

Our Reference: CEO-24-1385

Lord Jackson of Peterborough
HS2 Residents' Commissioner

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Sent by email: ResidentsCommissioner@hs2.org.uk

Dear Lord Jackson,

Thank you for your recent report as the HS2 Residents' Commissioner covering the period April to September 2024. I would also like to thank you for your continuing guidance on how we can improve our operations to enable us to deliver HS2, whilst improving the experience for those we directly impact.

I look forward to meeting you on the 4th December to discuss your work in person. I took on the role of interim Chief Executive in September and I think it is important I better understand your perspectives. As you will be aware, Mark Wild has been appointed as the new permanent Chief Executive of HS2 Ltd and we look forward to welcoming him to the company and I will make sure I pass on this relationship to Mark through a handover period.

Since you received our last response, the project has continued to make significant progress across the programme. Notably, in September we completed our first viaduct on the route near Aston le Walls in Northamptonshire and installed the final deck segment of the 2.1-mile-long Colne Valley Viaduct. Work has also started on the foundations at Curzon Street Station in Birmingham with a team of 80 people helping deliver the work – joining more than 31,000 people working across our construction programme.

We recognise the impact that uncertainty on the future direction of the project can have on the communities we affect, as you note in your report. We continue to work closely with the Department for Transport, including the new ministerial team following the General Election in July, as the new Government develops their plans for HS2 and wider infrastructure.

We were pleased to see that the Government has now committed to delivering HS2 to Euston in the Budget this October. A terminus station for HS2 in the heart of the capital will be a vital gateway for passengers travelling to and from the North and Midlands and will support transport led growth and regeneration in the local economy around Euston. We will continue to engage with communities along the route of the railway between Old Oak Common and Euston as we develop our plans for the construction of the Euston Tunnel.

It is excellent to see your ongoing visits to communities and I am sure these residents welcome your presence and ability to raise awareness of their ongoing concerns.

The wider leadership team and I are committed to improving communications with landowners and ensuring our supply chain continue to provide people with the information they require.

We are grateful for your contributions to the Policy and Engagement Improvement Group which, as your report states, scrutinises the claimant experience and considers areas for improvement. Recently the group has looked at how HS2 Ltd communicates changes to the scope of the project to property owners and helped develop a renewed focus on closing out long standing compensation claims. We have now reached the implementation phase of the Closing out Claims Framework and look forward to reporting back on further progress in due course.

We are also grateful for your support with Property Approvals Group and Special Cases Review Panel and in particular your acknowledgement of the quality and robustness of the papers presented. As you know, HS2 Ltd is bound by the Compensation Code which puts the onus on the claimant to provide appropriate evidence. We recognise this is not always as straight forward as it sounds and will always try to work with claimants to reach a fair settlement, whilst providing value for money to the taxpayer. The Special Cases Review Panel is a key part of this, and we have really valued your input into the process.

HS2 Ltd has always enjoyed working closely with industry colleagues and we were pleased to have the opportunity to work with the Central Association of Agricultural Valuers (CAAV) on the agent-to-agent forum last year. As you stated in your report, this is continuing to inform our efforts to improve communication and information sharing between HS2 and claimant agents. We appreciate your support with this work and your recognition of the strong commitment HS2 Ltd has shown to listening to and acting on feedback from the industry.

I am pleased to hear that the monthly reporting you receive from us enables you to monitor trends and performance, but do let us know if there are any improvements that would help your work.

Yours sincerely,



Alan Foster

Interim Chief Executive Officer

High Speed Two (HS2) Ltd