

Sir Mark Worthington

Independent HS2 Construction Commissioner

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15 July 2019

Dear Sir Mark,

Thank you for your ninth report as the HS2 Independent Construction Commissioner covering the first quarter 2019. We appreciate your ongoing work, advice and guidance on how we manage and respond to construction complaints.

Thank you also for the time you have recently spent with the HS2 Helpdesk team, I know that you have spent time with them in our Community Hub, based at our Headquarters in Birmingham and I hope that the session gave you an insight into how the Helpdesk are now working alongside our engagement teams, allowing us to improve the customer service experience we offer. As mentioned in my previous letter to you, we are also raising the awareness of our Helpdesk team to ensure that communities understand what the service offers and how to contact us.

In your report and through your recent meetings with the team I note that you have welcomed the progress that has been made regarding the provision of noise insulation in the Euston/Camden area. We remain fully committed to installing noise insulation as early as possible in order that residents are not subject to noise impacts from our enabling works stage. I agree there is still more to do and we are working with our contractors to ensure that the lessons learnt from Euston/Camden are shared with teams in HS2 for later stages of the project. We would welcome your continued input as this progresses.

You also raise an observation regarding the disruption of public transport, specifically the relocation of bus stops in the London area due to works being carried out for the project. We are working closely with the bus delivery team within Transport for London (TfL) to ensure there is an agreed process in place for communicating bus stop closures or movements with local residents. It is important that we continue to work with TfL in minimising the inconvenience that may be caused to the public.

In your report you mention the upcoming road closures in Hillingdon. As you are aware, the closure of Breakspear Road South has now been agreed to commence on 20 July 2019. Previously the road closure had been planned for late May; following discussions with the local community, and having listened to their concerns, we decided to postpone this until the end of the summer school term, avoiding the exam period.

You also raise three wider observations regarding involving residents throughout the design process of the programme, Settlement Deeds and Prolonged Disruption. I would like to address these areas below.

I agree on the importance of involving communities throughout the design process of the project and in line with our Community Engagement Strategy. We are committed to creating a long-term and trusted two-way conversation with the communities in which the railway will be built and operated. We will continue to ensure that the views of local people are taken into consideration, sharing designs and providing the opportunity for feedback.

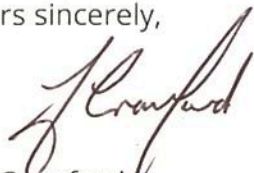
A recent example of this would be our engagement on the Colne Valley Viaduct. In late May and early June 2019 we held a series of five public information events, where we set out design changes and landscaping plans based on community feedback received at last year's design engagement events. Over 400 people attended across five events held in Hillingdon, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire. We will ensure that you continue to be made aware of these events and are always welcome to join.

We are developing a process for issuing settlement deeds to ensure those impacted have sufficient time to make an application, and receive their deed, ahead of the start of tunnelling works next year. In the meantime we have been keeping communities updated. In April 2019 we contacted all residents who have pre-registered their interest in settlement deeds to provide an update, and to inform them that more detail on the formal registration process will be shared later this year. In June 2019 we also updated the settlement deeds content on the HS2 website; including confirmation that those seeking to pre-register can do so by contacting the HS2 Helpdesk. Since this update to the website around 50 additional people have pre-registered their interest. In addition to this, colleagues from across the business are developing updated documentation on ground settlement, in order to better help residents understand settlement deeds.

Finally, with regards to prolonged disruption, we understand the government expects to make an announcement this summer, subject to final approval of the policy within government. We will then communicate the details to residents in a way that is clear and easily understood. We will continue to keep you updated as we prepare to launch the scheme.

I would again like to thank you for your latest comments and observations and look forward to continuing to work with you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Crawford', written in a cursive style.

Jim Crawford
Managing Director, Phase One
HS2 Ltd