

## HS2 update for the C&RV Community Board: March 2021

### 1. Programme of works

HS2 construction activity in the A413 corridor during 2021 is summarised below.

Construction work will continue at all these main sites until at least 2025, when the hand-over of local sections is due to begin, to (yet-to-be-appointed) rail-systems contractors, to install the track, signals, catenaries and lineside equipment.

#### a) Fusion – ‘Enabling works’

Fusion continue ‘enabling’ activities in the area, including the completion of road works, archaeological works, vegetation clearance and tree planting. Most of this work is due to be completed by Summer 2021.

#### b) Align – Main Works C1 (Hillingdon to South Heath)

The two **tunnel boring machines (TBMs)** are due to be ‘launched’ within the next few weeks and are due to arrive at the North Portal at South Heath in early 2024.

- The first shaft, at **Chalfont St Peter**, now has full planning permission.
- The **Chalfont St Giles** application is currently with Bucks Council (BC).
- Below-ground work at the **Amersham shaft** is due to start in April. The design of the proposed headgear has raised concern; the community awaits Align’s response.
- At **Little Missenden**, the idea of a new roundabout has been dropped; a signalised junction is now being discussed. Full design proposals are expected in March.
- At **Chesham Road** the initial site set-up has begun and a temporary signalised entry from the B485 is proposed. A full design proposal is expected to be presented to the community in early summer.

#### c) EKFB – Main Works C2 (South Heath to Brackley)

- Work on the A413 and the Link Road at GM is due to be completed in March.
- EKFB will construct the route between South Heath and Wendover “from both ends” using an internal access road (IAR) adjacent to the railway’s line of route. The IAR will probably be in place for at least 5 years.
- Work to construct the IAR is due to start in March, with vegetation clearance and temporary closures (at different times) of Leather Lane, Bowood Lane and Rocky Lane, and temporary closure and diversions of local footpaths.

### 2. Construction impacts and mitigation

The major concerns in the local area during construction remain:

- The volume of HS2 traffic on the A413 (the official construction route for all sites between Amersham and Stoke Mandeville)
- The impact of HS2 traffic using other roads in the area
- Non-HS2 traffic ‘rat-running’ to avoid HS2 congestion
- The impacts on ecology, hydrogeology and the environment
- The impact on footpaths.

‘Active Resistance’ protester camps are well-established at Jones Hill Wood (between Bowood Lane and Rocky Lane) and on the A413, near Wendover; a further smaller camp has recently been established near Leather Lane to prevent / delay tree-felling in that area.

### 3. Local engagement

BC Officers and Cllrs, and Town and Parish Cllrs have now established a framework for regular engagement with HS2 Ltd and their contractors, to run alongside the statutory engagement processes.

- A group, comprising representatives of the C&RV and the Missendens Community Boards, led by BC officers, meet monthly with HS2 Ltd and the contractors.
- Local County Cllrs are now meeting as a 'Members Interest Group'.
- Parish Councils and individual Cllrs have regular engagement with the Contractors' Community Engagement Managers.

There remain significant difficulties in getting the joint impacts of the two main contractors in the area (Align and EKFB) considered together. In particular, the cumulative impact on the A355/A413 has been escalated to senior HS2 Ltd managers, to local MPs and to the 'Independent' HS2 Commissioners. BC has delayed approvals for Sch 17 applications in the area, pending the outcome of meetings scheduled on this topic. At the time of writing a half a dozen Sch 17 applications remain 'unapproved'. A verbal update will be provided at the C&RV CB meeting.