

**Independent Construction Commissioner HS2**

**TWENTIETH REPORT: QUARTER FOUR  
2021**

**icc**

## **HS2 Independent Construction Commissioner: Twentieth Report**

### **Introduction**

This is the Twentieth Report of the Independent Construction Commissioner HS2 (ICC) and covers the fourth quarter of 2021 (1<sup>st</sup> October – 31<sup>st</sup> December).

### **Overview**

The number of complaints registered by HS2 Ltd saw a small rise over the quarter but the trend remained quite steady.

December was a quiet month particularly in Areas South and North. Overall the number of complaints fell in Area South and remained steady in Area North where there had been a noticeable rise in the previous quarter. Area Central saw a strong rise in complaints during the period. With the expansion of works across the whole line of route I am expecting the current year to be a challenging one. Yet again noise, traffic, lighting and site management issues continue to feature strongly in the figures.

Phase 2a remains relatively quiet.

During the quarter my community visits were once again somewhat curtailed by the changing advice from the Government regarding Covid-19. However, I have spent some time in Buckinghamshire visiting communities at Great Missenden and Little Missenden as well as touring areas in the general proximity of the Misbourne Valley.

I made a number of visits to the Euston/Camden area including joining the local contractor engagement team on the Regent Park Estate and twice visiting the main works contractor at the Euston tunnel portal. I also spent time with the Euston Partnership team who are responsible for the future development of the station and the surrounding area.

In addition I made further visits to sites around the Camden Town, Swiss Cottage and Primrose Hill areas.

I have continued to meet regularly with HS2 Ltd and its contractors and with the Department for Transport.

## **Representations**

The ICC received 92 individual approaches (see Annex) during the fourth Quarter, a small rise on the previous one. Of these 36 were issues raised with HS2 Ltd already but which the complainant thought the ICC should be aware of; 45 approached the ICC not having previously raised matters with HS2 Ltd and thus had their cases referred; and 11 concerned matters outside the Commissioner's remit.

## **Small Claims Scheme (SCS)**

For the fourth quarter of 2021, 33 new claims were registered with HS2 Ltd. Of these, 6 remain open, 21 cases are awaiting further evidence, 1 was rejected and one was settled by insurers. There were 10 goodwill payments.

In total there have now been 168 applications, with 49 approved with some form of payment made, 25 remain open and 94 have been rejected. The total amount paid out has been £14079.11.

One appeal was settled by the ICC under the Small Claims Scheme during the quarter.

## **Observations**

### **Public Roads and Traffic**

By far the largest number of complaints are connected to road use.

I have commented previously on the importance of contractors taking a wider overview of road closures to try to mitigate their impact on local communities and to ensure that good notice is given wherever possible. I expect that this will be a particularly sensitive issue in the coming year as main works begin to have their full impact.

Of notable concern are the London Borough of Hillingdon and the roads around the Old Oak Common area. HS2 Ltd remains alert to the impact on these areas and I shall continue to monitor the situation closely.

Construction traffic remains an issue of contention in Buckinghamshire and I remain in close contact with the communities and the contractors in this area.

In Area North there have been repeated reports of vehicles leaving HS2 sites and depositing mud and debris on the surrounding roads. Inevitably this is a problem to be expected during winter months, but contractors need to put in place measures to limit this occurrence.

## Noise Disturbance and the Insulation

I feel that I must mention again the frustrations of many local people at the impact of noise. It continues to register very strongly in the complaints. With spring and summer approaching contractors need to be very aware of the impact of their works.

Though previously noise issues have been largely registering in the Euston/ Camden area of London there are growing impacts on suburban and rural communities which contractors need to be mindful of.

There are still issues with the roll-out of noise insulation and ventilation measures in the Euston area which I have discussed on a number of occasions but I hope that we will see some strong progress for early 2022.

## Site Management

I mentioned above the problems of debris on roads in proximity to worksites.

However, site lighting remains an issue that with consideration can often be resolved easily. I hope that site managers will be more proactive in the vicinity of works to ensure that these issues can be resolved before they become a matter of public disturbance.

## Vegetation Clearance and Environmental Matters

Though complaints for the second half of 2021 on this issue declined it has tended to be a seasonal concern and with spring and summer approaching I am sure that there will be an increase so I would remind contractors of the need for sensitivity to local opinion.

I submit my report.



Sir Mark Worthington OBE

Independent Construction Commissioner HS2

February 2022

## Annex: Quarter 4 alerts, representations and complaints

Total construction complaints received by HS2 Ltd for Phase One and for Phase Two A for the 4th Quarter 2021

	South	Central	North	Two A	Non-Geographic	Total
October	39	61	41	0	1	142
November	47	43	43	0	1	134
December	19	44	23	6	0	92
Total	105	148	107	6	2	368

Representations received by the ICC for the 4th Quarter 2021

	Alerts*	Referrals to HS2**	Not within remit***	Valid complaints****
4th Quarter 2021	36	45	11	2
Total To Date	325	329	75	12

\*Alerts identified to the ICC already either under examination by HS2 Ltd or previously alerted to them.

\*\*Alerts not made to HS2 Ltd directly but referred to them by the ICC.

\*\*\*Alerts outside ICC remit but may have been referred to HS2 Ltd.

\*\*\*\*Valid complaints which fall under the ICC's remit to adjudicate.