

HS2 Independent Design Panel appoints 16 new members

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Sixteen newly appointed design experts are set to join the HS2 Independent Design Panel to ensure that it is well placed to support the next phase of HS2 development.

The new members will broaden and strengthen the panel's mix of skills, and bring fresh perspectives to the work of the panel.

The new members, with specialisms including architecture, engineering and sustainability, join as construction of Phase One of Britain's new high speed rail network between London and the West Midlands is in full swing, and enabling works are mobilising for works to extend the railway to Crewe as part of Phase 2a.

Since its inception in 2015, the HS2 Independent Design Panel has made a number of alterations to its membership to respond to changes to the project and taking on additional areas of work, in particular sustainability and customer experience.

The latest refresh of the panel has carefully balanced the need to retain the knowledge it has developed to

date with the desire to introduce fresh perspectives and address characteristics such as improving the diversity of the panel.

The Design Panel's role is to help ensure that, through great design, HS2 delivers economic, social and environmental benefits for the whole country.

As 'critical friend' the panel is guided by the HS2 Design Vision-which sets out the role that design can play in making High Speed Two a catalyst for growth across Britain. Through workshops, mentoring sessions and review meetings, the panel has made valuable contributions across the project.

It has influenced aspects such as HS2 guidance, procurement strategies, and the design of structures, buildings and landscapes along the line of route.

The refresh of the now 40-member strong Design Panel will help ensure that the panel has the right expertise to continue to scrutinise and support HS2 as it progresses.

Prof. Sadie Morgan, Chair of the panel, said: "We are delighted with the fantastic response from across the design and construction industries, having received over 100 applications to join the panel. It is important that the HS2 Independent Design Panel continues to evolve, bringing in fresh perspectives. We have strengthened the panel's diversity and adjusted the mix of skills it includes to meet the needs of this stage of HS2 Ltd's design work."

The HS2 Independent Design Panel includes a wide and diverse range of expertise, including procurement, railway operations, customer experience as well as civil and structural engineering, urban design and architecture.

Of the Panel's 40 members, 40 per cent are women and 60 per cent are men, with 20 per cent coming from a BAME background.

Kay Hughes, HS2 Ltd Design Director, said: "HS2 Ltd is committed to ensuring that public value is placed at the heart of the project, and the Design Panel plays a crucial role in achieving this.

"We are proud of the design quality that has been achieved on many key elements of Phase One, like Curzon Street Station in Birmingham, and the Colne Valley Viaduct. As we move from construction in Phase One to the design of Phase Two the commentary and recommendations of the Panel continue to support HS2's Design Vision aspirations."

New panel member Dav Bansal, a Birmingham-based architect and Partner at Glenn Howells Architects, has a keen interest to explore how places can improve people's lives through thoughtful interventions and the delivery of high quality design.

Dav Basnal said: "I am keen to be involved in helping drive forward the most important infrastructure project in the UK. Living and working in Birmingham, I am interested in how the city can retain its identity and rich heritage while simultaneously becoming a global city.

“I believe that the desire to be ‘More Birmingham, Less Anywhere’ should be a priority.”

The new panel members will begin being involved in panel activities from September. The frequency of their involvement will depend on their areas of expertise and the demands of the HS2 programme, but there are around 60 panel meetings per year, with approximately 4 panel members at each session. Due to the pandemic all meetings are currently held online. When in-person meetings resume, they will be held in London, Birmingham or locations along the line of route.

The HS2 Independent Design Panel’s 16 new members are:

- Dav Bansal, Partner, Glenn Howells Architects
- Jason Bruges, Founder, Jason Bruges Studio
- Sophie Chapman, Business Leader and Director, Heathrow Express
- Asif Din, Sustainability Director, Perkins&Will
- David Dropkin, Independent Consultant
- Kathryn Firth, Partner, FPdesign
- Eric Hallquist, Head of Landscape Architecture, Allies and Morrison
- Chris Hendy, Technical Director for Transportation UK&E, Atkins • Phil Jones, Chairman, Phil Jones Associates Ltd
- Sasha Krstanovic, Founder, mstep
- Nisha Kurian, Associate, We Made That
- Deborah Nagan, Director of Global Sustainability, Handley House
- Paul Priestman, Chairman, Co-Founder and Designer, PriestmanGoode Ltd
- Fiona Scott, Director, Gort Scott
- Joris Smits, Managing Director, Ney & Partners
- David Ubaka, Director, D.U.P. Limited

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