

Minutes of the Executive Committee

20th January, 2014 at 10.00 am
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham

Present: Councillor Edwards (Chair);
Councillor Idrees (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Aston, Davis, Douglas-Maul, Finnegan,
Quinnen and Shackleton.

Apologies: Councillors Foster and O'Reilly.

Observers: Councillors Atwal, Auluck, Chambers, Clinton,
Delaney, Eustace, Hogarth, Spence, Tranter, and
Yardley;
Mr Ager.

1/14 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 9th
December, 2013, be approved as a correct record.

2/14 **Consultation with Non-Domestic Ratepayers**

In accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Committee met to consult with representatives of non-domestic ratepayers on the setting of the Authority's budget and precept for 2014/2015.

No representatives of non-domestic ratepayers attended the meeting.

Executive Committee
20th January, 2014

3/14

Proposed High Speed (HS) Rail 2 Route

The Committee received a report on the Government proposals to construct a HS2 rail route from London to Birmingham and up to Manchester and Leeds.

Initial plans of the proposed route were made public during the summer of 2013 and had indicated that there was a potential impact on the Fire Service Headquarters site. In addition, the proposed route of the line would impact on road utilisation in certain areas which would need to be considered in terms of operational response capability, particularly during the development stage of the project.

Concerns on how the site was likely to be affected were forwarded to HS2 representatives in July 2013. On 25th November 2013, HS2 published its intended line of route together with any affected land that may have to be compulsory purchased. The proposed compulsory purchase involved land at the side and rear of the Fire Service Headquarters site. Due to the proposed compulsory acquisition of part of the Fire Service Headquarters it was anticipated that the Fire Service would wish to argue that the Service was adversely affected to such a degree that the premises should be acquired in its entirety.

At this stage, none of the specific concerns raised in July 2013 had been dealt with but it had been agreed that a series of meetings would take place between HS2 representatives and Fire Service representatives from January 2014 through to April 2014. The Hybrid Bill Process for the HS2 project was reported. No specific timescales had been published for the complete process, although it had been indicated that the target date for Royal Assent was some time in 2015. It was anticipated that the Second Reading would take place in April 2014, followed by a petition period of 3 to 4 weeks.

In order to ensure the Authority's position was protected as far as possible in connection with the proposed HS2 route, specialist advisors had been appointed to seek resolution and clarification on the proposals. Any costs incurred up to the point of petition, would be met directly by the HS2 project. Further reports would be presented to members if any proposed action would result in Authority costs arising from the specialist advisors and as the issues on this matter became clearer.

Executive Committee
20th January, 2014

No details were available regarding the potential scale of compensation the Authority might be entitled to at this stage as a result of the proposed HS2 route. It was anticipated this issue would become clearer during the meetings due to take place between January 2014 and April 2014 and would form the basis of a future report to members.

Members were informed that a Working Party looking at HS2's impact on Solihull MBC were also still awaiting responses from HS2. It was felt that funds for any future potential petition would be expensive and that Kent County Council would have spent £1m on its petition if it had not gone along with the HS1 proposals. It was suggested that officers contact Kent CC to enquire how it had responded to HS2.

In response to members' enquiries it was reported that the HS2 line would be 17m high with a canopy and would butt up against both the Headquarters building and Safeside. Building works could cause disruption for up to five years thereby making it untenable to operate from either building. Members were assured that the £3.6m government grant for the Fire Control Project had already been allocated, as originally intended, for IT systems and staffing purposes.

The Chair reported that the current Headquarters and Safeside buildings might be of interest to HS2 for its own use during the construction phase. This proposition would be explored and any response would be reported back to the Committee.

It was suggested that members might wish to inspect how the proposals would affect the Headquarters site when they attended the Authority meeting on 17th February, 2014.

Resolved that the Committee receive further reports as the HS2 proposals progress.

(The meeting ended at 10.25 am)

Contact Officer: Rosemary Jones Democratic Services Unit Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council 0121 569 3896
