

Independent Construction Commissioner HS2

**TWENTY-NINTH REPORT: QUARTER ONE
2024**

icc

HS2 Independent Construction Commissioner: Twenty-Ninth Report

Introduction

This is the Twenty-Ninth Report of the Independent Construction Commissioner HS2 (ICC) and covers the first quarter of 2024 (1st January – 31st March).

As this report was being finalised, the Prime Minister announced the date of the General Election. As such, its submission and publication has been delayed.

Overview

The number of complaints as registered by HS2 Ltd rose during the quarter, as would be expected following the Christmas shutdown.

In the area from Old Oak Common to London Euston much of the work to enable a safe stop to construction has now been completed. Elsewhere, 2024 will see major works continuing at a rapid pace.

Phase 2a is now quiet from a construction perspective.

Once again, noise, traffic, lighting, road conditions, site management and flooding, were the issues most raised by the public.

Line of route visits during the quarter included, Birmingham, Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire, West London 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 65 individual case approaches (see Annex) during the quarter. 44 were issues which had been raised with HS2 Ltd already but which the complainant thought the ICC should be aware of; a further 21 cases approached the ICC and these were referred on to HS2 Ltd for response. Two investigations were closed over the period.

Small Claims Scheme (SCS)

Under the Small Claims Scheme, 42 new claims were registered with HS2 Ltd for the quarter. 9 claims were settled and 22 claims were rejected in the period.

Since the commencement of the scheme 597 claims have been registered. Of those, 154 have been approved and 399 have been rejected.

The total amount paid out stands at £74,064.

Observations

2024 will be another challenging year in terms of construction for the project. This is the second year where main construction is in full swing with the consequent heavy impact upon individuals and communities.

Contractors must continue to engage with the public actively and clearly. Maximum advance notice should be given of future works even if there is a danger of timescales changing. Contractors are sometimes too cautious about announcements, preferring to make them only when all elements have been put together. This can mean that although Local Authorities are informed at an early stage, communities can be left behind. I would like to see contractors look more closely at this.

With the new government in place, I am sure that there will be a reassessment of what aspects of the original project will be delivered. That is right and proper. Previously, I have drawn attention to two significant sections of the route which need focus: the link north from Birmingham and that from Old Oak Common to Euston. Both these areas have suffered from great uncertainty since the decision of the previous government to pause works last October.

I fully appreciate that such major decisions cannot be rushed and that Ministers will want to review all their options but an early announcement of intent would be warmly welcomed by those communities most impacted. Delay and uncertainty create enormous difficulties for local residents who remain unclear as to where the project is going. We will all welcome any guidance which the new government can give.

I submit my report.



Sir Mark Worthington OBE

Independent Construction Commissioner HS2

July 2024

Annex: Quarter One alerts, representations and complaints

	Align	BBV	BBVS	EKFB	SCS	Euston	Curzon St	Non Area	2 A	Total
January	3	19	0	12	18	0	0	0	0	52
February	11	27	2	13	16	0	0	0	0	69
March	4	29	2	9	21	2	1	0	0	68
Total	18	75	4	34	55	2	1	0	0	189

*Euston Station is covered by Mace Dragados.

Representations received by the ICC for the 1st Quarter 2024

	Alerts*	Referrals to HS2**	Not within remit***	In depth investigations****
1st Quarter 2024	44	21	0	2
Total To Date	577	645	104	26

*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 and concluded during the quarter.