

Deborah Fazan
HS2 Residents' Commissioner
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25 October 2017

Dear Deborah,

Thank you for your seventh report as HS2's Residents' Commissioner.

As you highlight in your report, it has been a busy few months for HS2 Ltd, with a number of significant announcements including; the awarding of stage 1 of the main works civil engineering contracts for Phase One, the introduction of the hybrid Bill into Parliament for Phase 2a, and the Government's decision on the route for Phase 2b. Collectively these announcements mark an important milestone in delivering the new railway.

How we deliver the railway is just as important and, as you know, one of our guiding principles is to be a good neighbour and respect the communities we are working with and the environment in which they live. I am grateful for your continued work, which is an important part of how we ensure we are delivering on our commitments to those communities who will be affected by the project.

As your report notes, the HS2 Community Engagement Strategy was published at the end of September. The Strategy sets out the ways in which HS2 Ltd will engage with residents and our ten Community Commitments. These in turn will be used as the basis to measure the success of the project. It also provides the framework for the Local Engagement Plans, which will be delivered by HS2 Ltd in collaboration with communities. It is important for us to provide tailored local plans to meet the needs of different communities along the route of the new railway.

Publication of our Community Engagement Strategy, and the revised Residents' Charter published in July, marks significant progress in our implementation of the recommendations of Ian Bynoe's review. I welcome your comments on HS2 Ltd's focus on implementing these recommendations and I am pleased to hear the Community and Stakeholder Engagement Panel meetings are proving a useful way to keep you updated on progress and engaged in key community decisions.

As you note in your report, HS2 Ltd has committed to delivering against all of the Bynoe recommendations by the end of this year. Of the thirteen recommendations, eleven have been addressed with either ongoing arrangements established or actions wholly completed. There are two remaining recommendations which have already seen improvements and will be fully addressed by the end of December 2017.

The Bynoe review also included one suggestion to establish a best practice advisory panel comprising practitioners who have dealt with comparable community engagement challenges to that of HS2. This

suggestion has already seen a workshop held and the terms of reference for an ongoing panel will be considered by HS2 Ltd by the end of the year.

I know you will be participating in the upcoming review of HS2 property schemes and I have noted your comments on these schemes and the recent commitments made by the Department for Transport. It is helpful to receive your observations which will assist us in our thinking.

We continue to work through the development of an urban compensation policy which provides a fair and balanced response to the recommendations of the House of Lords Select Committee. We are also seeking to improve accessibility to the Need to Sell scheme; we absolutely need to ensure our property schemes like, Need to Sell, are as clear and accessible as possible.

We appreciate that our communities may need access to an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanism that can assist the resolution of disputes over the valuation of their property or the assessment of disturbance compensation. HS2 Ltd will be publishing guidance on its ADR policy and this is expected before the end of the year.

I also welcome your comments on the Homeowner Payments scheme and it is good to hear you have found that the administration of the scheme appears to be working extremely well.

We continue to take these issues forward and will continue to keep you updated as we do so.

I was pleased that you were able to attend a number of our recent community events. Over the last two months we've had teams out along the routes for Phase 2a and Phase 2b meeting with communities and listening to the issues facing them. We've delivered 34 events with over 8,000 residents attending. This really brings home the scale and complexity of what we're here to deliver.

I am also pleased you have joined the regular forum we have established with both our enabling works and main works contractors.

I would again like to thank you for your latest comments and observations and I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting of the Community and Stakeholder Engagement Panel.

Yours sincerely,

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

Mark Thurston
Chief Executive
High Speed Two Limited