

Search for new HS2 Ltd Chair is relaunched to help drive transformation and level up the country

- the search for a Chair to drive forward Europe's largest infrastructure project is relaunched
- the criteria for the role have been updated to appeal to a wider set of candidates able to take on the most important job in UK transport
- Sir Jon Thompson will take on an expanded role as Deputy Chair overseeing one of the UK's most critical and transformational programmes

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps has today (9 March 2022) relaunched his search for a new HS2 Chair, to lead the way in driving forward Europe's largest infrastructure project.

This is one of the most important transport roles in the United Kingdom with HS2 sitting at the heart of the government's once-in-a-lifetime plans to improve transport connectivity across the North of England and the Midlands and level up the nation.

To reflect this, criteria for the Chair role have been updated to attract leaders from a wider field of sectors and backgrounds ready to take on the challenge of leading this transformational project. All candidates will be asked to demonstrate their experience in providing world-class strategic leadership in complex settings.

The new Chair will build on the work already undertaken by HS2 Ltd and former Chair Allan Cook CBE – which, one year on from the Prime Minister marking the start of construction, is supporting over 20,000 jobs and more than 600 apprenticeships.

HS2 Minister Andrew Stephenson said:

The Chair of HS2 Ltd is one of the most important transport jobs in the UK sitting at the helm of a project that will deliver on the government's promises to boost connectivity, level up communities across the North and Midlands and help the nation build back better.

We've relaunched our search with new criteria designed to ensure we recruit the best and brightest candidate, ready to take on this challenge and drive forward transformation across the nation."

This comes as the Secretary of State for Transport appoints Sir Jon Thompson to become Deputy Chair of HS2 Ltd.

Sir Jon Thompson said:

This is a once in a generation programme, which will transform transport and connectivity in the UK and I am thrilled to take on an expanded role. Like the rest of the board, I am passionate about ensuring HS2 unlocks economic growth and jobs. As Deputy Chair, I will support the company to deliver the programme on time and on budget.

This role will include chairing HS2 Ltd until a permanent replacement is found and will be an extension of the duties Sir Jon has held as a Non-Executive Director since April 2021.

Sir Jon will support the HS2 Minister and future Chair to ensure HS2 is delivered on time and in budget whilst also working with the rest of the board and the executive to provide oversight, leadership and accountability for the HS2 programme.

Sir Jon brings decades of experience in the delivery of major projects to the role alongside world-class leadership experience having previously served as the Permanent Secretary at both the Ministry of Defence and HM Revenue and Customs.