

Gareth Epps

Independent HS2 Construction Commissioner

Sent by email:

gareth.epps@hs2-cc.org.uk

19 November 2018

Dear Gareth,

Thank you for your sixth report as the interim independent HS2 Construction Commissioner and your work to monitor how we manage and respond to construction complaints.

We are continually looking to improve how we handle complaints and I was pleased to read your observation that HS2 Ltd continues to make progress in this area.

Following an extensive review of the HS2 complaints service, we now have a new process in place which sets out clearly the steps involved. Under this new process, I understand four construction complaints have been referred to the Construction Commissioner to carry out an independent review and these have now all been concluded.

In October we published our first public report that documents our progress towards being a good neighbour and delivering our 10 Community Commitments. The report covers the six-month period January to June 2018, and draws on a number of case studies of activity during the first half of this year, along with currently available data such as from our helpdesk, funding awarded and events we have held.

We will be publishing these reports on a six monthly basis. The next report will cover July to December 2018, and will be published in Spring 2019. These reports will provide transparency about our performance against our commitments and help us to continuously learn and improve.

As the report documents, between January and June 2018 HS2 Ltd has dealt with 165 complaints, half of which relate to construction. During this time we dealt with 9 out of 10 complaints in less than 20 working days and resolved over 95% at the first stage of the complaints process, with no need for further escalation.

Your report comments on the recent complaints regarding HS2 on-network works carried out by Network Rail. Following a review, a number of mitigation measures were agreed and put in place and lessons have been shared between Network Rail and HS2. We are also continuing to work closely with Network Rail to develop our joint working arrangements, including in relation to lineside notifications and ensuring the process in place to respond to construction complaints requiring immediate response is fit for purpose.

You also raise the Prolonged Disturbance Compensation Scheme. As you know, we have developed proposals for the scheme, which were shared with local communities in June and July 2018 by way of engagement workshops held across the route of Phase One. HS2 Ltd are reviewing the draft scheme in light of feedback received in response to the community and local authority engagement. The intention is to launch the scheme as soon as practicable. I appreciate your guidance on this issue and we will continue to work with the Construction Commissioner's office both as the scheme is finalised and on its implementation.

As you highlight, we are also committed to further reducing adverse effects of construction through detailed design in accordance with the General Principles of the Environmental Minimum Requirements and the application of the Code of Construction Practice.

Finally, I know you have taken an active interest in the development of the new HS2 website and the local commonplace sites for communities along the route of the railway. I am pleased to update you that we have launched a new local website for communities in Cheshire and have also updated the content on the HS2 in Staffordshire local website to also reflect the Phase 2a activity in the area.

I would again like to thank you both for your latest report and your contribution over the last two years.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Crawford', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jim Crawford
Managing Director, Phase One
HS2 Ltd