

HS2 Draft Code of Construction Practice

RESPONSE BY BUCKINGHAMSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



Our main concern with the draft Code of Construction Practice (CoCP) for the proposed HS2 high-speed rail line is over accountability and enforcement since it seems that HS2 Limited (a government-backed organisation) seeks to delegate responsibility to its nominated undertaker (presumably a commercial enterprise as yet unknown).

We believe this is not standard practice. For other recent major projects, such as Crossrail and the Olympics, Crossrail Limited and the Olympics Delivery Authority respectively remained responsible under the CoCP.

The CoCP should clearly state that that it covers not only the area affected by construction of the line itself, but also disturbances caused by ancillary works. For example bunds, noise barriers, road construction, haulways, pipelines, and contractors' compounds.

Certain statutory undertakers and other bodies who will need to carry out work arising from the scheme may not be bound by the CoCP since they would not be directly contracted to the Nominated Undertaker. This situation needs clarification, perhaps in the mitigation measures which would ultimately be approved by Parliament.

The proposed line would cross three areas of Buckinghamshire which are known to have produced the remains of Pleistocene (Ice Age) mammals. This is a time zone which can fall uncomfortably between a number of bodies on occasion, the concerns of archaeologists (represented broadly by English Heritage), that of quaternary scientists (the British Geological Survey) and countryside sites in general (Natural England).

Advance investigation of these areas (and potentially others) would be important whether or not they can be demonstrated at this point in time to be directly connected with the early activities of man. This will undoubtedly be relevant also to other counties. It would be helpful if there was evidence of 'joined-up thinking' in this area.