



**West Midlands
Combined Authority**

HS2 Regional Enterprise Board

Friday 21 October 2021 at 10.00am

Minutes

Present

Councillor Ian Courts (Chair)	Portfolio Lead for Environment, Energy & HS2
Michael Anderson	Transport for West Midlands
James Betjemann	Birmingham City Council
Matthew Botelle	HS2 Ltd
Nick Brown	Urban Growth Company
Chris Egan	Warwickshire County Council
Claire Hatton	West Midlands Combined Authority
Mary Morrissey	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Paul Mountford	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Julie Nugent	West Midlands Combined Authority
Rachael Phillips	Transport for West Midlands
Craig Wakeman	Transport for West Midlands
Ed Watson	Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP
Martin Watson	Warwickshire County Council

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from D. Dayton-Hill, Councillor Ken Hawkins, Councillor Patrick Harley, Ian MacLeod, Anne Shaw, Pete Thomason, Mark Thurston and Councillor Ian Ward.

2. Introductions

The Chair welcomed those participating in the meeting and at his invitation, introductions were provided.

3. Chair's Update & Review of Purpose

The Chair updated the board on the purpose of the HS2 Regional Enterprise Board with a focus on demonstrating the success of HS2 and looking for visible outcomes.

4. HS2 Construction to Date & Next Key Milestones

The board received a presentation from Matthew Botelle on the HS2 Year Plan.

Matthew Botelle noted the points raised regarding vegetation clearance within Warwickshire and Solihull, advising there was a need to have the right communication in place and suggested sharing a vegetation map with the public.

ACTION HS2-001: Matthew Botelle to ensure communication gets provided to local authorities affected by tree removals, ensuring it is clear along with publishing a vegetation map to share with the public.

Craig Wakeman suggested an agenda item be added around communication going forward to note key communication elements, which could help with the points raised during the meeting.

ACTION HS2-002: Craig Wakeman to add a communication agenda item for future meetings.

Matthew Botelle suggested a communication strategy element could be added the presentation going forward, which would become more detailed as the programme of works progresses.

ACTION HS2-003: Matthew Botelle to update the presentation for future meetings to include a communication strategy update.

The Chair mentioned the early delivery of environmental mitigation and asked if HS2 Ltd were doing advanced tree planting works. Matthew Botelle was not aware of the line/route within Warwickshire and Solihull, confirming he would check.

ACTION HS2-004: Matthew Botelle to investigate if advanced tree planting works were being carried out and provide an update.

5. Building Skills to Deliver HS2 - Achievements so far in Delivery of 'Local' Jobs and Business Engagement

The board received a presentation from Kate Myers on Building the skills to deliver HS2.

The Chair expressed his concern at how long some of the activities were taking, asking why it was going to take another month to produce a statement of intent. Kate Myers advised she was due to be seconded to another department and was keen the team had enough time to get this sorted.

Martin Watson raised the necessity of seeing data to identify where local employees were living rather than working to show the success of local job creation, adding that councillors were keen to promote numbers of how many local jobs had been created. Kate Myers confirmed this was difficult information to provide based on GDPR, adding that HS2 Ltd was working with the Innovation team to provide better data.

Julie Nugent asked how the information presented translated to real jobs/people and benefits in the West Midlands, along with what was being done about the skills shortage in the West Midlands to ensure local people were moving into jobs. She was keen to identify what more could be done to accelerate jobs and skills, advising a session could be held with suppliers and submissions made to ministers. She suggested working with local job centres to ensure local people were being made aware of opportunities, as well as providing courses if aware of certain jobs being posted in the future, to ensure people were being trained to fill the skills gap.

The Chair felt if people were being trained, they may have been lost in terms of applying for HS2 Ltd roles but would not be lost within the industry and was keen to see results on this topic, adding he would be happy to write to ministers if needed.

6. WMCA Jobs Objective & Expectations

Julie Nugent updated the board on the work being done with the supply chain.

The Chair requested to see some results to report at the next WMCA Board meeting in November.

ACTION HS2-005: Julie Nugent to produce a report showing results from the work being done with the supply chain to be presented at the November WMCA Board meeting.

7. Potential Regional Opportunities for the Next 6-12 months (Economic, Environment, Employment, Engagement & Energy)

The Chair and Craig Wakeman suggested a variety of topics that would be covered during future meetings, including:

- Looking a wider engagement and communication with residents and businesses
- Key opportunities with engagement and communication
- East Birmingham Corridor
- Energy
- Electric and autonomous vehicles
- Giga Factory
- Looking at what things are being delivered, could be delivered

The Chair added future meetings could include looking at achievements made against the HS2 Growth Strategy to date.

Mary Morrissey also suggested that activities/action that were considered needed to evidence the 'added value' that they provided so that the full benefits of the programme could be evidenced.

8. UK Central Update and Key Next Steps and Timeline to Achieving Formal Sign-off for MSCP

Nick Brown updated the board on the Interchange site, advising it would be a place offering housing, industry, offices, healthcare, campus and would generate a place for people to live once fully developed. He advised of two issues being reviewed at present, one being how land was valued, which would be addressed by the Department for Transport. The other being a requirement for HS2 Ltd, which colleagues were working through.

The Chair mentioned the early release of land was a positive step and that people would want to see benefits, which would be of dramatic interest to people in the West Midlands.

James Betjemann asked if it would be possible to get a plan of the early release land, as he felt it would be useful to colleagues working on the East Birmingham route. Nick Brown agreed to provide a plan, advising they were still changing rapidly.

ACTION HS2-006: Nick Brown to request Jonathan Bretherton provide a copy of the early release land plan for information.

9. Curzon Metro Stop Update

The board received a presentation from Michael Anderson on 'Midland Metro Alliance & HS2 Ltd Collaborative Construction' advising of the difficulties with the Birmingham Eastside Metro Extension which were currently being reviewed by Transport for West Midlands and HS2 Ltd colleagues to reach a suitable resolution.

Matthew Botelle confirmed he would review the challenges within HS2 Ltd in Mark Thurston's absence and agreed to send an email to the respective stakeholders to outline the challenges being faced.

ACTION HS2-007: Matthew Botelle to send an email to the respective stakeholders regarding the challenges being faced by Transport for West Midlands, with a view to reaching a suitable resolution for both Transport for West Midlands and HS2 Ltd.

Nick Brown suggested the consideration of building the opposite end of the Metro route, from the airport side into Birmingham and felt it could risk embarrassment as a region if this could not be completed.

James Betjemann highlighted an issue in the Curzon area, advising a conversation had not been held with the landowners regarding the operation timescale, which was something to be progressed quickly to ensure there were no false expectations.

10. Any Other Business

The Chair informed the board of a visit he attended to a Laing O'Rourke factory which made concrete panels and showcased advanced manufacturing. He suggested that this might be something to consider in the future so as to showcase the use of new modern manufacturing techniques that are being used in the construction of HS2.

Martin Watson advised there had been lots of dialogue with HS2 Ltd regarding construction with concrete, adding engagement with residents would be important to ensure they understood the scale of the constructions. Matthew Botelle hoped this was fully underway, and Martin Watson confirmed it was better now but hadn't been great to begin with.

ACTION HS2-008: Matthew Botelle agreed to look at what engagement had been made to date regarding the viaduct construction, ensuring there is further more detailed engagement with Birmingham and Solihull.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 11 January 2022

[The meeting ended at 11.57am]