

Independent Construction Commissioner HS2

**TWENTY-SIXTH REPORT: QUARTER TWO
2023**

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HS2 Independent Construction Commissioner: Twenty-Sixth Report

Introduction

This is the Twenty-Sixth Report of the Independent Construction Commissioner HS2 (ICC) and covers the second quarter of 2023 (1st April – 30th June).

Overview

The number of complaints as registered by HS2 Ltd demonstrated a fall on the previous quarter. June saw a marked rise but this is to be expected as we enter the peak construction months. As I have noted before the figures must be seen in comparison with a considerable increase in construction work hours.

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 as construction work on this section comes to a pause pending further Government announcements.

Line of route visits during the quarter included, Birmingham, Warwickshire, 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 57 individual case approaches (see Annex) during the quarter. Of these, 20 were issues which had been raised with HS2 Ltd already but which the complainant thought the ICC should be aware of; 35 people approached the ICC as a first point of call and their cases were referred on to HS2 Ltd for response; and 1 issue was raised which fell outside the Commissioner's remit.

One case investigated by the ICC was closed during the period.

Small Claims Scheme (SCS)

Under the scheme, 66 new claims were registered with HS2 Ltd for the quarter.

There have been 462 requests under the scheme to date: of which 75 have been approved, 65 remain open and 322 have been rejected.

There was one more substantial payment for damage during the quarter leading to a larger rise in the total figure than usual.

Consequently the total amount paid out now stands at £33,235.30

Observations

Euston/Camden

The main concerns over the quarter remain the uncertainties created by the pause in works on Phase 2a and on the link between Old Oak Common and Euston Station. This is being complicated further by much background noise.

The Camden/Euston area remains the most challenging in terms of HS2 engagement. Local residents are frustrated and angry at the lack of project clarity and the impact that this might have on their properties and their lives.

Although HS2 Ltd is prioritising communications in the area, a great deal remains to be done and there can be no let-up on contacts with local residents. This is particularly the case as in spite of the “pause” in the programme a considerable amount of work will continue to be carried out over the next two years.

The work on “meanwhile use” of land in the Euston area is progressing. One project is now complete but there is still more work to be done to analyse what further usage can be agreed for identified sites.

Previously, I have raised the impact which a lengthening construction timetable will have on local communities. HS2 Ltd will continue to monitor and manage this and is keeping under review their residents’ welfare strategy.

North Warwickshire

The communities around Water Orton and Coleshill are now feeling the full impact of HS2 works. This area was always going to be a difficult one as so many infrastructure issues need to be managed successfully.

I would hope that HS2 Ltd pays special attention to keeping the local community fully informed of their programme and responds quickly when problems occur.

Timely Reminders

As we approach the winter months may I take this opportunity to remind contractors of the importance of managing mud on roads and lighting disturbance. In the past, these have both been strong issues with the public as we move into autumn. Now is the time for contractors to check that they have the right facilities in place to reduce the amount of mud carried off sites and on to local roads. It is also a good moment for site managers to ensure that lighting is not causing disturbance for local residents.

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

September 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. Now, 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
April	2	23	5	12	14	2	0	0	58
May	6	23	1	13	35	3	0	1	82
June	4	53	2	17	31	0	0	1	108
Total	12	99	8	42	80	5	0	2	248

*Euston Station is covered by Mace Dragados.

Representations received by the ICC for the 2nd Quarter 2023

	Alerts*	Referrals to HS2**	Not within remit***	In depth investigations****
2nd Quarter 2023	20	35	1	1
Total To Date	480	572	104	22

*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.

****In depth investigations carried out by the ICC.

