

19 February 2024

Sir Mark Worthington OBE
HS2 Independent Construction Commissioner

Sent by email: complaints@hs2-cc.org.uk

Dear Sir Mark

Thank you for your recent report, as the HS2 Independent Construction Commissioner, covering the third quarter of 2023.

Thank you also for your continued engagement with HS2 Ltd colleagues and contractors, as well as 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 communities in Birmingham, Northamptonshire, West London, Camden and Manchester.

Since your last report, we have continued to make significant progress in the delivery of Phase One. This includes the following major project milestones: the start of construction works at Curzon Street Station, the Tunnel Boring Machines, 'Florence' and 'Cecilia', reaching Chesham Road intervention shaft, nearing the end of their 10 mile journey under the Chilterns, and the opening of three recruitment hubs in the West Midlands.

Our Community Engagement Strategy, 'Respecting People, Respecting Places' continues to guide our engagement and communications through our commitment to involve, respond, inform and consult as we build the railway. Our latest annual report covering April 2022-March 2023, setting out our approach, our commitments and our progress, has been published on our website - [Community Engagement Progress Reports - HS2](#).

So far this year (April 2023 to January 2024), we have received 929 complaints. This compares with 907 for the same period the previous year, an increase of 2.4%. We have resolved 96% of complaints in 20 working days or fewer, and all complaints have been concluded at the first stage of the complaints process. I am pleased to report that 100% of urgent construction enquiries and complaints continue to be responded to in 2 working days.

Thank you for your ongoing oversight of our Small Claims Scheme. This scheme is available for people who claim they have suffered physical damage from construction work and, where this is found to be the case, are able to receive settlement quickly.

We can report that 115 claims have been approved to date. We are in the process of reviewing our processes and procedures to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. We will keep you informed of our progress.

Your latest report focuses on the changes to the HS2 project announced by the Government in October 2023. As you set out, the Prime Minister announced that the Government will not proceed with Phase 2a and Phase 2b of HS2 or HS2 East. The Government reaffirmed its commitment to delivering the first phase of HS2, between London and Birmingham, including construction of the Handsacre Link to the West Coast Main Line.

Following my letter to you on 13 December 2023, we are continuing to work closely with the Government to understand in detail the implications of the announcement for the project. As we do this, we recognise the importance of minimising uncertainty for those living and working along the route.

Regarding the decommissioning of Phase 2a from the HS2 programme, HS2 Ltd has been carrying out a review of the scope of work required to safely and cost effectively decommission the various enabling work sites across the Phase 2a route.

HS2 Ltd fully appreciates the ongoing uncertainties for the local community whilst options for connecting HS2 and the West Coast Mainline are being re-examined by the Department for Transport. Our local engagement team, alongside HS2's Helpdesk, remain available to provide information and support. As soon as we have clarity around these points, we will be able to proactively communicate with stakeholders and communities.

HS2 Ltd continues to complete enabling works across the HS2 Euston site, as well as keeping the site safe while the main construction work is paused. We will continue to maintain a dialogue with residents and interested parties via a range of different channels, including regular newsletters and engagement events. We are working to mitigate the impact of our works as much as possible and will be looking to open further meanwhile use sites in Euston which respond to community priorities, including on Euston Square Gardens West and a larger area on the National Temperance Hospital site.

I appreciate your ongoing support and guidance, and look forward to continuing to work closely with you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Speight', with a stylized, scribbled end.

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