

Our ref: Chair-24-1098

Lord Jackson of Peterborough
HS2 Residents' Commissioner

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Via Email

30 July 2024

Dear Lord Jackson,

Thank you for your latest report as the HS2 Residents' Commissioner covering the period December 2023 to March 2024.

I would like to thank you for your ongoing work with both HS2 Ltd colleagues and residents affected by the work of the project. I know your continued engagement is appreciated by all of those working at HS2 Ltd and I am sure that your support is appreciated by the residents you engage with along the line of route.

Following my response to your last report in January this year, HS2 Ltd has continued to adapt its activities to reflect the cancellation of Phase Two of the project in October 2023 and the subsequent announcements relating to Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR). Our focus remains on delivering the first operational phase of the railway between Birmingham and Old Oak Common and we continue to work closely with the Department for Transport (DfT) on their plans for the route between Old Oak Common and London Euston.

We recognise that uncertainty about the future of Euston Station is having an impact on residents and local businesses. As you note in your report, we are continuing our engagement with local communities about our ongoing enabling works and are progressing plans with Euston partners to open a community hub later this year to provide an information resource on developments taking place in the wider area.

As you are aware, we have identified areas within the HS2 Euston site which can safely and temporarily handed back to the community, to reduce the impact of the pause to construction of the station. The first of these 'meanwhile use' sites opened on Hampstead Road in July last year, with several more sites are set to open this year. These include returning Euston Square Gardens West to an open green space, providing a new play space, co-designed by a group of local young people, and the opening of a food growing area, which will be handed to a local charity.

Thank you for your comments regarding the complex work HS2 Ltd's Land and Property team has undertaken following the cancellation of Phase Two, to ensure that our management of Phase Two land and property cases adequately considered the unique circumstances of affected claimants. Identifying and progressing the most urgent cases for resolution whilst the new processes were still being agreed was of the highest priority for us, and I thank you for your contribution to this as part of your membership of the Property Approvals Group.

I would also like to express my appreciation for the ongoing support and independent scrutiny that you provide to the Policy and Engagement Improvement Group. We look forward to continuing to work with you as part of this forum as we further develop new and improved ways of working.

Your report refers to the work that we have been doing with the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers (CAAV). I agree with your assessment that this work has provided an excellent source of qualitative data. We will continue with this work over the coming months, with the aim that it will lead to real improvements in resolving land and property cases where reaching agreement has proved to be significantly more difficult.

Our reviews of the Crop Loss Expedited Payment and Streamlined Residential Blight schemes are ongoing, and we have shifted focus to make sure these schemes stay relevant and can be better promoted now that Phase Two has been cancelled. We will share the final outcomes of these reviews with you very shortly.

Following the completion of the Prolonged Disruption Compensation Scheme (PDCS) review by HS2 Ltd's contractors, recommendations have now been submitted to the DfT for potential (limited) revisions to the PDCS. We continue to work with the DfT on these recommendations and hope to agree a position on them soon. Thank you for taking part as one of the judges for the Community Engagement Inspiration Awards. Building HS2 affects the lives of many thousands of people along the line of route and the HS2 supply chain remains in daily contact with residents and businesses, to ensure we understand local concerns and, where possible, lessen the impacts of our activity. The awards have been developed to inspire outstanding performance across our supply chain in delivering against HS2's community engagement strategy, demonstrating best practice and encouraging innovation.

Through our Community and Business Funds we have now announced 288 awards totalling over £16m. One of our most recent awards is funding for a volunteer car service in Brackley to enable members of the community who struggle to access public transport to attend medical appointments. These funds were created to benefit communities along the route that are disrupted by our construction works and will remain in place for duration of the construction and first year of operation of HS2.

Finally, we have been working closely with the DfT to prepare for the continued passage of the former Phase 2b hybrid Bill as recently to make provision for the proposed NPR scheme.

We welcome the opportunity for you to undertake more onsite visits and we are happy to work with you in facilitating these. I look forward to working with you closely, and to receiving your next report in due course.

Yours sincerely,



Sir Jon Thompson

Executive Chair

High Speed Two (HS2) Ltd