

**THIRTIETH REPORT: QUARTER TWO 2024**

icc

## **HS2 Independent Construction Commissioner: Thirtieth Report**

### **Introduction**

This is the Thirtieth Report of the Independent Construction Commissioner HS2 (ICC) and covers the second quarter of 2024 (1<sup>st</sup> April – 30th June).

### **Overview**

The number of complaints as registered by HS2 Ltd remained very steady for the quarter.

The pause in works on the route from Old Oak Common to London Euston has resulted in an artificially depressed figure for this area with its subsequent impact on total complaints. Despite the usual increase in construction work in the spring and early summer months, overall the figures compare favourably with the first quarter 2024.

Phase 2a remains quiet.

As usual, noise, traffic, lighting, road conditions, site management, were the issues most raised by the public.

Line of route visits during the quarter included, Birmingham, Warwickshire, 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 47 individual case approaches (see Annex) during the quarter. 28 were issues which had been raised with HS2 Ltd already but which the complainant thought the ICC should be aware of; a further 19 cases approached the ICC and these were referred on to HS2 Ltd for response.

## **Small Claims Scheme (SCS)**

Under the Small Claims Scheme, 41 new claims were registered with HS2 Ltd for the quarter. 8 claims were settled and 18 claims were rejected in the period.

Since the commencement of the scheme 638 claims have been registered. Of those, 162 have been approved and 417 have been rejected.

The total amount paid out stands at £77,629.

## **Observations**

### **Changes at HS2 Ltd**

The impact of the former Government's decision last October to suspend works on Phase 2 of the project and on the link from Old Oak Common to Euston has had a considerable effect upon the company. As a result there has been a restructuring, resulting in a reformed and more slim-lined operation.

Though this is entirely understandable, there are potential reasons for concern and I hope that the company is alert to them. Over the past year, there have been a number of personnel departures, with more scheduled. Unfortunately, HS2 Ltd has lost some very able and experienced people, particularly in those areas of the company where interface with the public is of primary importance.

The loss of this experience and the reduction in numbers of such personnel working directly for HS2 Ltd, will shift the onus on dealing with public engagement towards the contractor teams. They will need to absorb many of the lessons which HS2 Ltd has learned over the past seven years and to adjust their working practices to mirror HS2's experiences.

I shall be observing closely how the new structure meets the challenges and I hope that there is no falling back of standards of public engagement.

### **Flooding**

This has been a particularly wet year and there have been a number of reports of localised flooding impacting upon residents and communities.

In a limited number of cases, HS2 works may have contributed to the problems. I hope as we approach the latter quarter of the year, contractors are alert to potential flooding problems and act quickly where this occurs.

However, the wider issue has been the British weather. Engagement teams will need to explain the obvious with patience and understanding. I welcome the fact that in some areas HS2, though not responsible, has been working with

local authorities, other agencies and landowners to try to co-ordinate responses to the problems.

#### Traffic

We have entered a period where there will be prolonged traffic disruption along key areas of the line. Road closures and diversions are extremely frustrating for local residents and can add considerable journey-time. Active engagement with communities is essential so that they are aware of what is going to be happening locally and when. The responsibility for this will fall upon contractor teams increasingly and it is important that the lessons of past engagement are absorbed by these teams.

#### Euston

I have written before of the great uncertainty which hangs over the Euston/Camden area since the then Prime Minister announced a cessation of works between Old Oak Common and Euston last October. Hopefully, we will have some clarity from the new Government over its intentions soon. Though any new announcement may not be greeted with universal enthusiasm it is important to bring some certainty for the future. The lengthening of the project schedule due to these pauses has generated considerable anger among local residents. I hope that a definitive decision will mean that local residents, HS2 Ltd, local authorities and any other public agencies can once again start to look forward as the area around Euston is transformed.

I submit my report.



Sir Mark Worthington OBE

Independent Construction Commissioner HS2

September 2024

## Annex: Quarter Two alerts, representations and complaints

	Align	BBV	BBVS	EKFB	SCS	Euston		Non Area	2 A	Total
April	2	22	6	10	25	0		0	0	65
May	2	23	0	8	21	3		0	0	57
June	0	23	1	15	27	2		0	0	68
Total	4	68	7	33	73	5		0	0	190

\*Euston Station is covered by Mace Dragados.

### Representations received by the ICC for the 2nd Quarter 2024

	Alerts*	Referrals to HS2**	Not within remit***	In depth investigations****
2nd Quarter 2024	28	19	0	0
Total To Date	605	664	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.

