

Old Oak Common Urban Realm Design Engagement Event Q&As

12 and 14 July 2021

1. **The HS2 “Register of Undertakings & Assurances” provides passive provision for Chiltern Line trains at your station. Which HS2 manager released you from that statutory obligation, so you could propose a cycle hub where the platforms would be?**

Should the Chiltern Line come into the station at some point in the future, it will not need the land proposed for the Cycle Hub.

2. **On the northern edge of the “Eastern Realm”, what is the treatment of the land where the eastern access viaduct may eventually be built? Would they be underneath the future viaduct? Where do they go?**

The eastern end of the site is still in discussion with OPDC. The land can be adapted around where the proposed viaduct structure is.

3. **Who pays for all the “Western Parkland” upkeep? Who would own the freehold? Also: The “Wetland Common” would be south facing, but only until it was in constant shade when the adjacent land was built out. Would you have to replant it?**

The Western Parkland upkeep is still in discussions between HS2 and the DfT. The freehold is currently held by HS2. In terms of the Wetland Common, we are yet to undertake detailed planning in terms of what can be planted there. Construction of the urban realm space is only set to begin in 2027. By this point we should have further information on development plans for the adjacent area, which we can factor into our plans for the Wetland Common.

4. **How much light spill would there be to Wells House Road homes and to Wormwood Scrubs?**

The design of the urban realm including lighting must comply with HS2’s environmental minimum requirements. There will not be any light spill from the station urban realm to Wormwood Scrubs, as the Great Western Mainline and the future development site sit between the urban realm scheme and Wormwood Scrubs. The closest lighting to Wells House Road properties will be street lighting along Old Oak Common Lane, which will replace

existing lighting. This street lighting will be submitted for the approval of OPDC as the realignment of Old Oak Common Lane design develops.

5. What is the actual size of the patch described as Western Parkland?

The actual size of the urban realm is equivalent to three Trafalgar Squares from Old Oak Common Lane up to the station including the Western Parkland. The Western Parkland is about two hectares, excluding all building footprints and the transport hub.

6. How have you programmed the urban realm to bring residents/people to the area? Is there a cultural catalyst planned for this important part of the station? How are we planning to make this space a draw? How is the urban realm supporting art, artists, music, events here?

HS2's Arts and Culture Team are developing an arts and culture strategy for the Old Oak Common Station site including establishing public art commissions for a variety of elements within the urban realm. We invited the community to share their feedback regarding the kinds of events they would like to see taking place in the space by filling in the online questionnaire.

7. How is biodiversity considered? Is anything radical and visionary considered? Will you be providing bird boxes and bat boxes, as well as insect boxes?

The objective has been to optimise the biodiversity value of the urban realm by creating a variety of habitat types. The rich mix of landscape character includes light woodland fringes, shrub understorey, dry gardens, wetland/aquatic landscape, planted terraces and vertical greening.

We have considered biodiversity from several perspectives, from providing wildflower meadows in the Eastern Urban Realm, to the Western Urban Realm where we have pocket parks and woodland edge. Extensive areas of lowland neutral grassland (a BAP Priority Habitat) are proposed to replicate the remnant grassland habitat that survives on Wormwood Scrubs. Acid Grassland is proposed on the Western Headhouse.

We will be looking to include insect hotels and the incorporation of standing and buried deadwood, plus the inclusion of green roofs for the bus shelters. We have developed the scheme along with the ecology team. We have bird boxes proposed to be in the significant oaks across the site, along with a few specific areas where bird boxes are recessed/mounted on retaining walls. Over three hundred trees will be planted, including native oak trees, creating woodland habitat with reference to Middlesex Forest which once covered the area.

Further information on this will be provided at a future point.

8. What tree species please? Will there be plants for pollinators?

We will ensure we maximize the biodiversity opportunities within the space given; for pollinators, insects, birds, etc; and underlying the elements of the landscape design mix. At this stage, there is no detailed information about the tree species. We will be planting several different tree species, with many being mature or semi-mature when planted. During the urban realm engagement, we invited the community to share their feedback regarding the types of trees they would like to see in the space by filling in the online questionnaire. These responses will be factored into the final plans for the area.

A variety of native trees are being proposed across the site. This includes the native oak tree and varieties of non-native oak species constituting an informal arboretum. The Dutch Elm disease tolerant elm variety 'Horizon' will also be planted as elms once existed along Old Oak Common Lane and in the surrounding area prior to the ravages of Dutch Elm disease in the 1970s.

A mix of ornamental tree specimens will be planted for visual interest and to optimise the range of wildlife attracting species. A diverse range of flowering native and ornamental plant colonies will be established across the site to provide shelter and foraging for pollinators.

9. Are there any forward-thinking concepts been worked on? E.g. Water harvesting, Solar energy, ground water heating, animal grazing, city farms, etc? How is the design giving more back to the planet than taking? E.g. Composting, urban farming, specific biophilia which throw out more O2 compared to others etc.? what additional are you doing to actually create a positive impact to the earth for the long term?

We have developed the scheme along with the ecology team. The station roof incorporates photovoltaic cells to harness solar energy which will contribute to the operational demand of the station. The Western Head House, cycle hub and bus shelter roofs will have green roofs (planted with species from rich acid grassland habitats).

We will be looking to include insect hotels and the incorporation of standing and buried deadwood. Habitat and green walls will be installed in the Eastern Realm. We have bird boxes proposed to be in the significant oaks across the site, along with a few specific areas where bird boxes are recessed/mounted on retaining walls. In terms of the water supply, we're looking at the developing rain gardens which will also provide some level of water penetration within the off-landscape area.

The planting strategy and species profile seeks to establish a resilient landscape which minimises irrigation dependence whilst optimising opportunities for biodiversity and seasonal variation. The topsoil will be manufactured from waste substrate materials and the overall landscape has been conceived along biophilic design principles to maximise people's experience of the natural environment in their daily lives.

10. How many retail shops and restaurants are expected? Are they all on the station concourse or in the outdoor spaces?

There are ongoing discussions with the DfT and HS2 commercial development arm on the potential for retail and restaurant use within the urban realm. This will not form part of the Schedule 17 submission. Discussions will continue with OPDC regarding future opportunities.

11. Since this is a super hub, we can see pedestrian, cycle routes, bus routes and car drop off. What are the considerations of the urban realm for 'mobility of the future'? We can see that shared mobility is on the rise, electric scooters are taking off. How are we thinking ahead of the change in the nature of future mobility? Will there be any electric charge points for cars, scooters bikes etc?

It is under discussion with TFL. There is sufficient flexibility in the design for future applications once the requirements become clear.

12. Have you factored in the "new normal" with changing retail and work patterns or are you assuming everything will flip back to pre COVID-19?

Retail elements are yet to be fully developed in engagement with the OPDC. Works on the public realm don't start for the next 6 to 7 years. This is something that we want to keep speaking to the community and other stakeholders about.

13. What is the access for disabled people given in this higher level?

Old Oak Common Lane is seven meters higher than the station entrance, for this reason our main task was to create a design with an accessible route for disabled people. It was achieved by deviating the direct route slightly to avoid the steep descent. This allowed us to lower the level of the urban realm, making it accessible by taking the path around the side. On the left of the primary pedestrian route, there is a series of terrace gardens and within that level seating areas with back rest and pockets of spaces that will be sized sufficiently for wheelchair access.

14. On the "Moving Through the Space" slide, why doesn't the red line on Old Oak Common Lane continue south on the EASTERN side of the road as it does on the WESTERN side? Is that an acknowledgement that there will be no pedestrian pavement on the eastern side there?

Old Oak Common Lane is a different work package. The planning application for this piece of carriageway includes pedestrian access along the Eastern side of the road.

15. What exactly is a Wetland common please? What expertise are you calling upon to advise on the ecological aspects?

We have given this area the name of Wetland Common as it combines different aspects such as a mixture of water bodies with lilies, marginal aquatic planting, dry/damp and sunken

gardens. This area will include a series of distinct terraced garden spaces located to the front of the western station concourse.

This series of spaces steps up from east to west from an area of open water with aquatic and marginal plant colonies, transitioning to a wetland garden incorporating habitat specific plant species such as reeds and grasses, and finally an open woodland glade providing opportunities for recreation and relaxation.

The soft palettes are being developed for RIBA 4 with support from our ecology team. We have a site-wide planting strategy for trees and plants, which also incorporates elements of semi-improved grassland, and have also considered suitable selected species from the Biodiversity Action Plan. The design team has ensured a close collaboration between the landscape designers, hydrologists and ecologists to ensure every opportunity has been made to increase the ecological value and habitat potential of the site.

It will be an area rich in biodiversity and a pleasant, safe environment for everyone – from children playing, friends relaxing or passengers waiting for a train or a bus.

16. Are there plans to include a skate park for the kids, or areas for young people to feel safe and utilise? Will play spaces be available for children / young teens who visit and reside in the immediate area?

We have created a safe space for kids and families at the Western Parkland. At the moment, there are no plans to include a skatepark for kids and young people. We invited the community to share their feedback regarding what play facilities they would like to see for younger people and children in the space by filling in the online questionnaire.

17. How tall are the trees vs the station?

We are looking at pre-growing the trees for the site and putting them in up to 12 meters tall on the day of planting.

18. Are there plans to use rainwater run off to water the plants/trees?

Currently the rainwater is collected and attenuated within large tanks below the main plaza area and is not utilised for irrigation. Rainwater gardens have been provided throughout the urban realm which will attenuate local run-off from hard areas.

19. Can you open the public realm early, while the station is still being fitted out?

The plan is to open the station and the urban realm at the same time. This is because the station is being developed from below ground upwards, with the urban realm sitting above underlying station structures. A large part of the urban realm sits on top of the operational railway. Consequently, the landscape will be the last part of the project that will be

completed. It therefore will not be accessible to the public until the final stage of the construction works are complete.

20. Please can you confirm that there are no car park facilities? Old Oak is a stone's throw from the most polluted road in Europe.

The transport hub will have three loops: an outer loop for buses, a middle loop for taxis and an inner loop for private cars. To reduce the pressure on local roads, there will be no public car parking. A 'drop and go' area makes it easy and convenient to pick up or drop off rail passengers on the inner loop in front of the station. Up to two minutes will be allowed for pick-ups and drop-offs.

A covered, high-quality cycle hub is positioned close to the station entrance, with space for 350 cycle spaces, of these 18 provide for accessible parking. Additional cycle parking will be provided close to the station.

21. What noise reduction measures are you employing here?

The design of the urban realm must comply with HS2's environmental minimum requirements. The future use of the space for events or pop up activities will be subject to normal planning processes and compliance with statutory noise requirements.

The composition of ambient noise across the urban realm will comprise a minor contribution from HS2 trains, a noticeable contribution from passing GWML trains and nearby passing road traffic. Stationary systems noise will be noticeable across the urban realm, with sound being most noticeable nearer to the GWML platforms and near to the cores and portals.

Mitigation has been incorporated within the cores and portals, including plant room acoustic linings, acoustic silencers and acoustically rated louvres, to limit noise to acceptable levels at nearby off-site noise-sensitive properties, the proposed ASD area and throughout the urban realm.

22. How indicative is the road layout at the mouth of the entrance?

The road layout is fixed and has been submitted for planning approval. Permission has been granted by the OPDC.

23. How are cyclists going to cross from Old Oak Common Lane to the station?

The main access and cycle routes are all going to go in at a steady cyclable incline along a wide path through the Western Realm.

24. Your literature talks specifically about 'urban' biodiversity. Please can you elaborate and explain how it differs from just 'biodiversity'?

Urban biodiversity refers to the various flora and fauna found in cities and the ecological systems in which they occur. Increasing or promoting biodiversity means finding creative solutions to create space for a variety of living organisms within urban areas.

25. Re: the cycle hub area: are you saying any High Wycombe Chiltern Line terminus station would only be on the separate plot called the "Station Adjacent Land", and completely outside this current "Public Realm Design" consultation's boundary?

Should the Chiltern Line come into the station at some point in the future, it will not need the land proposed for the Cycle Hub.

26. How many people will use the station as an interchange, and how many people will be using the station as a get on / off point? There is a well-used 250k daily figure, but no breakdown of what that means. To extend the question, what are your predicted numbers for people using various methods of transport - cabs / bikes / busses / foot, and how many will be heading towards Willesden and how many towards East Acton?

The breakdown passenger movements for the 2041 weekday assumes that 85% of people use the station as an interchange (including 41% between Crossrail and GWML and 34% between Crossrail and HS2) and 15% of people use the station as get on/off point. Of those 15%, the proportion of people using various methods of transport is shown as below.

Car (short stay)	0.5%
Taxi	4%
Motorcycle	1.5%
Bus	48%
Walk	36%
Cycle	3%
Car (pick-up /drop-off)	7%

In term of the number of people who will be heading towards Willesden and East Acton, those are included in the "walk" table above.

27. How is drainage, water supply and sewerage to be arranged? Will it make use of Stamford Brook?

We will make use of Stamford Brook Sewer at a couple of points, depending on the side of the station that we are on. We will divert the existing sewer slightly as part of the construction works because of our one-kilometre long cell structure box.

In terms of the water supply, we're looking at the developing rain gardens which will also provide some level of water penetration within the off-landscape area.

28. What are the risks of this being compromised during the planning/construction phase (e.g. the parkland area being reduced, encroachment by roads/buildings)?

The urban realm scheme will be submitted to the OPDC for approval, and this is the scheme that the site will be restored to following construction of the station. If there are any changes to the scheme, further agreement will have to be obtained from the OPDC.

29. Where will shops, cafes and places for refreshments be? Are they all on the station concourse? None in the outdoor spaces?

There are shops and cafes planned within the station and design reviews are continuing on the potential for some provision outside of the station.

30. How much light is the space going to get with very tall buildings to the South?

This will be considered when proposals are brought forward to develop the adjacent land to the south. This development scheme will be submitted for approval under normal planning processes.

31. If the primary area will be at the level of Old Oak Common Lane and the wetlands at concourse level, where will the main changes in level between these two occur?

There is a significant change in level between Old Oak Common Lane and the proposed main station. This constitutes a difference in height of approximately 7.5 metres at the highest point.

In order to optimise the connectivity of the station visually and physically with the existing public realm, the Old Oak Common Station Urban Realm Master Plan has been designed with a gently sloping landscape extending down from Old Oak Common Lane on the western side of the site to the proposed new transportation hub. The transportation hub and Station Plaza incorporating the wetland garden areas are broadly on the same level as the main station concourse.

32. Will there be a green corridor to connect Wormwood Scrubs and the station?

There is no green corridor connection in the design. Wormwood Scrubs can only be accessed via Old Oak Common Lane. While access to the east falls outside the scope of this engagement, we understand that the OPDC is pursuing a walking and cycling access route.

33. The open space to the south (Wormwood Scrubs) would create a great deal of clear wind paths. Has a wind turbine been considered for use requirements of the development?

A wind turbine has not been considered, but we will raise the suggestion with the OPDC and Hammersmith & Fulham.

34. Is there any access from Scrubs Lane / the east of the site?

OPDC are investigating the feasibility of a cycle and pedestrian link across the Grand Union Canal to create an access from Scrubs Lane to the east of the site. HS2 will continue to discuss this proposal with OPDC as plans develop.