

HS2 reveals viaduct designs for Edgcote and Lower Thorpe

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HS2 has revealed the latest designs for the Edgcote and Lower Thorpe Viaducts as the high speed rail project began a four-week online engagement event for communities in Northamptonshire.

Set low into the landscape, the 515m long Edgcote Viaduct will carry the railway across the floodplain of the River Cherwell, south of Chipping Warden. At between six and eight meters high, the viaduct will be supported by 20 pairs of concrete piers and from a distance, will be largely hidden by existing hedgerows and woodland.

The viaduct passes close to the site of the medieval Battle of Edgcote. Fought on 26th July 1469, during the Wars of the Roses, the battle is thought to have taken place on the nearby Danesmoor.

Initial archaeological investigation along the route of the viaduct has not found any evidence of the battle and further investigation will be completed before construction begins.

Two major new wildlife sites will also be created where the viaduct crosses the floodplain, with new and enhanced fen, marshland and meadow alongside new woodland planting. The schemes - which total 7.6

ha - will create valuable new habitats for insects, bats, newts and other amphibians.

The 210m long Lower Thorpe Viaduct, two miles to the south, will also be set low into the landscape. Seven weathered steel spans will carry the railway across Banbury Lane just south of the village of Thorpe Mandeville.

The use of weathered steel, which naturally ages to a dark russet brown colour, is designed to help echo the tones of the surrounding countryside and reduce the visual impact of the structure.

Three more new wildlife sites - totalling 9.5 ha - will be created near Thorpe Mandeville, including a major project to enhance and restore a small lake with new wetland meadow and habitat for birds, butterflies and small mammals.

HS2 Project Client Director, Ambrose McGuire said: "The start of today's public engagement is an important step in the development of the Edgcote and Lower Thorpe viaducts. Set low into the landscape, the designs of both structures are heavily influenced by their location and our determination to reduce the impact of construction on the surrounding communities.

"That's also why we are delivering five major new wildlife sites alongside the viaducts with significant areas of new woodland and opportunities for valuable new meadows and wetland habitats."

The designs have been drawn up by HS2's main works contractor EKFB - a team made up of Eiffage, Kier, Ferrovial and Bam Nuttall - working with design partners Arcadis and architects Moxon.

EKFB Technical Director, Janice McKenna said: "It is a huge privilege to be responsible for the design and delivery of these two viaducts and to create a legacy for future generations. EKFB is using innovative, digital techniques to create designs that meet the needs of the future railway, while balancing the community, environmental and engineering requirements of designing lasting infrastructure. Our design solutions are created with people in mind and we are using construction methods that limit the impact on residents."

The online public engagement event opened today and will last for four weeks.

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