

**COUNCIL SEMINAR
4th November, 2013**

Present:- Councillor R. S. Russell (in the Chair); The Mayor (Councillor John Foden), Atkin, Beaumont, Beck, Burton, Ellis, Gosling, Pickering, Roddison, R. S. Russell, Sharman and Wootton.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Clark, Godfrey, Jepson, McNeely, Sims and Smith.

HIGH SPEED RAILWAY HS2 - "ENGINE FOR GROWTH"

Further to the previous seminar held on 29th May, 2013, Members received a presentation from two representatives of the company HS2 Limited, Dan Barritt (HS2 Consultation Manager) and Rachel Blake (Community and Stakeholder Manager for Yorkshire) about the Government's formal consultation process on the route of the HS2 high speed railway from the West Midlands to Manchester and to Leeds. The consultation process had been launched on 17th July 2013 and would last until the end of January 2014.

The following summary of the consultation events was explained:-

- : events being held in 30 locations over 36 days;
- : there will be an exhibition about the HS2 railway at the Institute of Sport, Coleridge Road, Sheffield on Friday 8th and Saturday 9th November, 2013;
- : the intention to provide visitors with a 'walk through' of the proposed scheme and also to provide clear information about the impact (positive and negative) of the railway on the local area;
- : various specialists will be available to explain issues concerning: engineering works; the environmental impact; property issues;
- : there will be a 'welcome panel' and information about the case for HS2;
- : details of the proposed route, the main stations and the way in which the HS2 railway connects to local rail and transport services;
- : the provision of HS2 will release capacity on the regional rail networks;
- : "In your area" – maps of specific locations along the route (and visualisations of how the railway structures will appear at specific locations);
- : the use of GIS mapping technology to view precise locations;
- : High speed railways – information on the technical background:

- : Sustainability – the environmental impact and specific issues, such as noise from rolling stock;
- : Property issues (and the compensation scheme);
- : Timetable for construction and development of the railway route;
- : the next steps – after this consultation exercise has ended;
- : sound booths – enabling visitors to listen to a simulation of the level of noise which the trains will make;
- : Station groups (eg: the Sheffield City Region group)
- : Response forms may be sent to a postal address in Harrow (PO Box 1152); there are also on-line forms to complete www.hs2.org.uk.
- : the events will distill a large amount of information into a number of key points.

After the presentation, Members discussed the following salient issues:-

- : whether the HS2 project represents value for money for the Sheffield City Region; a principal benefit was explained that the high speed rail network will attract passengers who are making longer journeys, thereby creating space and capacity on the local and regional network for passengers making shorter journeys;
- : there will continue to be investment in improvements to the local transportation network;
- : time savings, in respect of journey times, are significant (not only for the longer journeys between the North of England and London);
- : in 2014, the Network Rail Chairman, Sir David Higgins, will take over as Chairman of HS2 Limited; reference was made to the importance of ensuring that the whole project will be delivered within the budget; it was explained that the much of the budgeted increase in costs were for contingency items;
- : difficulties of congestion and saturation of capacity affecting the West Coast mainline (linking London to Birmingham and Manchester) had dictated that the HS2 construction work would begin in London and move north; it was the Government's intention that the whole project (ie: the routes to Manchester and to Leeds, via Sheffield) will be completed and be within the scheme's budget;
- : the project budgets are defined (eg: information within a KPMG report) and both South and West Yorkshire will gain benefits from HS2;

: Members asked that more detailed information be made available about the impact of the route upon specific areas within the Rotherham Borough (eg: Catcliffe and Waverley); the representatives of HS2 Limited undertook to attend appropriate Area Assembly, Parish Council and community meetings, in order to provide such information to local residents and organisations;

: the construction timetable remained as work beginning in 2022, with the first train arriving at the new station in Leeds in 2033; the Government will have to decide if this timescale is to be shorter;

: the original proposal remains that a new rail station will be constructed above the existing transport interchange at Meadowhall (although Sheffield City Council prefers a location close to the city centre);

: the South Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority has already announced its support for the construction of the new station at Meadowhall;

: reference was made to the impact of any future reductions in local bus services;

: the proposed route of HS2 remains unchanged;

: Members emphasised that the Holmes Chord (railway line), serving the Rotherham Central rail station, should be preserved within the local rail network and that proposals for the construction of dual lines should proceed.

Mr. Barritt and Mrs. Blake were thanked for the presentation.