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May 4, 2021



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Plans by Highways England to infill more than 100 disused railway bridges are being blocked by councils that fear the loss of Britain's Victorian heritage.

An article in The Daily Telegraph says critics say proposals to reuse the sites as footpaths and cycleways could be destroyed if the work goes ahead.

At least 15 councils have warned that planning permission would be needed if Highways England wanted to infill historical bridges and tunnels.

A Highways England spokesman said the work was being carried out for safety reasons.

A recent survey of SME suppliers in the rail, construction, and engineering sectors has found overwhelming support for HS2's Eastern Leg, with those currently working on HS2 contracts predicting severe impacts on their businesses should it be curtailed.

The survey, co-ordinated by the High Speed Rail Group (HSRG) and the Railway Industry Association (RIA), found that of those SMEs already working on HS2, 80.5 per cent anticipated a drop in revenue should the West Midlands to Leeds leg not go ahead, with nearly half (46.3 per cent) responding that they would need to downsize staff levels.

[Click here for more details.](#)

Sub-national Transport Body Midlands Connect has welcomed Karen Heppenstall as its new Head of Rail.

Joining after a six-years at engineering consultancy WSP, following roles at the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Network Rail, Karen brings with her a wealth of experience in the development, appraisal and delivery of rail projects.

She says: "This is such an exciting time to be working in the rail industry, and I'm thrilled to be joining such an ambitious and forward-thinking organisation as Midlands Connect."

[Click here for more details.](#)

Finally, and a ceremony has been held Didcot Railway Centre to mark the return to service of the oldest working locomotive at the museum.

MP David Johnson OBE visited the tourist attraction to officiate a short ceremony for No. 1340 "Trojan" which dates from 1897.

The locomotive was returning to service for the first time in a decade following an extensive overhaul that has cost around £200,000.

Photo credit: Didcot Railway Centre