

**Sir Mark Worthington OBE**  
**HS2 Independent Construction Commissioner**

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

1 May 2024

Dear Sir Mark

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

This is my first response to your reports in my new role as Civils Delivery Director, and I look forward to working with you moving forward.

I would like to say thank you for your ongoing engagement with HS2 Ltd colleagues and contractors. Your guidance throughout the year has been gratefully appreciated by those working across the project.

I note that you have conducted a number of visits during the quarter, including to Birmingham and London, namely the western areas, Euston, and Camden. Your ongoing commitment to residents and stakeholders impacted by the construction of the new railway is welcomed.

Since your last report, we have continued to make considerable progress in the delivery of HS2. During the last quarter of 2023, our Tunnel Boring Machines 'Florence' and 'Cecilia' grew ever closer to the end of their 10-mile journey under the Chilterns, before breaking through at the North Portal in early 2024. 'Emily,' 'Anne' and 'Elizabeth' have now started their journeys too, building tunnels under Northolt and Birmingham.

Following on from the start of construction at Curzon Street Station in Birmingham in January, independent research published in February has demonstrated HS2's impact on regeneration and investment in the West Midlands. The economic analysis has shown that HS2 will drive a £10 billion economic uplift in the West Midlands over the next 10 years, generating 41,000 new homes and over 30,000 new jobs.

It was pleasing to see a reduction in complaints in this quarter, but we continue to work with communities to acknowledge and address areas of concern. Between April 2023 to March 2024, we have received 1,107 complaints. This compares with 1,147 for the same period the previous year, a decrease of 3%. We have resolved 97% 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 145 claims have been approved to date. In our last response to your 27<sup>th</sup> Report, we reported that we were in the process of reviewing our processes and procedures to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. We have since then made enhancements to our stakeholder management system to provide a single view of claims across HS2 Ltd and our supply chain, in a way that meets our requirements to manage data safely and securely.

Your previous report focused on the changes to the HS2 project announced by the Government in October 2023. Since then, we have continued to work with the Government to understand the implications of the announcement.

On Phase 2a, work is underway to plan the close down of construction activities in a safe, respectful, orderly, and efficient manner. We are continuing to work hard to provide certainty to local communities, especially in areas around Handsacre, Staffordshire. As you will be aware, the Government lifted safeguarding for the Phase 2a section of the route between the King's Bromley and Crewe areas in January 2024.

HS2 Ltd fully recognises the ongoing impact of uncertainty for local communities on the pause in works between Euston and Old Oak Common, and future plans for Euston station. We will continue to provide updates through a range of channels including newsletters, updates to the local websites and events when new information is available to share.

As we move into the spring and summer months, we are working hard with our contractors to minimise the impacts on our local communities, working within our approved working hours, reducing noise and dust, and ensuring that we respect local communities by doing what we say we will. This will include limiting working hours near residential properties where possible and letting local communities know in advance of any planned extended working hours.

Road closures and traffic remain a concern for local communities and businesses. We will continue to work with our contractors and Local Authorities to plan, coordinate and communicate our roadworks in advance, keeping communities updated of any changes to our plans. Lessons have been learnt from the 'Greatworth T' and processes improved as a result.

Finally, regarding the village of Water Orton, we are working closely with all parties to alleviate the concerns and impacts on this village community. We recognise that Water Orton is impacted by our construction activities and continue to engage with the local community and stakeholders to identify opportunities to mitigate our works as much as we can. This has included working with the responsible bodies to address issues such as flooding and air quality whilst demonstrating that we are robustly monitoring and reporting our construction impacts. This has included installing additional air quality and noise monitoring equipment to offer confidence we are working within agreed limits (as set out in the Environmental Statement) whilst reviewing compounds to reduce lighting impacts on the village.

I look forward to working with you closely, and to receiving your next report in due course.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JRoe', written in a cursive style.

**Jackie Roe**  
**Civils Delivery Director**  
**High Speed Two (HS2) Ltd**