

Deborah Fazan
HS2 Independent Residents' Commissioner
One Canada Square
Canary Wharf
London
E14 5AB

Deborah.fazan@hs2.org.uk

26 June 2017

Dear *Debbie,*

Thank you for your continued work to monitor and review how we are delivering HS2 against the commitments we have made to being a good neighbour within those communities who will be affected by the project.

Our commitments are set out in our Residents' Charter, which has been updated to reflect our step-change in how we will deliver HS2 during the next phase of the programme. The Charter provides clear measures by which the Commissioner and communities will be able to monitor our progress.

The Charter can be viewed on the HS2 pages of gov.uk.

I can confirm the Homeowner Payment scheme has been successfully launched following Royal Assent for Phase One in February. While more time is needed before any firm conclusions can be drawn, I am pleased to report the number of applications from homeowners has been positive and a series of payments have now been made, all well within target timescales.

The HS2 Need to Sell (NTS) scheme secretariat continues to work closely with the Department for Transport to address the points raised during the House of Lords Select Committee hearing. They are working to update NTS guidance following the Phase 2B property consultation so that it reflects feedback and helps to ensure that applicants can have a clear understanding of the scheme and its application requirements.

We will continue to work closely with you to improve communication and create greater clarity for those with an interest in our property schemes.

I welcome your comments on the progress in implementing the recommendations made by Ian Bynoe. HS2 Ltd is making good progress and is committed to delivering against these recommendations by the end of 2017.

This month we see the introduction of a new Freephone Hotline and Freephone Minicom service, making it much easier for communities to contact the organisation to ask questions or raise concerns they may have. A process to record all formal complaints and concerns has been developed and will continue to be improved over the coming months.

As part of our learning and continuous improvement programme we have now introduced a customer satisfaction survey after each call through our Hotline. In addition, every community along the line of route has a nominated member of the Community Engagement team who will act as their point of contact and voice within the HS2 project.

In addition to developing the organisation's Community Engagement Strategy, local engagement plans are being produced in partnership with the communities along the line of route. While forums have been an important mechanism for communicating in the past, we recognise the need to engage our communities in a variety of ways ensuring they are tailored to the local needs.

And finally, Ministers have been kept closely informed of our work in this area and Julie King, who was recently taken up the post of Director of Community Engagement holds quarterly meetings with the responsible Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, which will continue post-election.

I would again like to thank you for your latest comments and observations; they help us to maintain a focus on the people affected by HS2 as we make preparations to build the new railway. I also appreciate the support and time you have give me as I establish myself in the CEO role at High Speed Two, particularly your attendance and feedback at our newly established Community and Stakeholder Engagement Panel. Of course, if you have any comments or wish to discuss the contents of this letter in more detail please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Julie King.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Thurston', with a long, sweeping flourish at the end.

Mark Thurston
Chief Executive
High Speed Two (HS2) Limited