

**Sir Mark Worthington**  
Independent HS2 Construction Commissioner

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Dear Sir Mark,

Thank you for your recent report covering the second quarter of 2019, the tenth report from the HS2 Independent Construction Commissioner. As you are aware, Jim Crawford left HS2 in September and I have been appointed as the new Delivery Director for Phase One. On behalf of HS2 Ltd, I would like to thank you for your continued work, advice and guidance on how we manage and respond to construction complaints. I have read your most recent report with interest and I look forward to having the opportunity to meet with you to discuss your observations in detail.

Thank you also for the time you have spent meeting with local residents and stakeholders in communities along the route of the new railway. I agree with you on the importance of engaging with communities fully and openly, and ensuring community issues are considered in the planning, decision-making and implementation processes of the company whilst we construct the railway. As you mention, we have made good progress over recent years but we also recognise that there is more to do. Our aspiration is to be a good neighbour every single day, by respecting the people and communities we impact and being sensitive to their needs. This is demonstrated within our third public progress report, which we published this Autumn, outlining how we are delivering on our 10 community commitments which covers the six month period January to June 2019.

I note that the levels of alerts into your office increased in the second quarter of this year. As you highlight this increase reflects the extent of enabling works underway in preparation for main works. We have also seen an increase in the number of construction complaints received during this period, as would be expected as the impacts of the project become real for people living near the route. In the first half of this year we received 295 complaints in total, of which 96% were resolved within 20 working days and 99% were concluded at the first step of the complaints process.

In your report you raise a number of observations regarding noise insulation, the recent closure of Breakspear Road South in Hillingdon and engagement with local communities. I would like to address these below.

We remain fully committed to installing noise insulation prior to the commencement of those HS2 works that trigger the required noise levels. I know you have had a number of meetings with both HS2 Ltd and our contactors, most recently with an update on our progress at Old Oak Common, where we have seen an increase of residents taking up the scheme. As you have highlighted in your report, we are looking to learn the lessons from the Euston programme as we roll out noise insulation further along the Phase One route. We will continue to keep you updated on this programme of work.

In your report you also make an observation regarding the closure of Breakspear Road South in Hillingdon. I note that you welcomed our decision to postpone these works until the end of the exam period. We received 21 complaints regarding the eight week closure, this is in comparison to the previous closure in October 2018 which lasted three and a half weeks but attracted nearly 80 complaints. Both ahead of, and during the closure we actively engaged on the ground to ensure that residents and road users were kept informed. As you know, the HS2 Helpdesk is available all day every day; the team were fully briefed throughout the whole closure so that they were able to handle queries at the point of contact. I know you have spent time with our Helpdesk team in the Community Hub at Snow Hill, and we are grateful for your ongoing assistance.

Finally, I know you have met with a number of residents over the past few months including those from Hillingdon and Great Missenden. It is our aim to have an ongoing two-way dialogue with local communities affected by our works and to provide local engagement opportunities where issues can be discussed and resolved. Our engagement is tailored to the circumstances of those communities, as set out in our published local engagement plans for different areas along the route. We note your observation around the need for clear and transparent action logs. I have asked the Head of Community Engagement for the aforementioned areas above to review how we can improve our current processes we have in place.

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

Yours sincerely,



David Bennett  
Delivery Director, Phase One  
HS2 Ltd