of what HS2 really means to people of this region
 - **Energy opportunity** – looking at how we can capitalise on renewable energy and decarbonisation presented by HS2

- 2.6 To deliver on this, a review of the current and future membership of the HS2 Regional Enterprise Board has also been undertaken and will look to bring together both elected members and senior officers to help us maximise the opportunities that are outlined above. To ensure that we are not only focussed on the delivery of the key opportunities above, the configuration of the REB will also be expansive across the region to ensure that everyone across the entire West Midlands region is able to benefit from the HS2 programme, be that individuals, communities and businesses.
- 2.7 We will look to ensure that we not only link to regional but also national initiatives and priorities, such as 'Levelling Up' and 'COVID recovery'. We will look to focus more on the horizon for emerging opportunities so as to align our region to be best placed to embrace and deliver for people and businesses within this region.
- 2.8 A key activity will be to significantly increase the level of engagement we have with both partners and stakeholders across the region to maximise the opportunities presented by HS2, such as innovation to help us realise the potential in such areas as Health, science and energy as outlined above
- 2.9 We will also work with HS2 and its delivery partners to ensure that the project is constructed in an environmentally sustainable way and is respectful of both the people and communities of this region. We will look to ensure that where possible, all means of mitigation for such things as 'haul routes' across the region are fully examined to minimise disruption and disturbance to the residents of this region, all of which will be based on evidence-based research.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications in relation to this report. All projects and programmes that are being delivered by the HS2 programme are funded accordingly via individual funding strategies as identified within the respective project & programme business cases.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no legal implications in relation to this report.

5. Impact on Delivery of Strategic Transport Plan

- 5.1 As part of the wider development of the HS2 Growth Strategy, and most recently the refresh that took place in 2021, alignment with the Strategic Transport Plan (STP) was undertaken as many of the schemes that are within the STP are also contained within the 'HS2 Wider Connectivity' section with the HS2 Growth Strategy ensuring synergies across respective documents.

6. Equalities Implications

- 6.1 Each of the individual projects and programmes contained within the overall HS2 programme are required to undertake equalities impact assessments as part of their standard project development and for these to be reviewed and revised as part of the standard regular project and programme reporting cycles that are currently in place.

7. Inclusive Growth Implications

7.1 The proposed revisions to the focus of the HS2 REB bring it into alignment with several of the inclusive growth 'fundamentals' which comprise the Inclusive Growth Framework. Taking each focal point in turn:

- **Economic opportunity:** ensuring that local businesses can enter the supply chain for HS2 aligns with the Economy fundamental of the Inclusive Growth Framework. This is a chance to contribute to the region's objective for social economy growth – and it will be important to ensure that co-operatives, mutuals, social enterprises and community businesses are among the local businesses that are able to benefit from the investment.
- **Employment opportunity:** this focal point also aligns to the Economy fundamental of the Inclusive Growth Framework. Ensuring that the wider benefits and opportunities of HS2 are considered alongside the jobs within construction is key to ensuring that a broad section of the population can benefit from the investment. As with all aspects of inclusive growth, collaboration between sectors and partners will be required to ensure that our education and skills offer can prepare people for opportunities that will be there when they qualify.
- **Education opportunity:** ensuring that local people are given opportunities to develop new, relevant skills, both in and out of work, aligns with the Education and Learning fundamental of the Inclusive Growth Framework. The skills required to build HS2 are more broadly relevant to the future of the region – be that in construction, energy infrastructure or retrofit – so as with the 'employment opportunity' focal point, the onward step that people will make should be factored into the skills provision.
- **Environmental opportunity:** this aligns to the Climate Resilience fundamental of the Inclusive Growth Framework. The natural capital example highlighted earlier in the paper is particularly important – whilst HS2 is far less disruptive to the natural environment than new roads, it will nonetheless be important to achieve biodiversity net gain in order to align with the region's aspirations. However, there are other elements of WM2041 that HS2 could also benefit – notably delivery against the soon to be published Circular Economy Roadmap, and by creating additional passenger capacity on the heavy rail network.
- **Energy opportunity:** this also aligns to the Climate Resilience fundamental of the Inclusive Growth Framework. Alongside the decarbonisation opportunity within the transport network, HS2 also presents an opportunity to increase our generation and storage of renewable energy, as well as to upgrade our regional energy systems more broadly. The REB should consider how the disruption inherent in construction could also be an opportunity to achieve the objectives within the Regional Energy Strategy.
- **Engagement opportunity:** this aligns to the People, Power and Participation fundamental of the Inclusive Growth Framework. There are myriad benefits to HS2, and these benefits are the bridge between the people of this region and the infrastructure – communicating this well will make it more likely that these benefits are realised. The REB could also look into the broader picture of local influence and where the opportunities for that could be found – whether that is achieved through co-design of natural capital schemes, or the involvement of local organisations in the delivery of skills and employment support.

8. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

- 8.1 HS2 and the potential benefits from both the construction and the 'legacy' of the project, stretch across the breadth of the West Midlands region. It is proposed therefore that under the proposed revision, all members from the WMCA will be represented in some capacity to ensure that these opportunities are maximised.

9. Other Implications

- 9.1 No other implications have been identified.

10. Schedule of Background Papers

- 10.1 None.