

Newsletter

October 2017

CHARGE

Camden HS2 Association of
Residents' Groups for
Engagement

By and for residents affected by HS2 in Camden

This is the new newsletter from the umbrella group helping coordinate the activities of the residents' groups and TRAs affected by HS2. Find out more and sign up for updates at chargegroup.org.

Working groups

1. Traffic
 - a. Lorry routes
 - b. Speed limits
 - c. Dangerous sites
2. Air quality, open spaces and trees
 - a. Trees
 - b. Green hoardings
 - c. Open spaces
3. Station Design
4. Noise Insulation
 - Meetings
 - Progress so far
 - Technical challenges
 - Baseline monitoring
 - Trigger levels
 - Additional mitigation (ventilation etc)
 - Significant adverse effects and changes
 - Conclusion

About CHARGE

Working groups

After the Act was passed, various Working Groups were set up with representatives from the various residents' groups, to hold HS2 properly to account about things too detailed for the Euston Community Representatives' Group (ECRG) to be able to cover.

1. Traffic

a. Lorry routes

HS2 expects to apply at the end of 2017 to Camden Council for approval of HS2's proposed lorry routes under Schedule 17 of the Act authorizing HS2. That approval may last for the entire construction of the project, possibly two decades.

We are pressing for residents to be fully consulted on that application and for the decision to be made by full committee in Camden, so that residents can be fully heard. We are also pressing for limits to be put on the number of lorries on each route, so that HS2 must come back for re-approval if it wants to increase those numbers. We believe Camden residents should receive the same consideration and protection that other local authorities such as Hillingdon have achieved for their residents.

HS2 has agreed to supply the draft application to residents at the same time that it goes to Camden.

b. Speed limits

There is a risk that some residential streets such as Stanhope Street will see heavy volumes of lorries if we cannot persuade HS2 not to use those streets.

Led by Steve Christofi of Regents' Park TRA, we are pressing Camden to consider applying to the Secretary of State for approval to limit speeds on those affected residential streets to 10 mph where that is what residents want, to reduce the risks of injury.

c. Dangerous sites

After repeated input from Steve Christofi, the contractor appointed by HS2 agreed to revise a dangerously designed site on Hampstead Road.

2. Air quality, open spaces and trees

a. Trees

We are campaigning to save every possible tree that HS2 wishes to fell. HS2 has agreed to a Tree Panel that must approve any damage to a tree. Residents are forcefully represented on the Panel by Dorothea Hackman of Camden Civic Society and Ursula Brown of Regents' Park Estate as deputy.

The Air Quality, Green Open Spaces and Trees ('AQGOST') group continues to work on locations for replacement trees, pressing for those locations to be as near to the trees that are lost as possible.

b. Green hoardings

HS2 intends to provide green hoarding wherever possible. A few early examples have been placed along the boundary of St James's Gardens on Cardington Street, but subsequent hoardings should be better designed.

c. Open spaces

We are continuing to fight for full replacements for all green and open spaces that have been lost, as near to the original sites as possible, with full scope for large replacement trees to grow.

3. Station Design

HS2 invited a number of community representatives to see revised proposals for the station in September, and also made a senior engineer available to answer questions about the new design at a subsequent meeting. The revised scheme proposes an extension of the basement to the west, under much of the area formerly covered by St James's Gardens.

The new station design contractor is expected to be appointed by the end of the year.

We are compiling a joint response to the proposals with the aim of getting the best outcomes for the people who live in the area.

4. Noise Insulation

Meetings

The last meeting was held on 26th September 2017. Previous meetings were on 16/12/2016, 9/3/2017, 4/5/2017, 13/6/2017 and 4/8/2017. At our request HS2 has now agreed to monthly meetings. The last meeting was attended on behalf of residents by John Myers (Drummond Street TRA), Christy Rogers (PVE), David Auger (CCG / Mornington Terrace) and Luisa Auletta (CCG/Arlington Road). The next meetings are on 18th October (plus a meeting with Camden to check how it is monitoring the assurances it received from HS2) and 14th November.

Progress so far

HS2 is rolling out noise insulation (and ventilation) packages ('NI') to eligible residents in phases, starting on the west side of the Camden Cutting and proceeding anticlockwise round Euston station and approaches, finishing on the east side of the Cutting with Mornington Terrace and Delancey Street. HS2 now prepares and shares KPIs on number of acceptances etc.

Residents remain concerned at this circular phased approach given the order of planned works. The scheduled demolition of the carriage sheds will undoubtedly impact both sides of the cutting. This

work has been delayed and will now only take place during the day but other preparatory works are still being carried out by Network Rail at night.

We are concerned that HS2 continues to underestimate the complexity of installing NI. We are also concerned about the incorrect data being used on historic ambient noise levels, in appropriate trigger levels for noise, and the reliance on complaints by HS2 (and Camden Council).

We have demonstrated that the complaints process has been poor historically. Despite regular claims by HS2 that it has been improved, David Auger's recent experience is that it took over 3 weeks for Network Rail to respond, which only happened after chasing HS2. This is of particular concern given the problems with Crossrail (listed in the Crossrail Complaints Commissioner reports) and staff of HS2 and HS2's contractors citing Crossrail experience as a good example. Generally there is still a long way to go to get up to an acceptable standard of engagement and receptiveness to execution of sensible proposals by HS2 staff and contractors, although there has been some progress.

Technical challenges

a. Historic / listed buildings

Residents, Camden Council and Heritage England have all raised concerns on the adequacy of the proposals and applications to Camden for 34 PVE (owned by HS2). HS2 has indicated willingness to install exterior (as opposed to interior) secondary double glazing to reduce damage to the fabric of listed buildings but there also still appears a reluctance to be transparent or proactive on that option and the additional mitigation that may be needed. HS2's contractor for installing NI, Granada, appear to be constrained to a set of directions rather than proactively proposing potentially 'better' solutions or those preferred by residents where the residents are aware of them.

b. Blocks and cladding

We still do not know how HS2 intends to overcome the challenges of blocks with cladding, particularly on Amphyll. Camden Council will need to take the lead given that those flats are predominantly Camden social housing but we are concerned given that Camden still needs to make substantial progress on holding HS2 to account and taking enforcement action.

Baseline monitoring

HS2 has been using incorrect baseline levels from the Environmental Statement in some cases, even though we have shown the errors using HS2's own data. HS2 is installing monitoring equipment and will remeasure the baseline levels. It is not clear precisely when the new levels will be used and (given the 6 month noise test set out in HS2 Policy E23) how the accumulated totals will be calculated depending on when trigger levels are exceeded.

Trigger levels

We are concerned that HS2 appear to be using a 63dBeq level when the E23 level is 55dB at night. We believe this is a function of incorrect background levels. It appears that an unnecessary 5dB upward margin has been proposed and agreed with Camden Council, although we have yet to receive confirmation from Camden on that point. If so, we do not believe that is acceptable. HS2 has

asked Camden that all future applications should reflect the correct levels. Rob Carr agreed at the August meeting to revisit the trigger levels.

Additional mitigation (ventilation etc)

Surveys are being undertaken, although HS2 has not yet decided its process for addressing any additional issues that will arrive. Queries remain outstanding on how existing conditions will be verified and how potential claims for resulting damp / mould may in practice be brought, if those are the fault of HS2.

Significant adverse effects and changes

At the present time HS2 is proceeding with NI based on the AP3 scheme presented in Parliament and have promised that all properties identified for NI will be eligible whatever the revised scheme requires. HS2 intends to undertake additional modelling at the appropriate time for any new proposals in the Cutting. This may mean additional properties qualify. The 'effects' cannot be any worse than the AP3 scheme after mitigation. It is unclear exactly what the impacts will be. HS2 has agreed to clarify.

Conclusion

HS2's fallback position is that it will comply with Policy E23 etc. but we remain concerned given that HS2 is permitted under those policies to make an unlimited amount of noise at night for a maximum of 9 nights in a 15 night period and a maximum of 40 nights within 6 months. HS2 has stated that they are exceeding the standards set by Crossrail and we have challenged this assertion. HS2 has agreed to set out in writing how that is the case.

About CHARGE

CHARGE coordinates the activities of the various residents' groups and TRAs in Camden that are affected by HS2. It is currently chaired by David Auger. The current representatives appointed by the residents' groups from each area are:

Amphill – Fran Heron

Camden Cutting Area East Side – Phebe Robinow/Christy Rogers

Camden Cutting Area West Side – Luisa Auletta and Matt Hollier

Drummond Street and surrounds – John Myers

Primrose Hill – Jeff Travers

Regent's Park Estate – Steve Christofi and Ursula Brown

Somers Town – Slaney Devlin

South of Euston Road – Jo Hurford

Vent shafts areas (Alexandra Road and Adelaide Road) – Tony Connor

In addition, Camden Civic Society and the HS2 into Euston group are currently represented by Dorothea Hackman (with Hero Granger-Taylor deputizing) and by Mary Burd or John Neve.