

Our Ref: SE-23-1124

Telephone: 08081 434 434

Minicom: 08081 456 472

Email: [hs2enquiries@hs2.org.uk](mailto:hs2enquiries@hs2.org.uk)

[gov.uk/hs2](https://www.gov.uk/hs2)

**Sir Mark Worthington OBE**

HS2 Independent Construction Commissioner

Sent by email:

[complaints@hs2-cc.org.uk](mailto:complaints@hs2-cc.org.uk)

10 July 2023

Dear Sir Mark

Thank you for your latest report as the HS2 Independent Construction Commissioner covering the first quarter of this year.

Thank you also for your continued engagement with HS2 Ltd colleagues and contractors, as well as local residents and stakeholders impacted by the construction of the new railway. As detailed in your report, I know you have recently visited areas along the route, including across London, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, Birmingham and Staffordshire.

As you will have seen along the route, we continue to make significant progress with the construction of the new railway. We have now built over 18 miles of tunnels between London and the West Midlands, and our next Tunnel Boring Machine, 'Mary Ann', is about to start her 3.5 mile dig to build the tunnel that will take high speed trains towards the centre of Birmingham. Key structures are taking shape at sites across the route, with over 1km of the Colne Valley Viaduct already built. The project is supporting over 28,500 jobs, and we are now well over half way to our target of creating 2,000 Apprenticeships.

I know you have previously raised community concerns about the environmental impacts of construction. As you are aware, last year we published our Net Zero Carbon Plan setting out our plans for the project to be carbon net zero from 2035. I am pleased to report that 19 HS2 construction sites are now entirely diesel free, helping to reduce carbon emissions as well as accelerating the adoption of best practice across the wider UK construction industry.

As construction continues, we remain mindful of the impact on those living and working along the route of the new railway. We appreciate your work with teams, both at HS2 Ltd and our contractors, to identify causes of construction complaints.

Overall last year (April 2022 to March 2023), we received 1,147 complaints. This compares with 1,637 for the same period the previous year, a decrease of 30%. We resolved 99% of complaints in 20 working days or fewer, and 99% were concluded at the first stage of the complaints process. No complaints were escalated to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman for a formal investigation. I am also pleased to report that 100% of urgent construction enquiries were responded to in 2 working days.

Your most recent report highlights the changes to how HS2 is being delivered following the Government's update to Parliament on their Transport Capital Investment Programme in early March. Over the last few months, we have been working closely with Government and our construction partners to agree changes to when we will be delivering some parts of our work. I recognise that, as you highlight, this will have caused uncertainty for some communities along the route. We are continuing to keep communities and local stakeholders informed about any changes to HS2 works taking place in their local area and details of our future programmes of works, including updates to local websites, newsletters and community events.

At Euston, where we are re-phasing construction to develop the scheme for the new station, we are identifying areas of the HS2 site that could be made available meanwhile for community use during the pause in the construction programme. We are engaging with the local community, as well as voluntary and third sector organisations, to develop ideas and identify meanwhile use projects, including through community meetings and site walkabouts. We are also holding a workshop for residents, community groups and local business to feed back and help shape the proposals for temporary uses. We are committed to working with the local community and providing available space to meet their needs. We will also be continuing with parts of the noise insulation installation programme during this period.

The Government has reaffirmed its commitment to delivering HS2 from Euston to Manchester. Our priority is to maintain the momentum underway on the project to ensure the initial high speed services, connecting Old Oak Common and Birmingham Curzon Street, are operational by the early 2030s. We will continue to engage closely with communities along the route as we do so.

Thank you again for your report, and we welcome your ongoing feedback to help ensure that we deliver on our commitments to respect the people and places impacted by the construction of the new railway.

I look forward to discussing your observations further at our next meeting.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Speight'. The signature is stylized with a large initial 'D' and a series of vertical strokes.

**David Speight**  
**Civils Delivery Director**  
**High Speed Two (HS2) Ltd**