

**Independent Construction Commissioner HS2**

**TWENTY-FIFTH REPORT: QUARTER ONE  
2023**

**icc**

## **HS2 Independent Construction Commissioner: Twenty-Fifth Report**

### **Introduction**

This is the Twenty-Fifth Report of the Independent Construction Commissioner HS2 (ICC) and covers the first quarter of 2023 (1<sup>st</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> March).

### **Overview**

The number of complaints as registered by HS2 Ltd showed a marked rise for the quarter. This is not unusual for the first quarter of a year as there is usually a decline over the preceding four weeks of December. After a year of falling figures, the current ones most closely reflect the first Quarter of 2022.

However, I should note that the level of construction work is higher than it was a year ago and that therefore the numbers reflect a relative decline overall. All of the Joint Venture (JV) areas saw increases and I shall be working with HS2 Ltd and the contractors to identify any specific changes which might have triggered the rises.

Again, the main issues of concern were those of noise, traffic, lighting, road conditions, site management and issues connected to water management.

Phase 2a remains relatively quiet in construction terms.

Line of route visits during the quarter included, Birmingham, North Warwickshire, South Staffordshire, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, the Colne Valley and Hillingdon, Old Oak Common and the Camden and Euston areas.

I continue to meet regularly with HS2 Ltd, its contractors and with the Department for Transport.

### **Representations**

The ICC received 69 individual case approaches (see Annex) during the first Quarter. Of these, 20 were issues previously raised with HS2 Ltd but which the complainant thought the ICC should be aware of; 40 approached the ICC as a first point of call and thus had their cases referred on to HS2 Ltd; and 4 matters raised were outside the Commissioner's remit.

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

Under the scheme, 58 new claims were registered with HS2 Ltd for the quarter.

There have been 381 requests under the scheme to date: of which 64 have been approved, 50 remain open and 267 have been rejected

The total amount paid out stands at £23,573.42

## **Observations**

In this report I shall not be following the same pattern as in my previous ones, although I should state that in general the background issues remain the same.

Instead, I wish to address the significant change which has occurred since my 24<sup>th</sup> Report, namely the announcement that there is to be a pause to some works from Old Oak Common to Euston, including the latter's new station, and in the North Warwickshire/South Staffordshire areas.

There is still considerable uncertainty in the local communities about what the announcement means precisely. It is important for HS2 Ltd and its impacted contractors to communicate what work will be stopping and what will be continuing. Residents need a clear idea of what to expect and when to expect it. Some will have reached conclusions already from media reports. These may not be fully correct. To dispel uncertainty and to ensure that the Public's expectations are accurate, the engagement teams need to work quickly to provide the fullest information.

In the area around Euston Station it will be important to identify land that might revert to public use temporarily, as quickly as possible. This will allow the legal and planning processes to commence and for maximum benefit to be provided to the community. Clearly, much of the area is unsuitable for such temporary use and it will be important for residents to understand at an early stage which land may be used and which cannot. It is important to explain why this is the case also.

In the short-term, engagement will need to be more intense, so that the community has every opportunity to participate in framing public-space proposals.

While the delay may bring some temporary relief to local residents from HS2 Ltd.'s works themselves both in London and in North Warwickshire/South Staffordshire, it will also add uncertainty and prolong the overall disruption to

local residents. The impacts of a lengthening construction timetable will require careful monitoring and managing and this may have consequences for HS2 Ltd.'s residents' welfare strategy. I hope that the company will keep this very much under review.

I also hope that the delay will allow HS2 Ltd to make progress on its noise insulation programme prior to works being recommenced.

I am sure that I shall return to some of these issues on future occasions.

I submit my report.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Worthington". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'n'.

Sir Mark Worthington OBE

Independent Construction Commissioner HS2

May 2023

## Annex: Quarter Four alerts, representations and complaints

A reminder: HS2 Ltd has changed its recording procedures for registering complaints. Previously this had been done under the geographical categories of Areas South, Central and North and Phase 2A. In future, complaints will be registered under each Integrated Project Team covering a particular section of the route.

	Align	BBV	BBVS	EKFB	SCS	Euston Station *	Non Area	2 A	Total
January	4	42	0	20	23	2	0	4	95
February	24	21	5	21	24	2	0	7	104
March	3	10	3	21	30	6	0	1	74
Total	31	73	8	62	77	10	0	12	273

\*Euston Station is covered by Mace Dragados.

## Representations received by the ICC for the 1st Quarter 2023

	Alerts*	Referrals to HS2**	Not within remit***	Valid complaints****
1st Quarter 2023	24	41	1	3
Total To Date	460	537	103	21

\*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.