

Gareth Epps

Independent HS2 Construction Commissioner

Sent by email:

gareth.epps@hs2-cc.org.uk

24th October 2017

Dear Gareth,

Thank you for your recent report and your continued work to monitor how we manage and respond to construction complaints. This work is an important part of how we ensure we are delivering on our commitments to being a good neighbour to those communities who will be affected by the project.

I am delighted to confirm that the HS2 Community Engagement Strategy, which your report mentions was about to be published, has now been launched. The Strategy sets out more detail on our aspiration to be a good neighbour every single day, by respecting the people and communities we impact and being sensitive to their needs. It sets out the ways in which HS2 Ltd will engage and provides the framework for the Local Engagement Plans, which will be delivered by HS2 Ltd in collaboration with communities. It is essential for us to provide tailored local plans to meet the needs of different communities along the route of the new railway and I am pleased to read that you have found that they appear to be well received so far.

The Community Engagement Strategy, as well as our revised Resident's Charter, also provides information about the Independent HS2 Construction Commissioner's role and how members of the public can make contact. Moving forward all of our relevant publications will include the Residents' Commissioner's and Construction Commissioner's contact details, along with the HS2 Helpline information and complaints procedure, as set out in our tenth Community Commitment.

HS2 Ltd's ten Community Commitments will be used as the basis to measure our success. Every six months we will publish progress reports which will show how well we and our contractors are performing across a range of indicators.

Now that it is published, we will be focusing on bringing the Strategy to life, both across our own staff and also our contractors. A key part of this work will be to identify how HS2 Ltd will handle enquires and complaints during the construction process. I am pleased that you are an active member of the Community Engagement Contractors forum we have established with both enabling works and main works contractors. I know behaviours is one of the topics that will be discussed at an upcoming forum meeting.

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Publication of our Community Engagement Strategy, and the revised Residents' Charter, marks significant progress in our implementation of the recommendations of Ian Bynoe's review. 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 Ltd. 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 note your comments on the importance of resources being in place to ensure our complaints process and reporting are fully implemented prior to the start of major construction. I am pleased to hear you have had the chance to meet with HS2 Ltd's new Head of Public Response who, alongside our Director of Community Engagement, is leading work underway to further develop our helpdesk and complaints functions into a joint Community Hub. The Hub will be based in the heart of the organisation at Snow Hill. Your continued support in the development of this work is very much welcomed.

I understand you also attended a recent meeting with HS2 Ltd's Director of Community Engagement on the Small Claims Scheme and I know from your report that you are keen to receive the final details of the scheme once they have been agreed. As you are aware, this work is progressing, and we will keep you involved as we conclude our work.

I would again like to thank you for your latest comments and observations and I would be very happy to meet you to discuss your report and the topics covered in this letter in more detail.

Yours sincerely,



Jim Crawford

Managing Director, Phase One

HS2 Ltd

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