

## Engaging stakeholders in the future of Britain's railways

# HS2

### The Challenge

- Make a statutory document more accessible to the general public

### The Benefits

- Effective engagement with stakeholders
- Clearer communication of relevant information
- Faster responses to telephone enquiries



As part of preparations for Phase 2b of the High Speed Two railway, HS2 Ltd is using a story map to share information about the possible environmental impacts of the scheme. This digital method of communication is helping the organisation to make complex information more accessible and engage more effectively with stakeholders about the future of Britain's railways.

### The Challenge

High Speed Two is joining up Britain to build a fairer, more balanced country. By creating much needed capacity and connectivity for the country's rail network, it will be the catalyst for economic growth and regeneration, with local areas planning to create around half a million jobs from the arrival of high speed services. With enabling works underway along Phase One of the route between the West Midlands and London, and parliamentary approval expected for Phase 2a, extending the route north to Crewe, HS2 Ltd is currently undertaking planning and consultation for Phase 2b, completing the 'Y-shaped' network to Manchester and Leeds – and beyond.

HS2 Ltd has a statutory obligation to publish an Environmental Statement identifying any possible environmental consequences of building and running the Phase 2b railway and describing planned measures to reduce the impacts on local communities. The organisation wanted to engage with as many members of the public and other stakeholders as possible, during a period of consultation, to gain feedback on its draft Environmental Statement. However, it recognised that its working draft was both complex and long, comprising more than 10,000 pages, making it difficult for people to find and understand information pertinent to their local areas.

### The Solution

To try to make its Environmental Statement more accessible to a wider number of people, HS2 Ltd set up a project group to explore the possibility of creating a digital tool to support the working draft that would provide a visual and interactive overview of the environment information detailed in the statement. This project team soon identified that it could create an online navigator for its working draft, quickly and inexpensively, by leveraging Esri technology already used within HS2 Ltd to create a story map.

The digital solution was developed using two interlinked ArcGIS StoryMap templates, which provided the framework for displaying the environmental information in a highly visual way. HS2 Ltd embedded existing high resolution, high impact project images and corporate videos into its online navigator to draw people into the story. Most importantly, the organisation incorporated a series of interactive, digital maps allowing people to explore their own community areas and see the precise locations of the HS2 Phase 2b route.

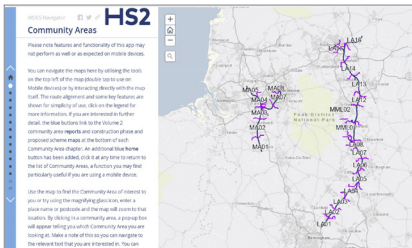
With links directly from the [HS2 website](#), the online navigator allows users to zoom into the map to see new features, such as tunnels and cuttings, and click on [hyperlinks](#) to access more detailed information from the full suite of documents. By overlaying different maps on top of one another in the story map, HS2 Ltd was able to show people the existing situation and likely future scenarios in a very clear way and illustrate precisely how the HS2 Phase 2b route is likely to change the environment.

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Interactive, digital maps allowing people to explore their own community areas and see the precise locations of the HS2 Phase 2b route

## The Benefits

### **Effective engagement with stakeholders**

The development of the HS2 Phase 2b online navigator has enabled HS2 Ltd to engage more effectively with a wide range of stakeholders, online and at regional events, during and after the consultation. Over a period of six months, the Environmental Statement online navigator was viewed more than 22,000 times, which demonstrates just how successful it was in engaging the interest of the general public.

### **Clearer communication of relevant information**

One significant benefit of the online navigator is its ability to make the working draft of the Environmental Statement more meaningful and relevant to everyone. Users can use the interactive tool to quickly find the information that matters to them and zoom in to see likely environmental changes in the communities where they live or work.

### **Faster responses to telephone enquiries**

Unexpectedly, the online navigator is also helping HS2 Ltd to improve its customer service by helping it to respond to enquiries more quickly. Members of staff in the HS2 call centre routinely use the story map to find the locations that callers are concerned about and zoom in to find the information they need to answer specific questions about possible environmental impacts.

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