

Chesham Bilateral Meeting

24 July 2012

KG 13Aug,
+ JC 13Aug

Chesham Society:

Tony Molesworth (TM), Jim Conboy (JC), Terry Cherrill (TC) and Richard Brock (RB)

Chesham Town Council:

Cllr Patricia Cherrill (PC), Cllr Colette Littley (CL), Cllr Tony Franks (TF), Cllr Noel Brown (NB), Cllr Rabia Bhatti (RaB), Cllr Alan Bacon (AB), Kathryn Graves (KG)

South Heath Action Group:

Simon Hooke (SH)

HS2:

Martin Wells (MW)

Charlotte Brewster (CB)

TM explained that this meeting had been called to begin a dialogue to minimise the impacts of HS2's construction on Chesham, which is only 2.5 miles from the preferred route. TM thanked MW and CB for attending and expressed the hope that there would be follow up meetings in the future that will be open to other stakeholders in Chesham. TM also made it clear that the general view of Chesham's community is that it does not support HS2, but there is a need to focus on how Chesham will be impacted if HS2 progresses.

MW explained that HS2 are currently preparing the hybrid bill and therefore are unlikely at present to have all of the answers to questions that will arise in this meeting.

Transport

TM flagged up concerns over construction traffic and dispersed commuter traffic adding to the total volume of traffic on Chesham's roads, which are already operating near capacity. It was emphasised that construction traffic must be prevented from travelling through the conservation area via Church Street (B485).

Concerns were also raised regarding congestion on the A413, particularly during morning & evening peak hours, which has the potential to displace commuter traffic onto less suitable roads, such as Rocky Lane/Chartridge Lane & onwards through Chesham.

MW explained that the details surrounding the movement of construction traffic, removal of spoil and workers are still being worked out.

JC asked whether stakeholders could submit a list of requirements, e.g. such as prohibiting construction traffic from using Church Street, to be included in the **Construction Code of Practice**. MW said this would be possible, but that it would be preferable for stakeholders to talk to HS2 about issues of concern so that they can be addressed within a whole range of documents. [**ACTION:** JC/Chesham Soc] The Construction Code of Practice is being drafted

at present and will go out to consultation in 2013. SH asked MW and CB to feedback into the system the fact that the timetable for consultation on such documents is too short in relation to the scale of impact of these works on the communities involved. PC asked who would police violations of conditions of the Construction Code of Practice. MW said that this would not be a consideration until 2017 and that he could not answer the question at this time. TM emphasised that the community needs to have input into the Construction Code of Practice as soon as possible, and in advance of the hybrid bill.

TM explained Chesham's dependency on the Metropolitan Line and Chiltern Railways and asked whether there would be disruption to either. Disruption to the Chiltern Railways service near Wendover would lead to commuter displacement to Chesham. [ACTION: MW will report back on this issue.]

Construction Camp

TM asked whether there is likely to be a significant construction camp within Chesham's catchment as this would place an excessive load on the local infrastructure and environment. Topics of concern include the impact on the already over-abstracted aquifer which feeds the River Chess, a rare chalk stream habitat, and the impact of increased traffic on the Air Quality Management Area of Berkhamstead Road where Newtown School is located. MW explained that camp locations are being worked through at present, but that the locations will be determined in advance of the hybrid bill so that its powers can be used for land take.

SH asked what will happen to land used for construction camps once it is no longer needed and warned that it will be very difficult to return once high quality arable land back to that same status. MW said that HS2 will not keep land that it no longer needs and that there will be a statement in the bill to describe the process of remediation.

MW was not able to provide any information on the size of the construction camps, or how much delivery of materials would take place by roads or other methods.

Business and Tourism

Maintenance of transport links between Chesham and its surrounding villages, e.g. South Heath and Missenden, are vital for both the surrounding communities and Chesham's economy as the town is the area's centre for shopping. There are also key routes from Chesham to nearby schools and medical centres, including High Wycombe and Stoke Mandeville, which need to be maintained. MW asked for details of these local links (including rights of way as well as roads) to be supplied to him to add to the knowledge that will be obtained through traffic surveys. Consultants are working on road realignment at present, so MW asked for this information to be provided as soon as possible. [ACTION: Chesham Soc, CTC]

Future Meetings and Representation

TM asked for enough notice to be given of critical dates to enable stakeholders to influence the process. MW said it would be possible to provide information as to when decisions will be made to enable a useful date to be made for a future meeting. TM suggested that it would be helpful to meet again in September 2012.

The Chesham Society representatives asked that they be placed on mailing lists for the three AONB forums. [**ACTION:** CB] The possibility of a forum covering the entire AONB was briefly discussed as a possible mechanism for freeing up local forums to concentrate on local issues. It was agreed that emails to the Town Council should continue to be sent to the Town Clerk.