

Press release: Young people in Derbyshire have a say on what HS2 could do for them

In an interactive workshop run by HS2 Ltd, members of Erewash Youth Forum were tasked with taking on the role of station builders. They chose which elements to add to their preferred building design while also considering the customer experience, environmental impacts and managing the project – just like the real thing.

Administered by Erewash Borough Council, Erewash Youth Forum is supported by Derbyshire County Council and 9 local schools, including Bennerley Fields School in Ilkeston, who hosted the HS2-themed event on Tuesday 14 May.

Kim Soucy, Senior Engagement Advisor, HS2 Ltd, said:

We are building a railway for the next 100 years and, as our future passengers, it is vital that young people are kept informed of HS2's development whilst also having a say in what their future rail network will look like.

It's important we consider their forward-looking ideas to future-proof the railway for successive generations, and I was really impressed with the concepts suggested by members of Erewash Youth Forum. Not only were they well-thought out, mature and realistic, they offered innovative ideas about the railway design and passenger experience.

Wilsthorne School pupils deciding what elements to incorporate into their ideal HS2 station

From 2033, passengers in the region will be served by a new East Midlands Hub adjacent to Erewash in Toton, which will provide high-speed connections to core UK cities including Leeds, Newcastle, Birmingham and London.

As the best connected station on the new high speed network outside of the capital, and with enhanced classic rail, tram and bus services, the East Midlands Hub will ensure people in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire are well placed to benefit from HS2. In addition, HS2 services will also serve Chesterfield, ensuring that the whole region can benefit from new, improved and faster rail services.

Olivia Guy is a Year 9 pupil at Wilsthorne School in Long Eaton. She said:

As a group, we really thought about how we could make the station experience better for every kind of passenger who will use HS2. We

proposed a design that was eco-friendly yet not too expensive, but also offered entertainment while you wait for your train.

Train travel now is very hectic and it's often difficult getting a seat. HS2 will get you places quicker but will also ensure there is enough room for everyone to sit down on its trains.

Wilsthorpe School pupils deciding what elements to incorporate into their ideal HS2 station

Ideas

Some ideas for the East Midlands Hub suggested by the pupils included installing gender neutral toilets, utilising face scanners instead of physical tickets and incorporating wildlife habitats into the building's structure.

William Holt is a Year 10 pupil at Saint John Houghton Catholic Voluntary Academy in Ilkeston. He said:

For people my age, HS2 offers incredible job prospects for the future. I am looking to go into engineering, a field which the UK already excels at, but HS2 really puts the cherry on top.

Other ideas generated at the event included offering colour coded and sound enhanced environments to aid visually impaired and hard of hearing passengers, utilising recycled materials to build the station and installing a community garden to provide produce for the station's cafés and restaurants.

Saint John Houghton Catholic Voluntary Academy pupils designing their ideal HS2 station

Erewash Youth Forum

Consisting of representatives aged 11 to 19, Erewash Youth Forum meets 5 times a year and aims to listen and speak for the young people of Erewash. The Forum aims to promote equality among young people, ensuring they are more involved in decisions that affect their lives and advance their participation in society and civic life.

Over 30,000 people will play a role in delivering Britain's new high speed railway, and HS2 is investing in young people now to leave a lasting legacy for the future.

HS2 Ltd's education ambassadors will be working with pupils – ahead of the choices they will make over whether college, work or university is the right path to take – knowing that today's teenagers are the ones that could be constructing HS2 as it extends from the Midlands to the North by 2033, or driving the high-speed trains of the future.

Press release: High Street Perfect Day makes debut

High Streets Minister Jake Berry MP is in Altrincham, Greater Manchester today (17 May 2019) to join Sir John Timpson CBE for the launch of the National High Street Perfect Day pilot.

Local businesses, schools, voluntary groups and Trafford council will all descend on the high street to take part in litter picks, while local schools will be working with the Keep Britain Tidy Eco Schools programme to learn more about protecting the environment.

But it's more than just looking good – participating businesses are also reviewing their customer service offer, including the offer of support to spring clean their social media.

The occasion is also being marked with the town's first 'High Street Festival'. Altrincham high street was named [Best High Street in England](#) at last year's Great British High Streets Awards.

High Streets Minister Jake Berry MP said:

Our high streets are at the centre of our communities and this government is determined to ensure they are fit for the future and adapting to the rapid change in consumer behaviour.

The first ever National Perfect Day represents a fantastic opportunity for communities to get together in partnership with local businesses and ensure our high streets are places that can gleam with pride.

In Altrincham, the local community has done a brilliant job in transforming the town centre into the success it is today and there could be no better place to launch the campaign than on England's champion high street.

The Day was first suggested in Sir John Timpson's [The High Street Report](#), compiled by retail industry experts, and called for a community-led approach towards supporting high streets, including one day in the year when every town centre looks the best it possibly can.

Sir John Timpson CBE, Chair of the Expert Advisory Panel on High Streets, and Chairman of retail services company Timpson, said:

Altrincham is where I served my first customer, and that's one of the reasons I proposed it as the pilot town for the 'National High Street Perfect Day'. It's a town where the partnerships are working really hard in a challenging national high street environment to buck the trend.

The 'Perfect Day' concept is one which we use in my shops throughout the country and it has worked for us for years. On one day each year, in every part of the business, the whole team get involved to make sure they shine on the day! Scaling it up to a whole town centre is an exciting proposition and I look forward to seeing the results in Altrincham.

This is a particularly challenging time for many retailers, confronted by rapidly changing consumer demand and the rise of online spending.

Recognising this, the government has stepped up, putting a plan for the high street at the centre of the Budget and is taking action to ensure that local high streets are able to adapt and thrive for generations to come.

The Budget saw business rates relief cut small retailers' bills by a third, building on over £13 billion of business rates support since 2016.

In response to recommendations from the independent expert panel, the government has recently launched a £675 million [Future High Streets Fund](#) to help improve infrastructure and access to high streets, put historic buildings back to use and make town centres fit for the future.

We have also announced a Town Centre Task Force to give local leaders expert advice and support in implementing their plans to revitalise their local high streets

The [Open Doors](#) scheme will see empty shops being opened up to community groups offering services to the most vulnerable in our communities.

We have published a planning consultation to help support change on the high street. This will aim to make it easier for high streets to adapt for the future, with a wider range of retail, residential and other uses.

We are empowering businesses to contribute to the success of their high street by providing loans to establish [Business Improvement Districts](#) across the country.

The [Great British High Street Awards](#), which will return soon is a hotly contested competition to find Britain's best high street, and the huge response to last year's competition highlighted retailers and community groups across the country working in innovative ways keep town centres vibrant and strong.

News story: Help Ofqual evaluate 2019's GCSEs, AS and A levels

We are inviting teachers from across the country to workshops to offer their perspectives on the assessment of the reformed GCSEs, AS and A levels that are having their first award this summer.

We are offering the opportunity to sign up for workshops in the following subjects:

- GCSE and A level Chinese
- GCSE and A level design and technology
- GCSE and A level film studies
- GCSE and A level media studies
- GCSE and A level statistics
- GCSE business
- A level mathematics and further mathematics
- A level geology
- A level politics.

The decisions about whether to run workshops in all of these subjects will be made based on interest and capacity.

The workshops will be our first opportunity to gather qualitative evidence about things that have gone well and any areas of concern. Your feedback will contribute to our thinking about the effectiveness of the reform programme. You may find [this blog about our previous meetings with teachers](#) interesting.

The workshops will be held in November at the Ofqual office in central Coventry, within walking distance of the main railway station. These are free events with a limited number of places. Your travel expenses will be reimbursed and lunch will be provided.

Ideally we would like you to have taught the qualification, in its legacy and reformed version. This is so you can comment on the changes and challenges of the new qualifications and how they have been addressed.

We hope that you are able to take advantage of this opportunity to have your say and share your experiences with us.

[Register your interest in attending a workshop here.](#)

We will email you by the end of September to tell you if you have been selected to take part in the workshop.

Press release: Cyber criminals face new EU sanctions

Cyber attackers around the world could now face EU sanctions, thanks to a new regime pushed for by the UK and its partners.

The new sanctions regime, which was signed off today (17 May) in Brussels, sends a clear message to hostile actors everywhere that the UK, and the EU, will impose tough consequences for cyber-attacks.

Over the last two years, we have seen a significant increase in the scale and severity of malicious cyber activity globally. The UK has been clear that it will not tolerate malicious cyber activity of this nature.

The UK, alongside a coalition of Member States, has been at the forefront of driving the new approach forward.

The sanctions regime will involve travel bans and asset freezes against those we know have been responsible for these actions.

Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said:

This is decisive action to deter future cyber-attacks. For too long now, hostile actors have been threatening the EU's security through disrupting critical infrastructure, attempts to undermine democracy and stealing commercial secrets and money running to billions of Euros. We must now look to impose travel bans and asset freezes against those we know have been responsible for this.

The UK and its allies have been unafraid to call out those who have conducted cyber-attacks with the intent to damage and destroy our institutions and societies. But we have been clear that more must be done to deter future attacks by hostile state and non-state actors.

Our message to governments, regimes and criminal gangs prepared to carry out cyber-attacks is clear: together, the international community will take all necessary steps to uphold the rule of law and the rules based international system which keeps our societies safe.

Further information

Press release: New poverty statistics developed to help government target support

The new analysis will be based on the work undertaken by the Social Metrics Commission which was presented in their report [‘A New Measure of Poverty’](#) last year.

DWP will publish experimental statistics in 2020 that will take the current Social Metrics Commission measure as a starting point and assess whether and how this can be developed and improved further to increase the value of these statistics to the public. This assessment will include the wider measurement framework presented by the Social Metrics Commission covering the depth, persistence and lived experience of poverty.

DWP will publish these experimental statistics in the second half of 2020 after and in addition to the government’s annual official [Households Below Average Income \(HBAI\)](#) publication. The HBAI figures are based on households’ incomes and will continue to be the main measure of poverty in the UK whilst these experimental statistics are developed.

Minister for Family Support, Housing and Child Maintenance Will Quince said:

Tackling poverty is a priority for this government. We welcome the work the Social Metrics Commission has done to find new ways to understand the lives and experiences of those who are in poverty.

Employment is at record levels and income inequality and absolute poverty are still lower than in 2010, but nonetheless we know some families need more support. That is why we continue to spend £95 billion a year on working age benefits, and we are looking at what more can be done to help families improve their life chances.

Our HBAI figures are National Statistics based on incomes and give us a strong statistically robust picture of the levels of poverty in the UK. However, the Social Metrics Commission makes a compelling case for why we should also look at poverty more broadly to give a more detailed picture of who is poor, their experience of poverty and their future chances of remaining in, or entering, poverty. We look forward to exploring the merits of developing a new measure with them and other experts in this field. In the long run this could help us target support more effectively.

Social Metrics Commission Chair Philippa Stroud said:

I am delighted that the government is taking poverty measurement

seriously. Without effective measures of poverty, we cannot hope to reduce the number of people who experience it or improve the lives of people who live in poverty.

The Social Metrics Commission has worked hard over the last 3 years to build a broad coalition of support and develop metrics that we believe represent a significant step forward in our ability to measure and understand poverty in the UK.

We now look forward to working with DWP as it takes this process forward and ensuring that the UK has a measure of poverty that can be used to improve policy making.

The department will work with the Social Metrics Commission and other experts, including other government departments, to develop the new statistics.

The [Social Metrics Commission](#) is an independent commission dedicated to helping policy makers and the public understand and take action on poverty.

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