

# HS2

## Being a good neighbour

# Our progress

July to December 2019





## Department for Transport

High Speed Two (HS2) Limited has been tasked by the Department for Transport (DfT) with managing the delivery of a new national high speed rail network. It is a non-departmental public body wholly owned by the DfT.

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# Foreword

HS2 is more than a railway, it's an opportunity to leave a legacy for the country. It has the potential to redistribute opportunity and prosperity, to provide much needed future rail capacity, and to form a vital part of the UK's future low carbon transport infrastructure.

Being a good neighbour is a high benchmark for us and we have made progress over the last year, but there is more to do. As you will see in this report, we are listening to feedback from communities and continuing to identify ways we can improve.

HS2 is the largest and most complex infrastructure project undertaken in modern British history. Big projects divide opinion, particularly in their early stages. However, once completed many people believed it would have been 'unthinkable' not to have carried out projects such as the Channel Tunnel, the Channel Tunnel rail link and the M25.

It is important for a project of this scale to demonstrate progress and to be transparent with the Government and the public. The Oakervee Review confirmed the case for HS2 remains strong, and the Government's response in February committed to the HS2 network in full. However, that commitment came with a clear signal to continue to improve the support we offer to communities along the route.

Inevitably, big schemes like HS2 are disruptive. We have to acquire a lot of land and property and we are very aware of the impact that will have on people's lives as we continue to build the scheme.

Our job is to be sensitive and respectful, both to the environment and our communities, as we go about our work. The Government has also been clear that HS2 Ltd should focus on the delivery of Phase One, between London and Birmingham, and Phase 2a, from Birmingham on to Crewe. These areas of the programme are significantly further developed than Phase 2b sections to Manchester and Leeds.

The National Infrastructure Commission has been asked by Government to conduct a review into the sequencing and integration of Phase 2b with other programmes like Northern Powerhouse Rail. This will unavoidably lead to a degree of uncertainty amongst communities in those areas, many of which have lived with the prospect of HS2 for over a decade. We will need to ensure they continue to feel supported through this time.

2020 will be a big year as we move into main construction work between London and Birmingham, and gain the permissions from Parliament to start the next stage of development on Phase 2a. As we start the next stages of the programme we must ensure that health, safety, and wellbeing of the community and our workforce remains at the heart of everything we do. It will be a challenging time as we respond to the impacts of Covid-19 and put in place measures to continue to deliver HS2 safely. Whilst we must not lose sight of the legacy we will create for generations to come, it is equally important we continue to challenge ourselves to set the standards for major infrastructure projects in this country in sustainability and consideration for communities.

**Mark Thurston**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
High Speed Two (HS2) Ltd



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# The journey so far

## Julie King, Director of Community and Stakeholder Engagement, describes the journey so far and what's coming next.

Our Community Engagement Strategy, published in 2017, sets out the behaviours we expect to see from our workforce and supply chain. It also provides clarity on how we will engage with you and our 10 commitments that describe how we aim to be a good neighbour every single day.

The construction and operation of the railway will run over multiple decades – so we are going to be a neighbour of impacted communities for a long time. We need to create a conversation that will last the lifetime of the project and beyond. And we need to be clear with communities about how we are going to achieve this.

This document completes our first two years of reporting on how we are living up to the commitments we have made, and the impact we are having on our neighbours.

From the feedback we receive, we are hearing the quality of our information is good and that we are listening. However, we have also heard we need to widen our audience and increase the awareness of the local benefits HS2 will bring.

In the last six months we completed our first series of local engagement plans, so that all communities across Phase One have a tailored plan. We have also introduced local websites for the whole line of the new railway, collectively receiving over 200,000 visits to date.

We have also focused on a series of events for local businesses to make sure they are aware of the opportunities available from HS2 being built in their area. Over £4.65 million of funding grants has been invested into 88 community and business groups across Phase One, and over 100 performances of the Playing it Safe school construction safety programme have been delivered.

## The next steps

As the project moves into main works construction and more detailed design across Phase Two, we will need to continue to adapt as the project intensifies. We recognise there is more we can do so that all our neighbours can see our strategy in action.

We appreciate communities are currently feeling some disruption, and we will do all we can to minimise and mitigate these impacts.

In addition to our substantial events programme, attended by nearly 60,000 people so far, we will also look to run additional tailored events to further widen our reach. This will include how we respond to Covid-19 and find ways to maintain our engagement with communities and stakeholders during this challenging period.

We will also continue our efforts to create a more visible local presence, such as the 14 new information points we've created between Birmingham and Crewe. The Government has said it wants to bring forward legislation to take the railway to Manchester as soon as possible. We will work closely with stakeholders and communities to finalise designs in preparation for the deposit of a hybrid Bill. We will also continue to support communities along the route to Leeds as we await the recommendations of the National Infrastructure Commission.

Awareness of our Helpdesk service is growing but we need to do more and will continue to promote it through our events and find other ways to advertise the service.

We will continue to look for ways to listen to feedback, widen our audience and increase awareness of local benefits to help us demonstrate that HS2 is being a good neighbour.

### Julie King

Director of Community and Stakeholder Engagement, High Speed Two (HS2) Ltd



# Community Engagement at a glance

## Cumulative figures from January 2018 to December 2019

The figures below are the totals for the first two years of our community engagement reporting (January 2018 to December 2019). Throughout this report, you'll see case studies that give a detailed breakdown of figures for the six months from July to December 2019.

**62,055**

Helpdesk enquiries

**59,388**

people took part in more than 3,800 meetings, drop-ins and events across the whole line of the new railway

**95%**

complaints resolved within 20 working days or fewer

**5,656+**

pupils came along to 111 construction safety workshops at 71 schools across Phase One, between London and Birmingham

**99%**

of the 627 complaints received were concluded at the first stage of the review process in 2019, compared to 95% of the 447 complaints received in 2018

**211,400**

people visited the 12 local community websites for Phase One and Phase 2a, and more than 6,000 people have subscribed to the local community websites since their launch

**Over £4.65m**

was given to 88\* Community and Environment Fund (CEF) and Business and Local Economy Fund (BLEF) projects across the line of the new railway between the West Midlands and London

\* The Community and Business Funds for Phase One have been open since March 2017 and these figures are the total awarded to the end of December 2019.

Our plan is to build and deliver the new railway in two phases. Phase One will link the West Midlands with London.

Phase Two is being planned and will link the West Midlands with Manchester, the East Midlands, South Yorkshire, Leeds and beyond.



Not to scale. Based on indicative train service specification as at April 2018. Final HS2 timetable subject to consultation. You can check maps to see the planned routes for the High Speed Two (HS2) rail network at: [www.hs2.org.uk/where/route-map](http://www.hs2.org.uk/where/route-map)

# Commitments



**We will continue to build respectful, long-term relationships with communities, and actively encourage our workforce to listen to local concerns and be considerate and accountable for their actions at all times.**

As the Project gains pace and our supply chain grows, we need to make sure we're behaving consistently and in line with our Community Engagement Strategy.

**How we measure this:** Evidence that our staff and contractor partners understand and are behaving consistently with our strategy.

## Facts and figures

**79%**

of people who attended our events say the quality of information provided is good, compared to 73% in our last report\*.

**15%**

say HS2 is making a positive difference to their area, compared to 13% for the first half of 2019\*.

While this has increased slightly, we still have a long way to go. We appreciate communities are seeing some disruption at the moment. We'll do all we can to minimise this. We'll also share some of the early benefits of the Project and train our frontline staff who are working with the community in 2020.

## Listening and responding

You have told us that you want to be able to talk to us regularly, that you'd like to have approachable Community Managers locally.

In our last report we said we would	Since then we have	In 2020 we will
Expand the programme of community activity and information events over the coming years to reach more people.	Delivered our programme of local events along the whole line of the new railway. More than 9,700 people have come along to more than 700 events between July and December 2019.	Involve and talk with a wide range of groups in our communities. In the second half of 2020, we'll hold a series of events along the line of the new railway.
As we uncover more archaeological finds across the line of the new railway, we'll share the news with local communities through regular community events and talks. We want to reach more and new audiences by sharing social history stories from local areas between Birmingham and London.	Shared the Curzon Street Station archaeological work with communities through events and online information.	Hold events and share information as more archaeological finds are uncovered. In the second half of 2020, we'll share the community histories being collected between the West Midlands and London. We'll do this online, at events and in key locations.

\* Feedback forms are available at all our public events.

Here are just some of the things we've done in the last six months to build respectful, long-term relationships with communities.

## 🔍 Case study

### Talking about HS2 with young people

In the last six months, we've met with more young people. They'll be the future users of the railway and benefit most widely from the outcome.

We were invited by Derbyshire County Council to run a workshop for young people in Chesterfield to talk about the benefits HS2 will bring to the area and the opportunities that will be available in the future. The session gave them a chance to see and appreciate the benefits and opportunities this project will offer them, and the new choices it will give them.

We attended a Children's Activity Day in Middlewich, organised by Cheshire East Council, to listen and respond to young people's interests and expectations. The young people talked about their desire to travel more easily and the need for it to be affordable. They were also interested in finding out more about skills and job opportunities. They said it was important to them that work experience placements and apprenticeships were available for people from all backgrounds.

In Camden, we hosted work experience students who hope to become engineers. They visited Drummond Street and the Regent's Park Estate. One of them told us: "This visit provided a real eye opener for me on how engineering can transform society."

In September, we held a hands-on workshop with Year 4 and 5 students at Annesley Primary School in Nottinghamshire, focusing on science, technology, engineering, arts and maths (STEAM). HS2 will need enthusiastic people with the right skills to help operate and maintain the railway in the future, and these young people will be in their mid-20s when the new railway opens in their area.



**Technology is the way it's going. We are not sure what the careers of the future might be but obviously this is going to help them learn the skills that they need."**

Lucy Wraith, Assistant Headteacher, Annesley Primary School

## 🔍 Case study

### Archaeology dig at Curzon Street celebrated with community open days

The last 12 months have seen over 70 archaeologists excavate 6,500 sets of human remains from the burial ground where the HS2 station in Birmingham is being built at Curzon Street. We shared the archaeological findings at two successful weekend National Trust Heritage Open Days. People had the opportunity to explore inside the iconic Grade 1 listed Curzon Street Station, over 50 years since the station closed to passengers. During the Open Days, visitors learnt about the archaeological processes and saw some of the artefacts found nearby and children also took part in a small replica archaeological dig.

# Commitments continued

## 2

**We will work with communities to develop local two-way engagement and communication programmes and ensure these are accessible and tailored to local needs.**

While working with communities and our construction partners, we're developing tools and forums that are tailored to local communities. We're ensuring that these fit well with our Community Engagement Strategy.

**How we measure this:** Our progress against our Strategy and our Local Area Engagement Plans.

### Facts and figures

# 82%

of people who attended our events say we listened and responded well, compared to 78% in our last report\*.

We ran a series of feedback sessions in summer 2019 for people who lived within a mile of the line of the new railway. We heard they wanted a more visible local presence, such as regular slots in local newspapers, local signs and information in libraries. We've now started to provide more local information, including new information points between Birmingham and Crewe. You can read more about that in the case study later in this report.

### Listening and responding

You told us that you want to be kept up-to-date with information specifically relevant to your area. You also told us you want us to use a range of ways of communicating information.

In our last report we said we would	Since then we have	In 2020 we will
Continue to provide a range of ways to communicate with us and find out more – face-to-face, online, by phone or in writing. In this way, everyone can use the method that best suits them given the diverse communities we work with.	Worked with local communities to complete the set of 10 area plans. These explain the activities we're using to involve people along the line of the new railway between the West Midlands and London. Delivered 14 locally based websites along the entire line of the new railway.	Explore new ways of reaching a wider audience.
Continue to share how we've listened to you, and the changes we've made based on your feedback. This includes the consultation in summer 2019 for the section of the new railway line between Crewe and Manchester and Birmingham and Leeds (Phase 2b).	Completed a series of 13 information events to get feedback on the design of the new railway between Crewe and Manchester and Birmingham and Leeds (Phase 2b). More than 2,300 people attended the events to talk to us about proposed changes. We met with more than 100 people, who will be some of the most affected individuals, to talk in more detail. This led to a number of proposed changes to the design of the new railway.	Share how we've listened, including any changes we've made based on your feedback.

\* Feedback forms are available at all our public events.

Here are just some of the things we've done in the last six months to make two-way communication even more accessible and tailored for the local area.

### Q Case study

#### You said, we did: railway design changes following community feedback

Planning for the new railway between Crewe and Manchester and Birmingham and Leeds (Phase 2b) is at an earlier stage than the other sections between Birmingham and London (Phase One) and Birmingham and Crewe (Phase 2a). We're still working on the design of Phase 2b, so this is an important time to talk with our neighbours about any improvements. We share and discuss designs with residents and businesses to get their views and local knowledge, and then use that feedback to update the designs.

For example, we've been able to make changes such as providing temporary footbridges during construction and realigning roads to reduce the effect on nearby properties. Changes such as these show we're listening and responding.



### Q Case study

#### Employment and skills opportunities in Washwood Heath, Birmingham

In July, we held an employment and skills event in Washwood Heath, Birmingham. The planned Washwood Heath Depot will become a major employer, offering higher level paid jobs. Hosted by our construction partners, Laing Murphy (LM) and Balfour Beatty Vinci (BBV), with support from a voluntary sector organisation specialising in employment, this was an important event for the local community. People who came along said they appreciated the opportunity to understand more about potential job opportunities.



# Commitments continued



## Case study

### Keeping people informed between Birmingham and Crewe (Phase 2a)

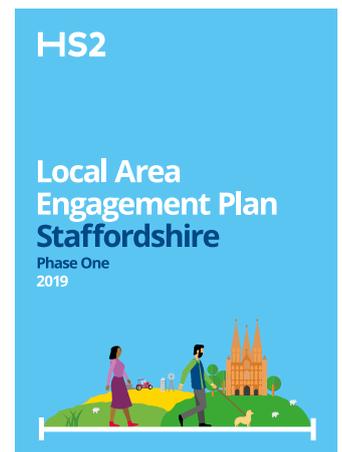
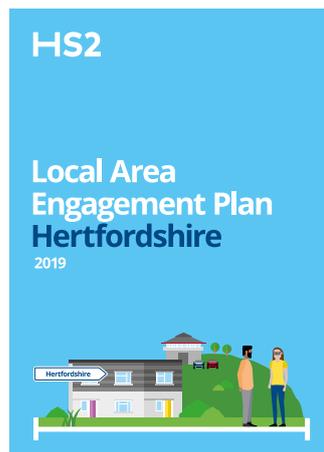
As the legislation moves through Parliament for the next stage of the railway between Birmingham and Crewe, we've set up long-term information points in 14 local venues. We recognised that these largely rural communities sometimes found it harder to get to larger events and drop-in sessions. So, we're bringing information to them so they can get the latest news in places they already visit regularly, including seven libraries, five council offices and two conference centres.

## Case study

### Local Area Engagement Plans in place between West Midlands and London

Our Community Engagement Strategy describes how we'll be a good neighbour to the communities we impact. Each community is different of course, so we tailor our approach in each area. We want to be clear about when and how we're informing, involving, consulting or responding. One way we do this is through our Local Area Engagement Plans.

We recently completed the set of 10 Local Area Engagement Plans for Phase One, between the West Midlands and London. The plans include maps, information on local works and contact points. They're available on our website, as well as each local website. Printed copies of the plans can be requested from our HS2 Helpdesk team, via Freephone: 08081 434 434, Minicom: 08081 456 472, and email: [hs2enquiries@hs2.org.uk](mailto:hs2enquiries@hs2.org.uk)



3

**We will make sure communities are made aware in advance of any activities taking place in their area.**

Our success depends on how well communities and stakeholders are informed about what’s happening in their area. We’re committed to giving you relevant and timely information about what we’re doing, using a variety of methods so you can choose a way that’s easiest and best for you.

**How do we measure this:** How well we’re informing you about the Programme.

**Facts and figures**

**211,400+**

people visited our community websites, compared to the 139,000+ from our last report. We also had more than 6,000 subscribers, compared to 4,600 in our last report.

People who attend our events have told us they sometimes have trouble finding one of our events. In 2020, we’ll improve the way we promote our events in advance, so that people know they’re happening. We’ll also promote the event on the day, so that the venue is easy to find.

**Listening and responding**

You told us that traffic and noise that could occur during construction are your biggest concerns. So, you told us you want to be kept informed and up-to-date about work in your area.

In our last report we said we would	Since then we have	In 2020 we will
Continue to give you advance notice through a range of methods.	Continued to give at least 14 days’ advance notice* to affected people to their home or business address. Shared advance notice information through our community websites so that subscribers get news alerts. We’ve also tested new types of advertising, such as through social media.	Provide home-owners and businesses with advance notice through a range of methods, including more targeted advertising on social media.
Continue to tell communities and businesses along the line of the new railway about the methods we use for sharing information, including community websites, mailouts and regular face-to-face events.	Provided you with information through a wide range of events, meetings, local websites, mailouts and information points. Some examples of these feature in this report.	Look at how we can increase the ways communities get information about HS2. We’ll look at increasing tailored options that suit people in each community.

\* Where emergency work is required, we may need to give less than 14 days’ advance notice.

## Commitments continued

Here are just some of the things we've done in the last six months to make sure you're aware of activities taking place in your area.

### Q Case study

#### All of HS2 route now covered by local websites

In December 2019, we launched new websites for the Phase 2b part of the railway line:

- HS2 Phase Two Eastern Route – Connecting Birmingham to Leeds: [www.hs2eastroute.co.uk](http://www.hs2eastroute.co.uk)
- HS2 Phase Two Western Route – Connecting Crewe to Manchester: [www.hs2westroute.co.uk](http://www.hs2westroute.co.uk)

These new sites, and the 10 existing ones, mean we now cover the whole line of the new railway. The sites are part of our broader efforts to offer information in as many ways as possible. Information on the new websites will grow over time and you can now sign up to get area-specific information alerts.

### Q Case study

#### Testing new ways to share local information

You've told us in the past that we haven't always kept you informed about forthcoming road closures. During the summer of 2019, we tested area-specific advertising for a road closure on social media to increase the ways we let people know. This was as well as our usual advertising and website notifications to see if it increased awareness – both for residents and for people travelling through the area. We did, in fact, reach a good number of people and we were also able to prioritise notices before the peak travelling and commuting hours in the early morning and afternoon. This is just one example of how we've listened to communities and tried new things in response.

### Q Case study

#### HS2 Helpdesk team go out and about for better customer service

The HS2 Helpdesk team has taken 62,000 enquiries in the last two years – and numbers will go up as our main work begins. So that we can help you properly, it's important we understand the impact the new railway will have on you. The Helpdesk team has been out regularly to get a real understanding of the local HS2 works and issues, such as diversions for early works, road improvements and the locations of key features, like the Colne Valley Viaduct. We hope this will mean you get a more personal and knowledgeable service.



**By getting to see what it will be like for people living in affected areas, we can give more detailed advice, right there and then when people contact us."**

Tom Walker, HS2 Helpdesk

### Q Case study

#### Early information ahead of ground investigations

Taking on board people's concerns about future ground investigations between Birmingham and Crewe (Phase 2a), we organised a workshop with land agents representing landowners along the line of the new railway. As works could impact landowners and rural businesses, we were keen to listen to feedback and learn from our earlier ground investigations. We were also able to explain why the work needed to be carried out, what it involved, and what we might do better. By engaging with potentially impacted people in this way, we improved our ways of working, tailoring the information we provide to specifically address local concerns.

# 4

## We will operate a Freephone Community Helpline 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

We want to give you a reliable, accessible and responsible service whenever you want to contact us and that's the aim of our Freephone Community Helpline.

**How we measure this:** How well we handle your enquiries.

### Facts and figures

#### How many people contacted us?

Our Helpdesk team is seeing a steady increase in enquiries as the Project gains pace and the impact becomes more visible to communities. Numbers are also going up as more people get to know they can call the Helpdesk with questions.

# 17,811

enquiries between July and December 2019 and 35,358 for the year.

This compares to

# 14,765

for the same period in 2018 and 26,697 for the full 2018 year.

Overall, there was a

# 32%

year-on-year increase of enquiries in 2019 compared to 2018.

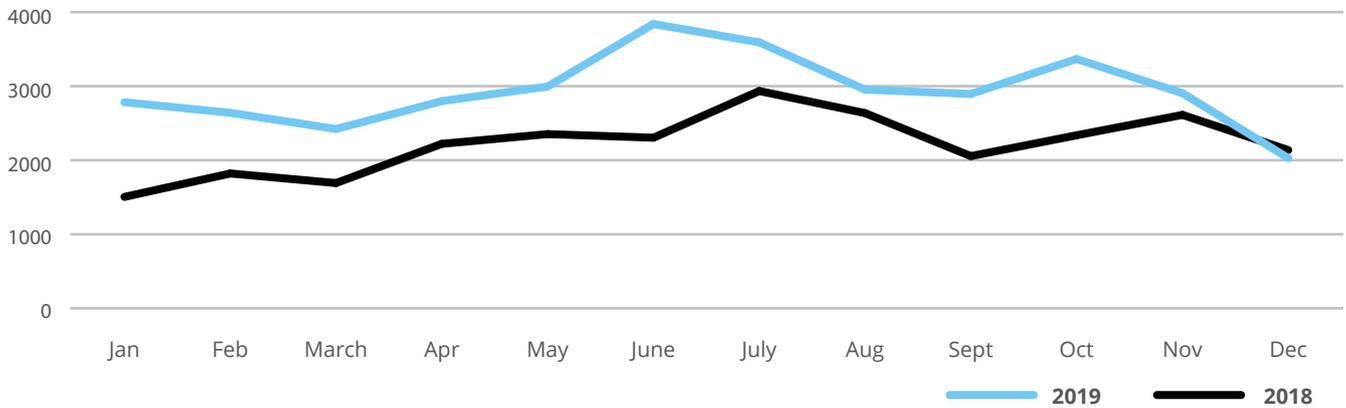
# 64%

of enquiries were about land and property.



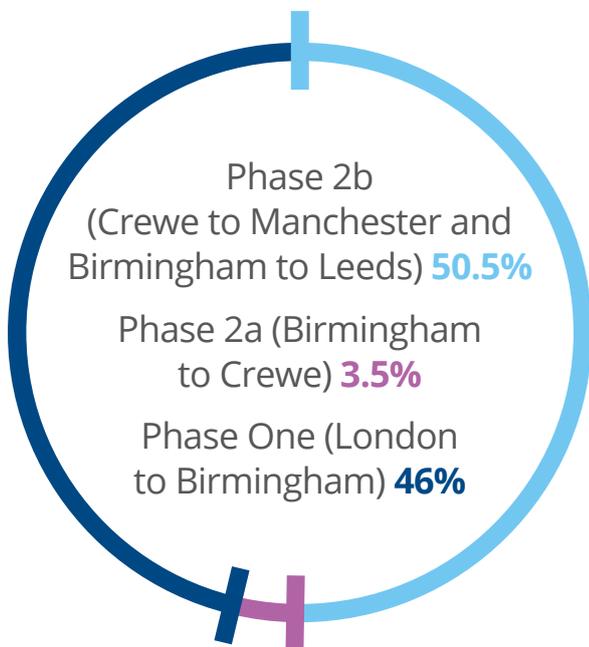
# Commitments continued

## Total Helpdesk (phone and email) contacts by month (January to December 2019)



### Why are people contacting us?

Between July and December 2019, the part of the Project that generated the most enquiries was Phase 2b – 50.5% of all contacts were about this part of the Project.



### How did people choose to contact us?

You can contact our Helpdesk team by Freephone, Minicom, email or Freepost.

In 2019, all of the contacts we received were by Freephone or email.

**47%**

of people called us on our Freephone number.

**53%**

of people opted for email.

We've seen a shift towards our Freephone number compared to 2018, when 41% of people called us and 59% of people used email.

## Awareness of the Helpdesk service

64% of people attending HS2 events during July to December 2019 were aware of the HS2 Helpdesk service\*, compared to 51% at the start of the year and 54% at the end of June 2019. In December alone, 81% of people said they were aware of the Helpdesk service. This suggests the campaign we ran during 2019 is already having an impact.

We're happy with the improvement, but we'll continue to promote the Helpdesk through our events. We're also looking at other ways to promote the service.



**There will be times when lots of enquiries come in at once and people may be asked to wait longer than we would like. With our new call-back function and position-in-queue messaging system, we can let people know we're busy and give them an option to avoid their having to wait."**

Nathaniel Fuller, Community Engagement Manager (HS2 Helpdesk)

## Listening and responding

You have told us you want us to improve the customer service from our Helpdesk. You also told us we need to promote awareness of the Helpdesk more widely.

In our last report we said we would	Since then we have	In 2020 we will
Offer a new call-back scheme so that you don't have to wait on hold during our busiest periods. We'll return your call as soon as a member of the team is available.	Launched the automated call-back function.	Explore further ways to enhance the stakeholder experience when they contact us, acting on feedback where appropriate.
Measure the quality of our Helpdesk service using a range of tools.	Created an independent feedback survey for people contacting the Helpdesk.	

## What sort of service can you expect?

Between July and December 2019:

**98%**

of enquiries were resolved in 20 working days.

**60%**

of enquiries were resolved at first point of contact.

**40%**

of enquiries needed a follow-up.

\* Feedback forms are available at all our public events.

# Commitments continued

## 5

### We will make health and safety a priority for communities and our workforce.

HS2 is an exciting project, but one that will affect communities in many ways. We don't underestimate that impact, nor our responsibility to minimise disruption and keep everyone who lives and works in those communities safe and secure.

**How we measure this:** How well we demonstrate that the health and safety of staff and communities is a priority for us.

### Facts and figures

98%

of children rated the **Playing it Safe workshop, which teaches children through an interactive workshop how to ensure they are safe living or going to school near construction sites, as good or excellent, compared to 97% in our last report\***.

After the workshop

98%

of children said they understood more about **why construction sites are dangerous places, compared to 99% in our last report\***.

### Listening and responding

You told us you really liked the Playing it Safe workshops and the Growing Spaces healthy eating programme. We're looking at how we can expand these projects so more people can benefit.

In our last report we said we would	Since then we have	In 2020 we will
Continue to work with schools to educate children about safety if they live close to the construction of the new railway.	Held Playing it Safe performances for more than 600 students from July to December 2019.	Take the Playing it Safe programme to schools along the line of the new railway.
Continue to expand the Growing Spaces project so as many children and communities as possible can benefit.	Brought Growing Spaces to schools and community venues between the West Midlands and London, between July and December 2019.	Widen the Growing Spaces project to also include locations along the line of the new railway between Birmingham and Crewe.

\* Children and teachers are invited to complete a feedback form after every performance.

Here are just some of the things we've done in the last six months to make health and safety a priority for our neighbours.

### 🔍 Case study

#### Providing tailored support for everyone

Mental health and counselling specialists have trained all of our Engagement team, so they can support our area teams in communicating and sharing information with people more effectively. In late 2019, we also began sharing our activities with our construction partners, building on our own staff training.

Feedback has been very positive. 90% of people who took part said they'd highly recommend the course to other staff and 100% said they'd learned something that they'd use when working with the community.

We'll continue to work with our partners to ensure everyone gets the same level of support from anyone working on the Project. This is part of our commitment to ensure our services are accessible to everyone.

### 🔍 Case study

#### Playing it Safe reaches 100 and beyond

The Playing it Safe school safety workshop project is one example of how we've listened to and responded to people's needs. Arc Theatre put on the first performance in January 2018. Playing it Safe recently reached a major milestone with 111 performances at 71 schools, reaching more than 5,650 students.



### 🔍 Case study

#### Growing Spaces healthy eating programme now in community locations

Growing Spaces teaches the importance of healthy living and eating and the science of growing your own fresh produce. Students work with their teachers and our team to build mini-allotments, vegetable growing boxes, and create new planted areas.

As well as the 26 schools that have taken part, Growing Spaces has now been extended to include community locations. Community groups have been involved in designing and building raised garden beds at Tithe Lodge in Southam, Westbury Village Hall in Brackley and at the Epilepsy Society at Chalfont St Peter.



# Commitments continued

## 6

**We will respect the wellbeing of communities, minimising disruption to their lives with local mitigation plans and activities, ensuring we meet the standards set out in the Code of Construction Practice.**

We recognise that construction causes disruption to communities. This commitment considers how communities and stakeholders can influence how we build the railway. How we and our contractors behave is as important to the railway's success as completing the Project on time and ensuring value for money for taxpayers.

**How we measure this:** How well we show we're continually looking to minimise the impact of the programme.

### Listening and responding

You have told us that you want us to minimise disruption as far as possible when we're working close to homes.

In our last report we said we would	Since then we have	In 2020 we will
Listen to your concerns about disruption, finding solutions wherever we can.	Held events and meetings, along with our contractor partners, to understand people's concerns and work together to find solutions where we can.	Continue to look at ways we can mitigate the impacts of the railway.
Offer communities, local councils and MPs the chance to visit construction sites to better understand the work taking place.	Arranged site visits for communities and stakeholders to share our work and provide a chance to ask questions about the mitigation actions we're taking. We also ran sessions for MPs and their staff.	Offer communities, local councils and MPs the chance to visit construction sites to better understand the work taking place and ask questions.

Here are just some of the things we've done in the last six months to minimise disruption.

### 🔍 Case study

#### Listening to communities about the Colne Valley Viaduct

Progress on the Colne Valley Viaduct design reached a milestone in August 2019. During the previous 18 months, we'd worked closely with the local community around Colne Valley. We listened to what people had to say, and we changed our design plans to take into account concerns about the potential impacts.

For example, we added a walkway so people could walk around the reservoir and we worked with the Canal and River Trust to provide continuous access along the Grand Union Canal. We also reduced the impact on local roads by using construction machines that can move 4,000 lorries-worth of concrete above the valley and planned a new haulage road.



### 🔍 Case study

#### Breakfast event for businesses in Manchester

In October, we held a drop-in breakfast event for directly affected businesses around Manchester Piccadilly station. The businesses included scrapyards, warehouses, car garages and boxing clubs. Because these are run by busy people, we needed to do something at different times of the day to make it easier for them to attend. We held a business breakfast event to try not to disrupt their working day, and the team emailed, phoned and called round in person to build interest. The event was a success and businesses were able to find out about timescales and practical next steps.

### 🔍 Case study

#### Parish councils visit ground investigations between West Midlands and Crewe

We invited a number of parish councils affected by the route from the West Midlands to Crewe to visit our ground investigation sites to see what happens and learn how this important work will help us build the railway.

In October, for example, we hosted a visit for councillors from the newly formed Yarnfield and Cold Meece Parish Council. The parish will be affected by the major works near Stone, and councillors were keen to get some first-hand knowledge of how we carry out our ground investigations.

These visits help give councillors a deeper understanding of the Project and a chance to meet our contractor partners. They also give us the chance to discuss options for improving our links with communities.

# Commitments continued



## Case study

### MP staff see how we're being good neighbours

In August, we hosted a visit for staff working for MPs along the line of the new railway between the West Midlands and London (Phase One). The visit included a briefing and site tour of Euston, with the support of our contractor partner Costain Skanska Joint Venture. MPs' staff are regularly asked about HS2 by constituents, so we wanted to help them understand more about the Project and how we can work together to address local concerns.

We also hosted a further briefing and site visit for MPs' staff in the West Midlands. The visit included site tours of Curzon Street, Old Curzon Street Station and Interchange. With the help of our contractor partner Laing Murphy, we explained the work we're doing to reduce the impact on local roads and businesses.

## Case study

### Partnering with Derbyshire MP

During August, we worked with North East Derbyshire MP Lee Rowley on an information event for his constituents in and around Staveley. We were joined by around 80 people, as well as district councillors and representatives from the Chesterfield Canal Trust.

There were questions and discussion on topics including the design of the depot spur, environmental impacts, property support schemes and the current government review. The event gave us a chance to explain the Project and hear people's views, which will help us in designing how we involve the community in the future.



**Thank you very much again for being willing to support last night. I'm grateful for you being willing to help."**

Lee Rowley, MP

7

**We will leave a positive and sustainable legacy for the communities in which we operate.**

We know building the railway will cause disruption for communities. It's important, though, that we also focus on the positive benefits for local people and businesses in a way that sets a new standard for major infrastructure projects. This commitment considers how benefits come about through our investment programmes.

**How we measure this:** What long-term benefits our investment programme is delivering.

**Facts and figures**

**£4.65m**

**Since March 2017 £4.65m has been awarded to 88 local projects through our Community and Environment Fund and the Business and Local Economy Fund along the line of the new railway between Birmingham and London. £940,000 of this has been allocated since our last report.**

In the second half of 2019, we targeted areas that hadn't submitted many applications. We helped them connect them with Groundwork UK, who deliver the grants programme for HS2. As a result, we saw an increase in applications, and awarded projects in new areas such as Tamworth and Old Oak.

**Listening and responding**

You have told us that you are not always aware of how HS2 is making a positive difference to local areas, or how it is delivering positive benefits more widely. Leaving a positive legacy is critical to the success of the Project.

In our last report we said we would	Since then we have	In 2020 we will
Work with local businesses to let them know more about the benefits to the area, and to report on who we're involving.	Continued to work with businesses through our local business campaign. Partnered with organisations to hold events and share local business opportunities.	Work with existing and new local businesses to share the results of this work.
Promote funding opportunities for affected communities, particularly in those areas yet to benefit from funding. We want to ensure that benefits are shared along the line of the new railway.	Clearly shown the spread of funded projects through a projects map at: <a href="http://www.hs2funds.org.uk">www.hs2funds.org.uk</a> We've also continued to promote funding opportunities along the line of the new railway between Birmingham and London (Phase One).	Identify areas yet to benefit from funding to promote the Community and Environment Fund and Business and Local Economy Fund programmes to ensure people are aware of the opportunities available. Promote the funds available for the route between Birmingham and Crewe (Phase 2a) after Royal Assent of the Phase 2a Bill. Future announcements will be made through <a href="http://www.hs2funds.org.uk/">www.hs2funds.org.uk/</a> and <a href="http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/high-speed-two-limited">www.gov.uk/government/organisations/high-speed-two-limited</a>

# Commitments continued

Here are just some of the things we've done in the last six months to bring positive benefits for our neighbours.

## 🔍 Case study

### £4.65 million awarded to community and business groups

£4.65 million has now been awarded to 88 community and business groups along the new railway line between Birmingham and London (Phase One) from the Community and Environment Fund and Business and Local Economy Fund.

**Here are a few examples of projects completed in 2019:**



Project Pigsty at The Woodhouse Farm by the Woodhouse Farm and Garden Community Investment Corporation in Staffordshire (£10,000).



Renovation of a BMX Track at Whittington Village by the Whittington and Fisherwick Parish Council in Staffordshire (£9,999).



Wendover Woods Recreation Development – Visitor Hub by the Forest Enterprise England in Buckinghamshire (£450,000).



Quinton Windmill Restoration Project by the Quinton Parish Council in Buckinghamshire (£10,000).



### Q Case study

#### Over £2.4 million allocated from the Camden Fund

The £3.15 million Camden Fund supports Camden communities during the construction of the railway. Over £2.4m has been allocated from the Camden Fund to date. One example from the last six months is the Action Youth Boxing Intervention Community Investment Corporation, which supports at-risk young people in Camden to stay enrolled and engaged in school. The Change Please Foundation also received funding to support four retail sites in Camden that will be used to train homeless people to be baristas and then help run either a coffee shop or mobile coffee outlet. You can see more details at: [www.camdenfunding.org.uk/thecamdenfund/](http://www.camdenfunding.org.uk/thecamdenfund/)



Upcycling our community by Upcycle Birmingham Community Interest Company in the West Midlands (£70,750).



Greengage by the Castlehaven Community Association in London (£73,591).

# Commitments continued



**We've gained invaluable knowledge about EDI, sustainability and all the processes that are valuable to business and how it can drive efficiency and save us time and money."**

Natalie Bews, Concept Engineering Consultants Ltd (Camden event speaker).

## Case study

### HS2 on-board with local business

We're working closely with business organisations, our contractors and local communities to bring about opportunities for local businesses to benefit. Through our specialist events, we give businesses the information they need to make the most of the opportunities HS2 offers in their area.

Nearly 200 businesses have got involved in our events over the last six months. We started with an event in Hertfordshire, working with Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Growth Hub to invite local businesses to talk to us and our local construction partner Align.

For our final event of 2019, we partnered with Camden Council and Skanska Costain STRABAG Railways to bring Camden-based businesses together. Businesses heard about the potential benefits, and we shared knowledge to help them get other work in the future. People were positive about the session, saying they now had the information they needed to get more involved in HS2.



Many different types of local businesses are already getting involved and benefitting from HS2 working in their area.



**HS2 brings many benefits to Crewe but its construction will be disruptive to some communities. It's great that HS2 are looking to work with local businesses, to bring some of the opportunities and benefits to these communities."**

Ken Lawton, Managing Director at Alpha Omega Securities Ltd, which is working for HS2 contractors Balfour Beatty Vinci joint venture, providing 24-hour security for HS2 ground investigation sites across Cheshire. Around 20 staff are being employed for this work.



**Working on a project like HS2 is really important for us. The more access to work we can get, the more good we can do."**

Kirsty Palmer, Operations Manager at Jericho, a social enterprise in Birmingham. They're working with one of our subcontractors to remove, reuse and recycle the waste wood from site demolitions, much of it within the local community.



**The work we are carrying out for HS2 has given us the opportunity to showcase our expertise on a huge scale. It's exciting to work on such a high-profile, nationally recognised project. We are proud to play our part."**

Stephen Fisher, Business Development Manager at Total Reclaims Demolition, based in Nottingham, who led on the demolition and reclamation at the former Network Rail yard in Birmingham. The work they did for HS2 meant they were able to hire more people.

## Q Case study

### HS2 staff volunteer on community projects

Staff at HS2 Ltd, as well as our contractor partners, take part in volunteer days as part of our corporate social responsibility. Here are just a few examples of how our volunteer efforts, and those of our contractor partners, have helped communities along the line of the new railway.

## Q Case study

### Supporting SIFA in Birmingham

Some of our team volunteered at Birmingham-based SIFA Fireside for a day. SIFA is a leading charity, enabling homeless and vulnerable people to take control, paving the way for healthier and more fulfilling lives. The team did a variety of tasks, including sorting and giving out clothes, serving food, helping in the kitchen and working on reception.

## Q Case study

### Acorn to Oak Woodland Learning Centre

As part of our community investment work, HS2 Ltd and Fusion recently carried out work at the Acorn to Oak Woodland Learning Centre in Boddington, a Forest School and community space used by the local primary school, Brownies and Scout groups. The group was asked to clear the brambles to make a clearing for a shelter, providing a new space for the children to use.



**I just wanted to say a huge thank you for sending in the troops on Thursday. What an amazing group of people. They worked so hard and the area looks amazing. This was so heart-warming and meant so much to my little boy and myself. It just shows that they all had a genuine interest in the community."**

Kate, community member at Forest School, Boddington

## Q Case study

### Groundwork support in Leeds

Our teams were also rolling up their sleeves and getting their hands dirty in Leeds, working to clear a neglected area as part of the wider regeneration of the South Bank area of the city. The volunteers spent their day working hard to cut back overgrown vegetation and clear the riverside paths of litter. They also worked with a ranger to identify and record plants and animals on-site. The day gave something back to the city and helped us understand this important area better.

## Q Case study

### Community support in Warwickshire

Our contractor partners LM, with the support of BBV and HS2 Ltd, recently worked together to give something back to the community in Middleton, Warwickshire. A day of volunteering in the area saw us remove vegetation from an overgrown area to create a usable clearing.



**It is really nice not to be writing to you with some concern or criticism about HS2, but this time to say a big thank you. You pulled together a great bunch of guys who put a lot of hard work into helping remove the Himalayan Balsam. I'm not sure what they expected but they all know about the stuff now...Please pass on my thanks to everyone."**

Tony Harris, Middleton resident

# Commitments continued

## 8

**We will respond to questions and complaints quickly and efficiently, with an acknowledgement within two working days, and responding within a maximum of 20 working days if we cannot answer the query straight away.**

How well we handle community and stakeholder enquiries and complaints is an important aspect of our aspiration to be a good neighbour.

**How we measure this:** How well we handle your complaint.

### Facts and figures

#### How many people complained?

We received 332 complaints between July and December 2019, compared with 265 at the same point in 2018. This is an increase of 25% which is to be expected as the construction of the railway becomes increasingly real for those living along the line between Birmingham and London (Phase One).

#### Why did people complain?

Over 82% of all complaints from July and December 2019 related to early preparation works for building the railway between Birmingham and London (Phase One). Noise and vibration were the main complaints, followed by traffic and transport issues. If you have concerns about these issues, you can contact our Helpdesk team all day, every day on: 08081 434 434.

### Complaints totals

#### Complaints July to December 2019

	Phase One	Phase 2a	Phase 2b	Route-wide	Total
<b>Programme and Delivery</b>	272	4	1	1	278
<b>Land and Property</b>	11	2	6	0	19
<b>Community Engagement</b>	28	0	5	1	34
<b>Corporate Services</b>	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Health, Safety and Security</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Sixth month total July to December 2019</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>332</b>
<b>Annual total 2019</b>	<b>575</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>627</b>
<b>Annual total 2018</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>447</b>

## How quickly did we resolve complaints?

Between July and December 2019

# 95%

of 332 HS2 complaints were resolved within 20 working days, compared to 96% of 295 complaints in the first half of the year.

# 99%

of HS2 complaints were concluded at the first stage of the complaints process, the same as for the first half of the year.

## Our complaints process in more detail

You can see the complaints procedure at: [www.hs2.org.uk/how-to-complain](http://www.hs2.org.uk/how-to-complain)



## How did we compare to last year?

In 2019, we had 627 complaints. Of these, 95% were resolved within 20 working days, compared to 90% of 447 complaints in 2018.

99% of HS2 complaints were concluded at the first stage of the complaints process in 2019, compared to 92% in 2018.

## Listening and responding

We'll do all we can to ensure that you don't have cause to complain. But, when you do need to complain, we want to make the process clear, fair, accessible and efficient.

In our last report we said we would	Since then we have	In 2020 we will
Provide an accessible and responsive complaints service, aiming to continue to resolve complaints within 20 working days, and at the first stage of the complaints process.	Provided an accessible and responsive complaints service, resolving 95% of complaints within 20 working days, and concluding 99% of complaints at the first stage of the process.	Work to resolve all complaints within 20 working days, and at the first stage of the complaints process.

# Commitments continued

## 9

**We will promote awareness of all our property schemes so that anyone who may be eligible has all the information they need and is aware of the support available to them.**

People located near the approved or proposed line of the new railway may have access to a range of our property assistance schemes. When this is the case, we want them to be able to find the information they need quickly and easily.

**How we measure this:** We will provide clear and up-to-date information about our property schemes.

### Finding out about our property schemes

Communities and businesses near the approved or proposed lines have access to the range of property schemes. Information about these schemes, answers to frequently-asked questions and details of the application process have been made widely available at events, meetings, in our literature and online at: [www.hs2.org.uk](http://www.hs2.org.uk)

### Listening and responding

You told us we still have more to do to promote awareness of the property schemes. We've listened to your feedback and updated our property scheme booklets.

Our Helpdesk team can answer any of your questions about our property schemes. They're available all day, every day on: 08081 434 434.

### Facts and figures

Since their launch, we've had and accepted the following numbers of applications to the discretionary property schemes:

Discretionary property schemes from launch to 31 December 2019	No. of applications	No. accepted
Rural Support Zone	743	574
Homeowner Payment Zone	881	764
Need to Sell	879	316*

In our last report we said we would	Since then we have	In 2020 we will
Continue to review the frequency and tone of our communications to ensure they're as accessible as possible.	Reviewed our printed material to make it easier to read.	Review our property scheme web information so it matches the Plain English improvements we've made to our printed materials.
Ensure key Land and Property documents are written in Plain English and receive Crystal Mark accreditation.	Received Crystal Mark accreditation for Plain English for our property scheme documents.	

\* The Need to Sell scheme is available for people that need to sell their property within the next three years. The time requirement means there are more reapplied applications than the other schemes, such as for properties where the project isn't going to have an impact within the next three years.

Here are just some of the things we've done in the last six months to improve how we provide information about our property schemes.

## Q Case study

### Crystal Mark for Property Schemes

Earlier this year, the Residents' Commissioner recommended we should aim for the Crystal Mark for Plain English on our property scheme guidance booklets. This is something we'd already done for the HS2 complaints booklet.

We were happy to do this and, by the end of the year, we'd achieved Crystal Mark accreditation for the booklets and all key property documents.

We get a lot of enquiries about our property schemes, so making the process clearer and more accessible is important, both for those applying and those living close to the line of the new railway. Our property schemes can be quite challenging and so we're always working to make it easier for people to understand them and make informed choices.

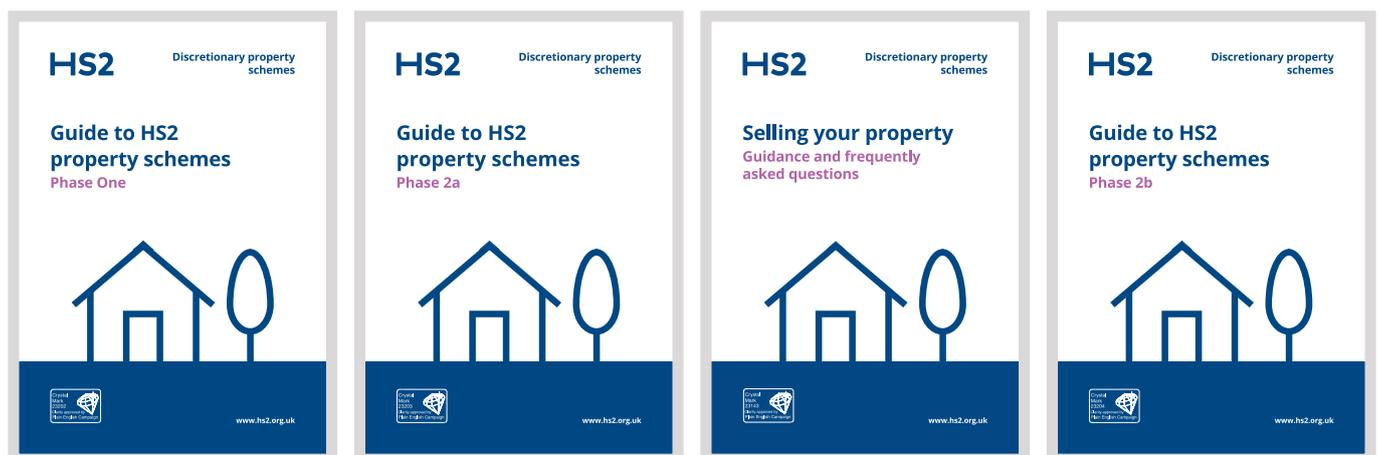
We're also reviewing our online information to make sure it's accessible and easy-to-read. We aim to get this done by summer 2020.

## Q Case study

### Improving how people experience the property process

HS2 involves the largest land and property buying programme in 70 years. Since 2015/16, we've bought more than 30.5 square kilometres of land and more than 1,280 properties. We want anyone affected by HS2 to get clear, timely and reliable information.

A key focus for us in the last six months has been on improving the experience for people dealing with us on property matters. This has meant looking more closely at requests for land made by HS2 Ltd teams and our contractor partners so that we can reduce the impact on property owners, and help us communicate more clearly and simply with them. We recognise this was an area where we needed to improve, and this is something we've done for the benefit of people and businesses dealing with us.



# Commitments continued

## 10

### We will display the Residents' Commissioner's and Construction Commissioner's contact details on all relevant materials, along with the HS2 Helpline information and complaints procedure.

This commitment is about making information about the role and contact details of the commissioners more accessible. We ensure that the commissioners' contact details are available at all public events, and are also advertised on our website, local community websites and all public materials.

**How we measure this:** We will learn from the independent reports provided by both the Residents' and Construction Commissioners.

### Listening and responding

We recognise that people need clear information about how to get in contact with us, and how to access the range of information they will need throughout the course of the Project.

In our last report we said we would	Since then we have	In 2020 we will
Learn from commissioners' recommendations and reports.	Considered the reports from the commissioners and made improvements, such as achieving the Crystal Mark accreditation for Plain English on our property scheme guidance and improving communications for the Breakspear Road closure in Hillingdon.	Review and consider how we can learn from the commissioners' reports and include this in our progress reports.
Publish commissioner contact details widely and involve both commissioners in site and community visits.	Involved the commissioners in our work with communities and site visits to ensure they understand the impact on local communities and hear residents' feedback. We've included their contact details on our materials.	Involve both commissioners in activities so that they can hear views on the ground as often as possible. Continue to widely publish commissioner contact details.

## More about the Residents' Commissioner – Deborah Fazan



## More about the Residents' Commissioner – Deborah Fazan

The Residents' Commissioner oversees and monitors our commitments to you. The Commissioner published 12 reports up to the end of December 2019. You can read her reports and our responses at: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-ltd-residents-commissioner](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-ltd-residents-commissioner)

The independent Residents' Commissioner holds us accountable to the commitments made in our Residents' Charter. Deborah regularly meets with our Chairman to talk about emerging trends and concerns.

You can email the Residents' Commissioner at: [residentscommissioner@hs2.org.uk](mailto:residentscommissioner@hs2.org.uk)

You can see the Residents' Charter at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-residents-charter](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-residents-charter)

## Learning from the independent reports of the Residents' Commissioner

The Residents' Commissioner released her latest report in October 2019. It included 13 recommendations. A number of these recommendations related to how people experience the property schemes. In response, we achieved the Crystal Mark for Plain English on our property scheme guidance material (as explained in the previous section). We're also reviewing our property scheme web pages, holding extra meetings and one-to-one sessions with directly affected property owners and have started a training programme for Land and Property staff.

## More about the Construction Commissioner – Sir Mark Worthington



The Construction Commissioner regularly meets our Chief Executive Officer to raise any concerns or emerging trends across the Project. He has published 10 reports so far.

The Construction Commissioner is independent and monitors the way we manage and respond to construction complaints. He mediates any unresolved construction disputes between us and individuals or organisations. He also advises people about how to make a complaint about construction.

You can contact the Construction Commissioner at: [complaints@hs2-cc.org.uk](mailto:complaints@hs2-cc.org.uk)

## Learning from the independent reports of the Construction Commissioner

The Construction Commissioner released his latest report in September 2019. It had three recommendations for us. One of the main recommendations was to encourage people to take up the offer of HS2's noise insulation programme. In response, we strengthened our promotion of the scheme and, as a result, more residents have taken it up.

We are committed to keeping you informed about work on HS2. This includes ensuring you know what to expect and when to expect it, as well as how we can help.

## Residents' Charter and Commissioner

The Residents' Charter is our promise to communicate as clearly as we possibly can with people who live along or near the HS2 route. [www.gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-residents-charter](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-residents-charter)

We also have an independent Residents' Commissioner whose job is to make sure we keep to the promises we make in the Charter and to keep it under constant review. Find reports at: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-ltd-residents-commissioner](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-ltd-residents-commissioner)

You can contact the Commissioner at: [residentscommissioner@hs2.org.uk](mailto:residentscommissioner@hs2.org.uk)

## Construction Commissioner

The Construction Commissioner's role is to mediate and monitor the way in which HS2 Ltd manages and responds to construction complaints. You can contact the Construction Commissioner at: [complaints@hs2-cc.org.uk](mailto:complaints@hs2-cc.org.uk)

## Property and compensation

You can find out all about HS2 and properties along the line of route by visiting: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-property](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-property)

Find out if you're eligible for compensation at: [www.gov.uk/claim-compensation-if-affected-by-hs2](http://www.gov.uk/claim-compensation-if-affected-by-hs2)

## Holding us to account

If you are unhappy for any reason, you can make a complaint by contacting our HS2 Helpdesk team. For more details on our complaints process, please visit our website: [www.hs2.org.uk/how-to-complain](http://www.hs2.org.uk/how-to-complain)

## Contact us

Our HS2 Helpdesk team are available all day, every day. You can contact them via:

 Freephone **08081 434 434**

 Minicom **08081 456 472**

@ Email **[hs2enquiries@hs2.org.uk](mailto:hs2enquiries@hs2.org.uk)**

Write to

**FREEPOST  
HS2 Community Engagement**

Website **[www.hs2.org.uk](http://www.hs2.org.uk)**

To keep up to date with what is happening in your area, visit:

**[www.hs2inyourarea.co.uk](http://www.hs2inyourarea.co.uk)**

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