

HS2

Aspiring to be a good neighbour **Our progress**

January to June 2020





Department for Transport

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Foreword

Our ambitious programme is now at a crucial point; we need to reflect on and learn from the experience of the last few months.

At the front of everyone's mind this last year has been the impact of COVID-19 on society and the economy. It has tested us in many ways at HS2 Ltd, not least in how we engage with our communities. Our first priority has been to ensure the safety and wellbeing of both the people working on site and those in the community who are nearby. We have been able to operate the overwhelming majority of our sites safely and in line with the Government's guidance, meaning HS2 has continued to make clear progress in building the railway over the past year. However, one consequence has been the need for us to put on hold all face-to-face events and meetings during lockdown, in line with continuing social distancing. As a result, we have had to adapt the way we work with local residents to put in place new and alternative ways of communicating, so questions can still be answered and concerns still addressed.

Our Helpdesk has continued to operate all day, every day to respond to an increased level of enquiries. Our local engagement teams are still in place and they continue in their efforts to engage and support the community as our construction programme is delivered. I am proud of how the organisation has responded to the engagement challenge, but we know there are still more areas in which we can improve. Our Independent Commissioners, Debbie Fazan and Sir Mark Worthington, continue to challenge us and our supply chain in this regard, and I am personally grateful for their continued hard work and support.

With the official start of our Main Works construction, HS2 will become an ever-increasing reality and presence in the community. As everyone is spending more time at home, many communities we impact will be more conscious of our presence as a result. That is why our responsibility is to minimise the impact we have on the lives of people who live on and around the route and to continue to engage in a sensitive, respectful and transparent manner. My challenge to the organisation and our contractors is to start to better understand, shape and improve a positive community experience of HS2. We must continue to listen to the feedback we receive in order to learn and adjust our approach, something I know communities value greatly. The HS2 Minister, Andrew Stephenson MP, has also played an important role in supporting the organisation to better engage and respond to feedback from MPs on the line of route over the past year. Quite rightly, the Minister has set out the Government's expectations that we deliver HS2 in a way that is as considerate as possible of those disrupted by the project. His Land and Property Review, published in November, set out a number of proposals which we will be implementing in the coming months, to improve both the process and the experience for those who may face losing their homes or relocating their businesses.

Foreword continued

Our focus for the year ahead will be to make clear progress with the civil engineering programme for Phase One. Earthworks and tunnelling will begin in earnest, along with new permanent structures being put in place, like bridges and roads. Alongside this we will be advancing Phase 2a through its final stages in Parliament so that we can then start construction of the route to Crewe as soon as we can, helping to bring the benefits of HS2 to the North West sooner. Crucial rolling stock contracts will be awarded within the next year, along with major contracts for the West Midlands stations at Curzon Street. Each contract will create thousands of opportunities for businesses around the country to get involved in the delivery of HS2, helping to support jobs and boost many small and medium-sized enterprises in an uncertain time.

The economic impacts of COVID-19 have demonstrated why we need to continue to push for investment in the regions outside London. The Government has been clear that HS2 has a pivotal role to play in helping to secure Britain's economic recovery after COVID-19 – the drive to rebuild our economy and divert much needed investment and growth into towns and cities in the Midlands and the North will never be greater. Long after the health risks of the pandemic have passed, which may still be some time, we will all need the links that connect the major cities of our country and provide opportunities for regeneration, jobs, and growth.

We are looking forward to returning to face-to-face engagement with people in communities when the time is right, but until then I encourage everyone to use the range of channels of engagement available, to let us know how we are doing and to let us know if there is more we can do as we aspire to be better neighbours to those of you impacted by the construction of the new railway.

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



What you'll find in this document

The journey so far	3
Community Engagement at a glance January to June 2020	4
Progress reports on our Community Commitments	5–36

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, describes our desired behaviours and provides clarity on our engagement methods. It also sets out our 10 commitments that describe our aspiration to be a good neighbour every day.

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

January to June of this year were, of course, dominated by the impact of Covid-19 on communities, stakeholders, and our construction partners.

The safety of the communities in which we are working, and our workforce, has been our key priority during this unprecedented time. We have been aware that communities were concerned about the impact of construction activity continuing in their local areas, and we have worked hard to demonstrate HS2 sites were compliant with Government guidance on construction.

Throughout this period, we kept our Helpdesk fully operational all day, every day, with no reduction in service. The Helpdesk continued to be the first port of call for all questions and concerns about the project.

We also kept communities informed through our HS2 community websites, and through regular alerts to our subscribers. We also issued newsletters and maildrops, and continued engagement with local community groups through new and improved virtual formats.

These enhanced engagement tools and digital channels helped us continue conversations with communities and stakeholders as well as extend our reach. We also introduced webinar programmes to share our archaeology findings, and to speak to local businesses about getting involved in the benefits and opportunities the project will bring.

Throughout this unprecedented time, we have continued to hear that despite the changes in the channels and

methods we are using to engage communities and stakeholders, the quality of our information is good and we are listening and responding. However, we have also heard that, on occasions, not all communities are seeing positive benefits or behaviours. We need to work even harder to embed the behaviours set out in the community engagement strategy to improve the presence felt in those communities.

Overall, despite the challenges of engaging during the pandemic we have continued to reach communities and stakeholders during this six-month period, and we have maintained a two-way dialogue. In the first half of the year we have seen 6,150 people at over 400 engagement activities. We have taken over 18,000 enquiries on our Helpdesk, and resolved nearly 800 complaints. Our community websites now have almost 8,000 subscribers who receive regular alerts and information from us.

The next steps

Looking forward to the remainder of 2020, we recognise there is still more we need to do so that all our neighbours can see these positive behaviours in action. There is also more we need to do to keep communities informed as the programme of construction intensifies.

We will also be continuing to adapt to the impact of Covid-19. The digital and virtual channels we use will be further developed and enhanced, so that we can reach as many people as possible. This includes both designing a formal consultation programme for the next stage of design for Phase 2b and preparing communities for the next stage of delivery should Phase 2a receive Royal Assent by the end of the year.

We will continue to listen and adapt how we are delivering to ensure we are meeting our aspiration to be a good neighbour every single day.

Julie King

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



Community Engagement at a glance

Cumulative figures from January 2018 to June 2020

These figures below are from the first two and a half years of our community engagement reporting (January 2018 to June 2020). The case studies in this report contain detailed figures from the six months covered by this report.

80,378

Helpdesk enquiries

96%

complaints resolved within
20 working days or fewer

100%

of the **782** complaints received in the first
6 months of 2020 concluded at the first stage
of the review process (compared to **99%** of the
627 complaints received in the whole of 2019)

Over £7.14m

of funding awarded to **118*** Community &
Environment Fund and Business & Local Economy
Fund projects along the line of the new railway
between London and the West Midlands

* These figures show the total amount awarded between March 2017, when the Community & Environment and Business & Local Economy funds for Phase One first opened, and 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.

65,550

people attended over **4,270** engagement
activities, including meetings, drop-ins and events
along the whole line of the new railway

6,700+

pupils attended **126** construction safety
workshops at **81** schools along the line of the new
railway between London and Birmingham

293,100+

people visited the **14** local community websites
for Phase One and Phase Two, and over **7,800**
subscribed to the sites since their launch



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 HS2 rail network at: www.hs2.org.uk/where/route-map

Commitments

1

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.

This commitment looks at how well our staff and contractors understand and follow our Community Engagement Strategy. As the project gains pace and more partners and contractors come on board, we want to make sure all our behaviour is in line with this Strategy.

How we check we're meeting this commitment:

Evidence that our staff and contractor partners understand and are following our Strategy.

Facts and figures

80%

of people attending our events say the quality of the information they receive is good, compared to 79% in our last report*.

15%

of people attending our events still say HS2 is making a positive difference to their area – no change since the last report.

We know we still have a long way to go for communities to see the benefits of the project. We appreciate communities are experiencing more disruption as the project gains pace in 2020 and we will do all we can to minimise the impact of these disruptions.



Public engagement event.

* Feedback forms are available at all our public events, including virtual ones.

Commitments continued

Listening and responding

You have told us that you want to be able to talk to us regularly through a range of channels, and that you would like engagement managers to be local and visible in your area.

In our last report we said we would	Since then	In the second half of 2020 we will
Engage inclusively with a range of groups reflective of communities. Hold a series of events along the line of the new railway in the second half of 2020.	Because of Covid-19, we haven't been able to hold the face-to-face events we had planned for 2020. However, our Helpdesk has remained open throughout and we have developed a range of new digital and virtual ways of engaging with communities.	Keep improving our digital and virtual channels, so we can regularly reach as wide an audience as possible. Deliver a programme of Heritage Open Days webinars. Develop 'Being a Good Neighbour' toolkits, so all our staff and supply chain understand our commitments to communities and are supported to live up to them.
Hold events and share information as more archaeological finds are uncovered. Share the community histories being collected between the West Midlands and London online, at events and at key locations, in the second half of 2020.	We have held more events focused on archaeological finds – including as webinars, so that they could continue during Covid-19. We have planned how we will share the community histories safely, on an accessible platform, with accompanying information.	Continue with our programme of digital archaeology events, using webinars to make sure we can keep sharing findings safely during Covid-19. Deliver our community histories project, using digital and virtual channels to make sure a wide audience has access.

Here are just some of the things we have done in the past six months to help us build respectful, long-term relationships with communities.

Case study – Before Covid-19 restrictions

Helping our teams to be a good neighbour

After a successful pilot last year, we trained all of our teams that meet the public on how to be a good neighbour when engaging with local communities.

Our Community Engagement Strategy describes how HS2 Ltd aims to be a good neighbour every day. This new training focused on the tools and techniques our front-line staff need when engaging with communities and stakeholders, including how to maintain empathy and clear communication when under pressure. The training has helped our teams understand how to engage with confidence in what can sometimes be challenging situations, so that constructive solutions and outcomes can be found.



This course helped me to reconsider and adjust how I deal with challenging and unpredictable behaviours, whilst attending public events or dealing with significantly impacted stakeholders.”

HS2 Ltd Course participant



The Curzon Street Station roundhouse excavation.

Case study – Before Covid-19 restrictions

Continuing to share our archaeological findings with communities

As part of our ongoing commitment to sharing our archaeological findings with local communities, we spent time in February talking to local people in the Coleshill area of the West Midlands.

Experts were on hand at Coleshill Town Hall to discuss the finds, environment and archaeology of the nearby site. The event included interactive reconstructions, interpretative text, 3D photography, artefacts and maps, as well as a very popular interactive Virtual Reality Roman Villa experience.

The event was well received and proved very popular, with over 100 people visiting. We saw a wide range of local people, including young families, local heritage groups and interested local residents.

Commitments continued

🔍 Case study – During Covid-19 restrictions

Archaeology goes virtual

It hasn't been possible to see stakeholders and communities face-to-face for much of this year, so we have developed new, safe and accessible ways of keeping people informed about our activities. We have collaborated with our contractors to continue our archaeology events in 2020 as a series of interactive webinars for communities along Phase One and Phase 2a of the new railway.

Over 350 people tuned in live to see previously unseen photographs, footage and imagery captured during our excavations, and to ask questions of our expert panel. The feedback so far has been positive:

- 89% of people rated the information shared as fairly good or very good.
- 86% of people thought we answered their questions fairly well or very well.
- 93% of people said they would attend a future session.

The webinar series is available on our YouTube channel, with over 1,600 views received so far. Find our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/HS2Ltd

Facts and figures

94%

of people would attend a future online event.

🔍 Case study – During Covid-19 restrictions

Keeping community groups engaged virtually

Since the start of lockdown, we have moved our community and stakeholder engagement to virtual formats wherever possible. This has been well received, with positive feedback from the groups who are talking to us in these new ways.

Virtual meetings of the Euston Community Representatives Group in Camden have worked well, and kept the local community involved and informed. We have also held constructive virtual meetings with the Drummond Street Group in Camden, with representatives from the Costain Skanska joint venture, the Mace Dragados joint venture, Camden Council, and Euston and Camden Town Business Improvement District. These meetings have covered a number of topics, including the wayfinding and signage that forms part of our commitment to encourage footfall and trade on Drummond Street during our works.

🔍 Case study – Before Covid-19 restrictions

Promoting STEM in the East Midlands

We are always keen to work with schools and young people, and in early March we worked with schools near the East Midlands hub to deliver science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) workshops. Working with Bramcote College and Alderman White School, our team met 124 students over two days.

Before the sessions, most of the students had never heard of HS2 and some had never even been to a railway station. But after designing a railway station for the year 2050, building a tunnel, and playing a train network board game, there was a noticeable difference in both awareness and enthusiasm for a STEM-based career. Teachers at both schools have asked us to keep working with them as we move forward with the project.

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 are actively developing tools and platforms tailored to local communities. We want to make sure that these tools follow the engagement approach in our Community Engagement Strategy.

How we check we're meeting this commitment:

Evidence of our progress against our Strategy and our Local Area Engagement Plans.

Facts and figures

82%

of people attending our events still say we listened and responded well – the same as in our last report*.



Encouraging the use of digital channels.

Listening and responding

You told us that you want to be kept up-to-date with information that is tailored to be relevant to your area. You also told us that you want us to use a range of different communication methods.

In our last report we said we would	Since then	In the second half of 2020 we will
Explore new ways of reaching a wider audience.	We have used more digital and virtual channels, which has helped us reach wider and more diverse audiences in 2020. We now record demographic information, so we can measure the diversity of the audiences we reach.	Expand our range of virtual channels even more. We will use the demographic information we collect to make sure we carry on engaging with diverse audiences.
Share how we have listened, including any changes we have made based on your feedback.	We have continued our community engagement insight programme and used the findings to shape how, when and where we engage with communities.	Continue with our community engagement insight programme so that we can improve the quality and reach of our engagement.

* Feedback forms are available at all our public events, including virtual ones.

Commitments continued

Here are just some of the things we have done in the past six months to provide accessible and tailored local two-way engagement.



Engaging with the public in Birmingham.

Q Case study – Before Covid-19 restrictions

You said, we did: Railway design changes following community feedback

Before submitting planning applications for Curzon Street Station and Interchange Station in early 2020, we held a series of events around Birmingham and Solihull to show people the latest designs. These were the latest in an ongoing series of station design events that began in 2017.

At the start of this year, we put up freestanding exhibition boards at Millennium Point and New Street Station in Birmingham, showing the new HS2 Curzon Street design. We also held two staffed events to talk to members of the public about the new designs.

The exhibition boards showed how feedback from public engagement influences our designs. For example, feedback about Curzon Street showed us how important accessibility and cycling are to people in the area. We have responded to this feedback, and the new station design will incorporate 256 bicycle parking spaces, with the potential for 300 more in the future.

We also shared the Interchange Station design at staffed events at Melbicks Garden Centre in Coleshill, the NEC, Birmingham International Railway Station and Touchwood Shopping Centre in Solihull. Visitors could see how their feedback has influenced the design.

Q Case study – Before Covid-19 restrictions

Involving communities in Kingsbury Road Railhead changes

In autumn 2019 we communicated the decision to change Kingsbury Road Railhead in North Warwickshire to a main works construction compound. The original railhead had been opposed by the local community and we anticipated a positive reaction to removing the railhead, communicating the decision required sensitivity to community feelings. The new proposals included a concrete facility operating for over 5 years. We needed to engage the community about these new proposals.

A comprehensive communications and engagement plan accompanied the announcement. This included political stakeholder briefings, letters and meetings with landowners, parish council Q&A sessions, and community drop-ins where HS2 Ltd and main works contractor Balfour Beatty VINCI (BBV) explained the change and proposed the compound.

Concerns and suggested mitigations were raised to reduce the impact on the local community, particularly on Marston village. BBV and HS2 Ltd committed to review suggestions and to feed back to future engagement meetings. Further briefings in 2020 saw us present an updated compound layout, incorporating amendments made following engagement. These included moving the concrete plant away from the perimeter, relocating offices and car parking to avoid heavy goods vehicles, an embankment to help screen the compound and a chain link fence.

Reasons why some suggestions were not taken forward were explained, and a commitment made to continue engagement during the mobilisation of the compound. Copies of the updated layout were circulated to parish councils for residents and a final version will shortly be published on our North Warwickshire community website.

Our approach to engaging, listening and responding to community concerns was praised by the parish council and the local councillor. They formally expressed thanks for us acting on comments raised, with the councillor stating it was 'an incredible example of HS2 Ltd and its contractor responding to feedback'.



Thame Valley viaduct visualisation.

Q Case study – Before Covid-19 restrictions Seeking views on viaduct design in the Thame Valley and Water Orton

In February, we held an event asking for feedback on the first designs for the Thame Valley Viaduct, which is close to a residential area. The event attracted over 230 residents who were keen to share their views and discuss the design. As well as the viaduct itself, topics of conversation included the project's value for money and its impact on the local golf course and traffic on the A418.

In May, we engaged with communities about the Water Orton Viaducts, an important element of HS2 in North Warwickshire. These three viaducts are significant structures that will span the area and cross other major transport links. We want them to respect their surroundings and the local area. We asked local residents to give us their thoughts on various aspects of the design, including how we build the viaducts, some elements of what they will look like and how we can lessen their impact.

We distributed booklets to over 2,500 homes in Water Orton and Coleshill and virtually briefed local stakeholders, including the two local authorities, Craig Tracey MP, and the North Warwickshire Special Management Zone.

We will listen to these views as part of the ongoing process of designing the Water Orton Viaducts. Our feedback will be published on the HS2 Ltd community website for Warwickshire. We will also share what we've learned with the local planning authority, North Warwickshire Borough Council, to help them assess our final designs when we submit them for their approval later this year.

Commitments continued



Case study – Before Covid-19 restrictions Involving residents in design in Buckinghamshire

In late February, we held three events in the Chilterns in Buckinghamshire, to update residents about road improvements in Great Missenden and the designs for the Chalfont St Giles vent shaft.

Last year we received negative feedback about the design of the road improvements in Great Missenden. Over 2,000 residents signed a petition calling for works to be cancelled, and a number of local demonstrations took place. We listened to the local concerns and now have redesigned the scheme and the events in February focused on sharing the changes. Over 130 residents attended the two sessions in Great Missenden to talk through the redesign.

Also in February, we invited residents in Chalfont St Giles to share their views about the vent shaft for the Chiltern Tunnel. At the information event, we presented the current design along with other useful information about our construction approach. The event was attended by 74 residents, who provided valuable feedback.

Case study – Before Covid-19 restrictions

Responding to the community in Amersham

Earlier this year, to prepare for main works construction, we conducted junction improvement works in Amersham, Buckinghamshire. The junction is near both a hospital and a crematorium. Our engagement team has worked closely with our contractor, Fusion, to keep local stakeholders informed about the works.

Just before work was due to start, the hospital told us they needed to resume their normal patient services as part of lockdown easing. They raised a new concern about how a bus stop closure might affect their patients. We quickly set up an HS2 shuttle bus to replace the service that had to temporarily close. On its first day running in May, over 25 patients used the bus to get to their hospital appointments.

Case study – Before Covid-19 restrictions

Listening and responding about Phase 2b ground investigation work

Early ground investigations started in Cheshire as part of Phase 2b early this year. Our original aim was to establish a main works site and then conduct ground investigations, but we brought the ground investigation stage forward on this site to reduce the impact on the landowner. This followed extensive engagement from the local team, which helped us understand the landowner's needs and preferences.

This change in schedule also gave us an opportunity to tell the local community about ground investigation and why it is so important to the project. We invited the group Mid Cheshire Against HS2 to the site to see the works for themselves and to ask questions of our contractors, Balfour Beatty and Cheshire Soils, and the local HS2 Ltd engagement team.

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 are committed to providing people with relevant and timely information about what we are doing, using whatever digital and traditional methods are easiest and best for you.

How we check we're meeting this commitment:

Evidence of how well we are informing you about the programme.

Facts and figures

293,100+

visitors to our community websites, compared to 211,400+ in our last report.

7,800+

subscribers, compared to 6,000+ in our last report.

Listening and responding

You told us that construction traffic and noise remain your biggest concerns. You told us this means you want to be kept up-to-date about works in your area.

In our last report we said we would	Since then	In the second half of 2020 we will
Notify homeowners and businesses in advance about works using a range of methods, including targeted advertising on social media*.	<p>We have carried on sharing advance notifications on our community websites and sending alerts to people who subscribe to these websites.</p> <p>We have used social media more widely to keep communities informed about local work and activity.</p>	Introduce a new letter referencing system to make it quicker and easier for people who receive letters from HS2 Ltd to discuss any questions and concerns with the HS2 Helpdesk.
Look at more ways for communities to engage with HS2 Ltd and provide options tailored to the needs of diverse communities.	We have developed our digital channels, which included asking subscribers for their views on our community websites and making the changes they wanted to see.	Keep expanding the range of channels we use to keep communities updated about local works.

* Where emergency work is required, we may need to provide less than 14 days' advance notice.

Commitments continued

Here are just some of the things we have done in the past six months to help make communities aware of activities taking place in their area.

Case study – Before Covid-19 restrictions

Finding new ways of reaching more rural communities

In early 2020, before lockdown, we launched a new way of reaching local communities along Phase 2a. We introduced 13 fixed information points along the line to make information about HS2 as easy as possible to access for these rural communities. The information points are in places already commonly used by community members, including village halls, council houses and libraries.

At each information point, people can find maps, In Your Area leaflets, information about property schemes, community funds and contact details for the HS2 Helpdesk.



The new information points are just one of the ways we keep people up-to-date with the project, including events, meetings, newsletters and our local community websites. We're always looking for new and effective ways to keep in touch with the local community, as part of our commitment to being a good neighbour to anyone affected by the new railway."

Iain Andrews, HS2's Head of Community Engagement for Phase 2a

To see the locations of the information points, visit the HS2 in Cheshire community website at hs2incheshire.co.uk

Case study – During Covid-19 restrictions

Keeping communities updated with newsletters

We sent the third Phase 2a community newsletter to around 17,500 residents in Staffordshire and south Cheshire in May. It is also available on the community websites. The newsletter includes:

- an update about the progress of Phase 2a in Parliament;
- information about ground investigations and ecology surveys, which are happening in the next few months;
- the impact of Covid-19 on works, including how we will operate safely;
- what we are doing to manage and lessen the impact of works on local roads;
- examples of our community engagement initiatives; and
- information about property schemes.

Case study – During Covid-19 restrictions

Preparing Phase 2b communities for ground investigation work

In May, the main compound off the Bowdon roundabout at the junction of the M56 and A556 became operational, marking the start of advanced ground operations in Cheshire. This compound is a base for our contractors, Balfour Beatty, to carry out investigation works at sites across Cheshire.

We made sure all stakeholders and members of the local community were fully informed about these works. As well as sending advance notices to landowners and tenants, we produced a newsletter for the wider community. This covered what we are doing to minimise the potential impact of the work and reassured readers that everyone working on our sites is adhering fully to current Government and Public Health England advice on working safely during the Covid-19 pandemic.



A ground investigation survey.

Case study – Before Covid-19 restrictions

Preparing Phase 2a communities for tunnelling

Along the line of Phase 2a, we shared information about tunnelling methods with local communities in early 2020. These tailored events were a response to local interest in tunnelling and requests for more information about it.

The events informed residents about how different tunnelling challenges have been successfully managed on previous projects. This allowed the team to reassure communities and stakeholders that we will be able to bore a tunnel safely below Whitmore Heath.



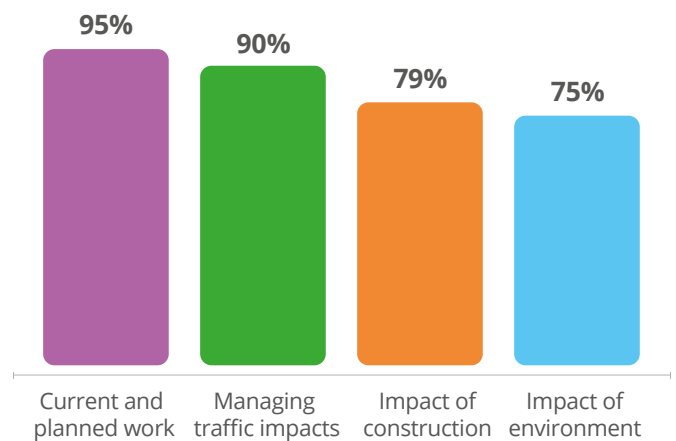
Unveiling one of the new tunnel boring machines.

Case study – During Covid-19 restrictions

You said, we did: Updates to our community websites

In spring 2020, we invited subscribers to let us know their thoughts about the community websites. We wanted to find out how we could improve the sites and what subscribers are most interested to hear about.

What information do people want?



Based on the responses, we made it easier and quicker to navigate the websites and find relevant information on the topics which were most important to our subscribers. The changes included:

- introducing a new 'Works in your area' tile that sets out the local work notifications more clearly, making it easier for users to navigate to the area they live in;
- consolidating previous sections into a 'managing the impacts of construction' page and a 'managing the impact on the environment' page, making it easier to navigate the menu and find relevant information as quickly as possible; and
- launching a new landing page for each website, so that the navigation menu is visible as soon as a user arrives on the website, making it easier to navigate and find relevant information.

Commitments continued

See the new 'Works in your area' tile in action at hs2inbucksandoxfordshire.commonplace.is/schemes/proposals/works-in-your-area/details

“

Overall, I was impressed with the information available for the area. I felt it provided excellent details of relevant information around the HS2 areas and the alerts received appeared suitable for the region selected. This all helped position HS2 very strongly in terms of being a good neighbour for the community.”

Kilburn (Anonymous, independent shopper researcher)



Social distancing measures on site.



Thermal imaging being used on site for temperature checking.

Case study – During Covid-19 restrictions

Community website updates throughout the pandemic

We kept our community website subscribers up-to-date with our response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

- We explained the measures we were putting in place to follow guidance from Public Health England and our industry, such as reviewing sites and their activities.
- We made sure all the work notifications on the websites started with a paragraph explaining how we would continuously review work sites and activities to make sure they were operating safely.
- The 'Works in your area' pages included updates about what activities we paused or resumed on what sites, to remain in line with guidance from Public Health England and the industry.

See an example of one of our Covid-19 news alerts at hs2inbucksandoxfordshire.commonplace.is/news/2020/03/27/information-about-hs2-ltd-during-the-coronavirus-covid19-pandemic

4

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

Our Freephone Community Helpline is the foundation of our approach to reliable, responsive customer service for everyone who contacts us. We want to be open and accessible and make it as easy as possible for you to contact us.

How we check we're meeting this commitment:

Evidence of how well we handle your enquiries.

Facts and figures

How many people contacted us?

As the project gains pace and becomes more visible to communities, and as awareness of our Helpdesk team grows, we are seeing a steady increase in the volume of enquiries.

The HS2 Helpdesk is the first point of contact for members of the public and stakeholders who need advice or information from HS2.

During Covid-19, the Helpdesk has remained fully operational all day, every day, with no break or reduction in service at any point.

18,323

enquiries received between January and June 2020.

This compares to

17,547

for the same period in 2019.

4%

year-on-year increase in enquiries in 2020 so far, compared to 2019.

Our Helpdesk team

Freephone

08081 434 434

Minicom

08081 456 472

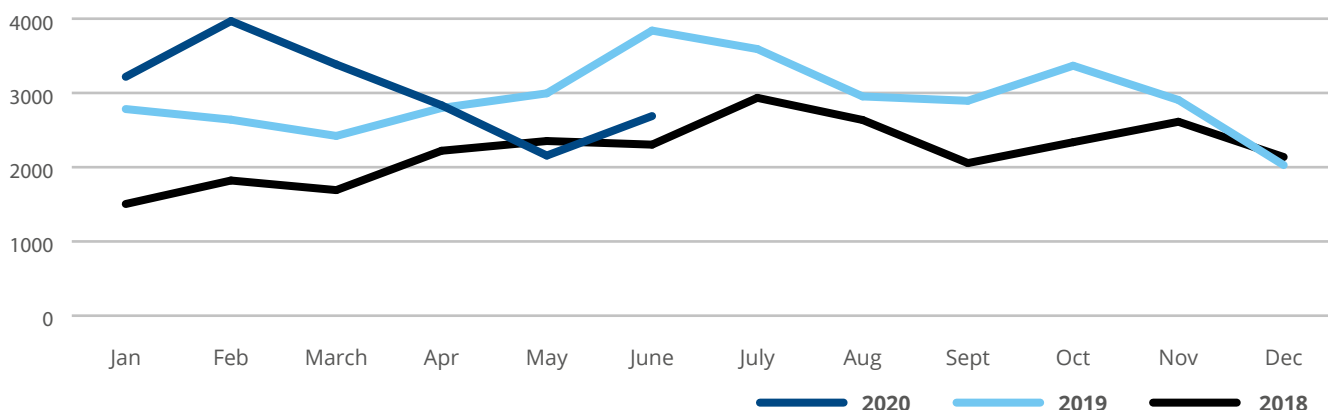
email

hs2enquiries@hs2.org.uk



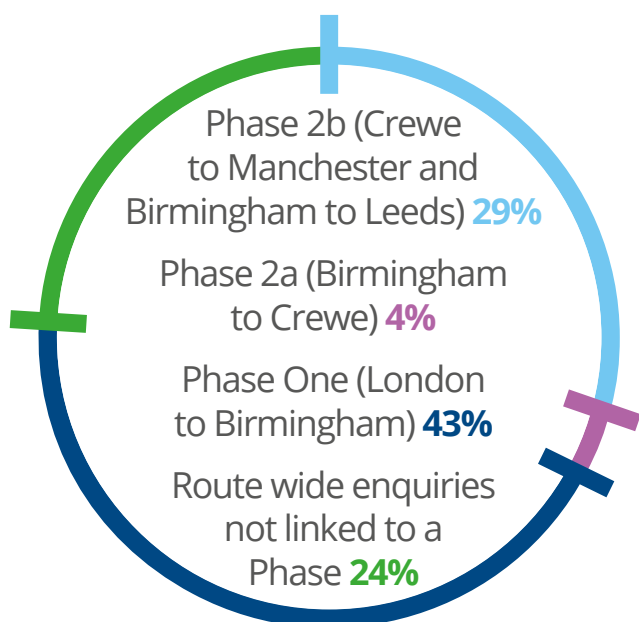
Commitments continued

Total Helpdesk contacts (by phone and email) by month



Why are people contacting us?

Between January and June 2020, the part of the project that generated the most enquiries was Phase One.



49%

of Helpdesk contacts were queries about land and property.

How did people choose to contact us?

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

All of our contacts in 2020 so far have either been by Freephone or email.

43%

of people called us on our Freephone number.

57%

of people opted for email.

What sort of service can you expect?

Between January and June 2020:

63%

of enquiries resolved at the first point of contact.

37%

of enquiries needed a follow-up.

Here are just some of the things we have done in the past six months to make it as easy as possible to contact us.

HS2 Minister visits the Helpdesk

Before Covid-19 restrictions

In early March, before the start of the pandemic, we welcomed HS2 Minister Andrew Stephenson to our Community Hub in Birmingham. The minister also spent time with the HS2 Helpdesk and listened in on live customer calls.

The minister was interested to talk through how we make sure everyone is committed to being a good neighbour, and how we measure and test this.



The visit from the HS2 Minister to our sites in Birmingham has been a great opportunity to talk through our construction plans, our approach to being a good neighbour in the communities in which we are operating, and increase understanding around how we are delivering this huge, exciting project."

Aileen Thompson, HS2's Director of Communications and Stakeholder Management



HS2 Minister visit to the Community Hub.

Meeting the passengers of the future in our Community Hub

Before Covid-19 restrictions

In February we hosted a group of 10 and 11-year-olds at our Community Hub in Birmingham. The children were on a tour of our Snowhill offices to learn more about HS2. They met our Helpdesk staff, who they quizzed about HS2 and what the team does every day to support people affected by the project.

The children took part in an HS2 quiz, where they guessed the number of enquiries we received in a year to win a Helpdesk pin badge.



It was great to host some hugely polite and enthusiastic young people in the hub and to engage with a generation that will massively benefit from HS2. Based on their detailed questioning I'm pretty confident we spoke with some HS2 leaders of the future!"

Tom Walker, HS2's Senior Public Response Manager

Commitments continued

Anonymous shopper testing

One of the ways we make sure our Helpdesk is providing a high-quality service is to use anonymous shopping research, or 'mystery shoppers'.



I felt I had been spoken to in a polite and professional manner throughout and that I was given lots of information. I was impressed to receive such a level of service while so many businesses and contact centres are closed during the lockdown."

Anonymous, independent shopper researcher



The personal, informed and professional approach of the agent instilled a real sense of confidence in HS2 and completely supported their aspiration to be a good neighbour, respecting people and being sensitive to their needs."

Anonymous, independent shopper researcher

Listening and responding

You have told us you want us to improve our Helpdesk's customer service. You also told us we need to promote the Helpdesk more.

In our last report we said we would	Since then	In the second half of 2020 we will
Monitor our progress against a range of other measures.	We have introduced anonymous shopping research to give us a regular, independent view of the service we provide to the public. This shows us where we need to improve and develop to provide the best possible service.	Keep using anonymous shopping research and other insights to understand where we can still improve the quality of our Helpdesk service.



5

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

HS2 is an exciting project, but one which will affect lots of communities. We don't underestimate that impact, or our responsibility to minimise disruption and keep everyone who lives and works in those communities safe and secure.

How we check we're meeting this commitment:

Evidence of how well we demonstrate that health and safety is a priority for staff and communities.

Health, safety and wellbeing – of the communities along the line of the new railway, and of our staff – is our absolute priority.

The impact of Covid-19 dominated this six-month period. Our first priority has been to keep communication and engagement with communities open throughout these challenging times.

The HS2 Helpdesk is the first point of contact for members of the public and stakeholders who need advice or information from HS2. Our Helpdesk has remained operational all day, every day, with all members of the team now working from home, and with no break in service at any point.

From the start of lockdown, we postponed all face-to-face events and meetings, and explored new ways of keeping communities informed and involved. We kept residents informed about the postponed activity,

Listening and responding

In our last report we said we would	Since then	In the second half of 2020 we will
Deliver the Playing it Safe programme to schools along the line of the new railway.	<p>We have had to pause our Playing It Safe programme because of the restrictions of Covid-19. We have found other ways of engaging schools online.</p> <p>The Playing it Safe programme has been shortlisted for 'Best Educational Programme' in the 2020 Corporate Engagement Awards.</p>	Work to make Playing it Safe available in alternative ways and in accordance with Covid-19 guidelines within a school environment.
Widen the Growing Spaces project to include locations along the line of the new railway between Birmingham and Crewe.	<p>We have completed the Growing Spaces project for Phase One of the railway.</p> <p>We launched Growing Spaces in the Phase 2a area in early 2020. However, we have had to pause this programme because of the restrictions of Covid-19.</p>	Develop and pilot new community projects that are appropriate for Covid-19 secure guidance and are relevant to local communities.

Commitments continued

as well as the status of construction work in local areas, through letters, phone calls, and updates and alerts from the local community websites.

We have engaged more and more online, in the form of webinars and virtual meetings, while also maintaining more traditional forms of engagement, like newsletters and mailouts.

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

Case study – During Covid-19 restrictions Tailored support for more vulnerable members of the community

HS2 Ltd has an advocacy and support service for vulnerable people who need extra support, operated independently by the charity POhWER. For example, the service can help people understand HS2 Ltd documentation or literature, respond to HS2 Ltd, or complete paperwork.

POhWER are experts in supporting vulnerable individuals remotely, and they have continued to provide their services throughout Covid-19. This means that those already referred to the service have still been supported, and new referrals have still been made.



Richard Crosse Primary School in Kings Bromley taking part in the Growing Spaces project.



Richard Crosse Primary School in Kings Bromley taking part in the Growing Spaces project.

Case study – Before Covid-19 restrictions Growing Spaces launched in Phase 2a area

In early March we launched Growing Spaces, a programme to build mini allotments, vegetable growing boxes and planted areas at schools and community centres. We completed five in the first week of March, before lockdown.

The first of these was at Pirehill School in Stone, Staffordshire. The school's head teacher said:



The children thoroughly enjoyed themselves and it was great for them to see a project through from start to finish. Understandably they are very proud of what they achieved! Even the weather was kind (until right at the end of the day!). Many thanks to all involved, very much appreciated by everyone at Pirehill."

Following the success at Pirehill, the Phase 2a team moved on to Sir John Offley Primary School in Madeley. Over 30 children aged between four and five enjoyed building planters and learning from the Growing Spaces team about the plants they were intending to grow.

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 will have an impact and cause disruption to communities.

This commitment considers how communities and stakeholders are influencing how we build the railway. How we and our contractors behave is as important to the railway's success as delivering the project on time and ensuring value for money for taxpayers.

How we check we're meeting this commitment:

Evidence that we are continually looking for ways to minimise the impacts of the project.

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	In the second half of 2020 we will
Keep looking for ways to lessen the impacts of the project.	We have worked with our contractors to make sure that construction followed the Government's guidance in a way that was safe and respectful to local communities.	Launch a pilot with the Considerate Contractors Scheme to independently assess how safely and respectfully our contractors are operating. Number all of our construction sites so you can reference issues more easily when you contact us with questions or concerns. Analyse construction complaints to understand why people are contacting us, so that we can prevent similar complaints in the future.
Offer communities, local councils and MPs the opportunity to visit construction sites, to ask questions and better understand the work taking place.	We have had to pause this work while we made sure we were following the Government's safety advice. During the pause, we shared information virtually, using digital visits and walkabouts.	Start these visits back up where we can do this safely.

Commitments continued

Here are just some of the things we have done in the past six months to minimise disruption and make sure our sites operate safely for our neighbours.

Case study – During Covid-19 restrictions

Launch of HS2 Settlement Deeds scheme

As we start to build the new railway, we need to carry out excavation works. These can cause small movements in the ground, called settlement. We have measures in place to minimise settlement and will be monitoring it before, during, and after construction.

Like other major construction projects, we are offering settlement deeds to people who own property close to our excavations. In June we sent out the first offers to 113 eligible owners to let them know they can have a deed if they want one.

So that we can expertly manage enquiries from communities, the HS2 Helpdesk has had specialist training on settlement and settlement deeds. Anyone with concerns can contact the Helpdesk for appropriate advice and support.

We have also published the 'Guide to ground settlement', which explains our approach to settlement and settlement deeds. The guide has received the Crystal Mark, which the Plain English Campaign awards to publications that are clear and easy for everyone to understand.

We sent out the new guide along with the letters and made it available on the HS2 website, on local information websites, and via the Helpdesk. We will inform more eligible property owners about their right to a settlement deed later in 2020.



Signage in place on site.

Case study – During Covid-19 restrictions

Ensuring safe operations and addressing local impacts

Early in the lockdown period, one of our contractors, LM*, updated its working practices for all staff to make sure it can keep working without compromising health, safety and wellbeing, either of employees or local communities. It has produced new guidance describing best practice, to make sure teams are following the Government's advice.

The guidance includes:

- posting visual aids at all sites to remind staff of social distancing measures;
- adding floor markings in key places to make sure people are aware of safe distances;
- minimising travel to and between sites, working from home where appropriate and, when it is necessary to travel to sites, avoiding public transport to reduce the risk of contact;
- stepping up cleaning regimes, including cleaning vehicles at the beginning and end of each shift, and using checklists to make sure cleaners remember key areas like door handles;
- appointing social distancing marshals at some sites to make sure everyone follows the Government's guidelines; and
- introducing welfare areas where people can safely take a break.

* LM is a joint venture between Laing O'Rourke and J. Murphy & Sons Ltd.



Case study – During Covid-19 restrictions

Contractors supporting communities during Covid-19

In March, HS2 Euston contractors donated protective clothing to nearby University College London Hospital. A team from the Costain Skanska joint venture gave masks, gloves, goggles, overshoes and sanitiser to help protect frontline NHS staff caring for patients with Covid-19.

In June, Align* helped out Barn Farm Plants, a garden centre in Waddington, with traffic cones and wooden reels. The items were warmly received, with Deborah from the garden centre commenting:

“

A massive thank you for the cones – these will be very handy and multi-functional and at present are being used to organise our entry queuing system since we have re-opened. Also, the reels we received today were a pleasant additional surprise. They will have many functions as plant and gift display tables and will also double up as garden drink tables at weddings next year.”

* Align is a joint venture between Bouygues Travaux Publics, a subsidiary of Bouygues Construction; Sir Robert McAlpine; and VolkerFitzpatrick, a subsidiary of VolkerWessels.

Commitments continued



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. However, it's important that we also focus on leaving a positive legacy for communities – one that sets a new standard for major infrastructure projects. This commitment considers how communities benefit from our investment programmes.

How we check we're meeting this commitment:

Evidence of the long-term benefits our investment programme is delivering.

Facts and figures

£7.14m

Since the Community & Environment Fund (CEF) and Business & Local Economy Fund (BLEF) opened in March 2017, they have awarded £7.14 million to 118 projects.

We use outreach to target areas where we haven't received many applications or made many awards, to connect organisations in these areas with Groundwork UK, who deliver the grants programme on our behalf. As a result, we have seen more applications from most areas and have awarded funding to projects in priority areas including Hillingdon, Ealing North, Banbury, Hammersmith and Lichfield.

Listening and responding

You told us that you are not always aware of how HS2 is making a positive difference, either in local areas or more widely. Leaving a positive legacy is critical to the success of the project.

In our last report we said we would	Since then	In the second half of 2020 we will
Work with existing and new local businesses and share the results of this work.	We have run webinars to help local businesses understand the opportunities and benefits HS2 will bring.	Host a webinar about the community and business funds and continue to advise people how they can get involved.
Identify areas yet to benefit from funding, and promote the CEF and BLEF there to make sure they are aware of the opportunities available. Promote the funds available for the route between Birmingham and Crewe (Phase 2a) after the Phase 2a Bill gets Royal Assent.	We have run a webinar about the CEF and BLEF. At peak, around 85 people tuned in and we received 80 questions.	Keep raising awareness of the funds in communities where take-up is lower. Raise awareness of the benefits of the funds among communities in the Phase 2a area.

Here are just some of the things we have done in the past six months to help leave a positive and sustainable legacy.

£7.14m

of funding awarded through the CEF and BLEF to 118 local projects along the line of the new railway between London and Birmingham.

£2.5m

of this has been allocated since our last report.

Some projects completed in 2020:



£44,500 to Birmingham Civic Society to deliver tree planting schemes in parks across Birmingham.



£10,000 to Quinton Parish Council to fund the restoration of a Grade II listed windmill.

Commitments continued



£73,591 to Castlehaven Community Association to enhance biodiversity at Greenhaven Community Nature Park.



£75,000 to Coleshill Town Council to fund the relocation of the Coleshill Community Hub – a local advice and support service on the ground floor for better accessibility.

🔍 Case study – Before Covid-19 restrictions

Camden Fund reaches £3.15 million

In 2017, the HS2 Camden Fund was set up in partnership with Camden Giving, an independent charity. The Fund was secured by Camden London Borough Council while the HS2 Act was going through Parliament. The aim of the Fund was to create a sense of place in Camden by supporting projects that bring people together, to improve physical and mental health, and create a stronger voluntary and community sector.

To allocate the funding, a community panel was formed, with representatives from HS2, Camden Giving, the local community, the Department for Transport and Camden London Borough Council. During the Fund's final 18 months, the panel was chaired by Ranya, a 19-year-old student who has lived in Camden her whole life. She has grown up surrounded by heavy development and now lives on the doorstep of HS2.

Just over two years after it launched, the Camden Fund has now closed after awarding £3.15 million to 57 projects across Camden. The Fund has supported local projects in a range of areas including homelessness, mentoring and support for young people, environment, schools and education, sport and recreation, arts, mobile food banks, bereavement support, family support, music, citizen advice, and health and wellbeing.



I enjoyed and appreciated working with the panel and Camden Giving and feel proud of what we've achieved with the Fund and I look forward to hearing about the positive impact it has over the next few years as the projects are delivered."

Greg Ward, Community and Business Funds Programme Advisor



The opening of the new Community Hub at Coleshill Town Hall.

Case study – Before Covid-19 restrictions

Benefits for communities and local businesses in Warwickshire

In January, Mark Thurston and Julie King, HS2's Chief Executive and Director of Community & Stakeholder Engagement, visited Coleshill in Warwickshire to see the benefits of HS2 first-hand. They visited Coleshill Town Hall, a successful recipient of £75,000 from the CEF.

Mark toured the newly refurbished Community Hub and its new, more accessible facilities, and met volunteers and hub users to hear about the impact of the CEF-funded services. The hub aims to improve the lives of people in and around the Coleshill area, by providing facilities and services to combat social isolation and issues related to their semi-rural location.

MP Craig Tracey officially opened the Community Hub to local residents the following week. We installed an HS2 Information Point in the new hub, where we will host monthly drop-in sessions in the future. It will be a place where all members of the community can find information about local works, traffic impacts and opportunities in and around the Coleshill area.

Local businesses in this area are also benefiting from HS2 and the work we have been doing through our Onboard Local campaign. Kai Ogunbanjo from Trinity Assets, a local property management and development firm, has found that HS2 provides an opportunity to expand. Trinity Assets now regularly houses around 35–40 workers associated with HS2, and expects this number to grow over the next year.



Local businesses are one area where we can really start to have an impact and bring the benefits of HS2 to life. Trinity Assets are a great example of a local business that has grasped the opportunity of HS2. They saw the need for affordable and flexible accommodation for our workers and have grown their business to meet this demand, seeing a 30% increase in their revenue. This has enabled them to support the growth of other local businesses in their supply chain, creating more jobs and business opportunities in the area."

Mark Thurston, HS2's Chief Executive

Case study – Before Covid-19 restrictions

Finding new ways to support communities in Phase 2a

In early 2020 we worked with our contractor partner, Balfour Beatty, and a London bus company to bring decommissioned buses to the West Midlands for local communities to use.

The first bus was delivered to Henry Chadwick School in Hill Ridware, Rugeley, Staffordshire. The school is turning the bus into a library, which will free up much-needed classroom space for their pupils.

The second bus was delivered to a Community Interest Company: Upper Moreton Farm in Wolseley Bridge, Stafford. The farm provides a range of rural activities to promote learning and wellbeing, supporting vulnerable adults recovering from mental ill health, and young people and children with learning difficulties and disabilities. The director, Carol Carney, is expanding her facilities to install a woodcraft shed and has said she is delighted that her clients and dedicated voluntary team can use the bus as a rest area and craft room.

Commitments continued

🔍 Case study – Before Covid-19 restrictions

Sharing the benefits of HS2 with local business communities

Local businesses have told us they don't always have the time or resources to attend HS2 business opportunity events out in communities. To reach this busy but interested audience, we worked with the Balfour Beatty VINCI and SYSTRA joint venture (BBVS) to run a webinar all about the opportunities for these businesses to get involved.

In February, staff from BBVS hosted their first local business webinar. They introduced the work they will be doing to deliver the new HS2 station at Old Oak Common, as well as highlighting their commitment to using small, medium-sized and local businesses wherever possible to help the local area.

140 businesses listened in to this first webinar, finding out about opportunities coming up for businesses of all types and sizes, including how to get involved and tender for opportunities. Feedback tells us that businesses found the session very helpful and are likely to sign up to the next webinar.



We are delighted the technology made the event accessible to such a diverse range of interested companies. The team will continue to deliver engaging content in future presentations.”

Nigel Russell, BBVS's Project Director

Following the success of this early session, we expanded our webinar programme to make sure we could keep engaging with local business communities during Covid-19 restrictions during summer 2020.



Meeting Birmingham Telecommunications Ltd, a business benefiting from HS2.

🔍 Case study – During Covid-19 restrictions

HS2 Onboard Local business

We are working hard to make sure local businesses understand the benefits and opportunities the project can bring.

Between January and June 2020:

- 376 business stakeholders registered an interest in getting involved in HS2;
- we held 14 local business events or webinars in partnership with our business stakeholders, engaging directly with almost 1,000 local businesses; and
- 1,453 people visited the local business information and registration web page (launched March 2019).

Birmingham Telecommunications Ltd is one local business benefiting from HS2. In May, HS2's Chief Executive Mark Thurston visited this firm, located less than a kilometre from the new railway.

The business offers a range of telecoms products and services, including headsets, innovative phone systems and call management software. The meeting was a chance for Mark to hear how this local business's expertise is adding value to HS2: they helped us identify the specialised headsets we would need for the HS2 Helpdesk. Since the Covid-19 outbreak, they have also provided our community engagement teams with headsets so they can work from home.

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 enquiries and complaints from communities and stakeholders is part of how we aspire to be a good neighbour.

How we check we're meeting this commitment:
Evidence of how well we handle your complaints.

Facts and figures

How many people complained?

We received 782 complaints between January and June 2020, compared with 295 over the same period in 2019. The increase in complaints has come from people living between London and Birmingham, where the impacts of construction are becoming more noticeable.

Why did people complain?

Over 87% of all complaints between January and June 2020 related to the part of the railway between Birmingham and London (Phase One).

The main reason people in these areas complained was because of site operations (34%), traffic and transport issues (32%) and noise and vibration (18%).

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
Programme and Delivery	649	0	1	93	743
Land and Property	10	1	2	0	13
Community Engagement	21	1	0	1	23
Corporate Services	1	0	0	2	3
Health, Safety and Security	0	0	0	0	0
Sixth month total January to June 2020	681	2	3	96	782
Annual total 2019	575	21	24	7	627
Annual total 2018	387	9	51	-	447

Commitments continued

How quickly did we resolve complaints?

Between January and June:

97%

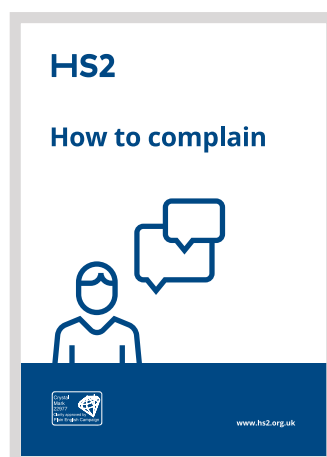
of 782 complaints were resolved within 20 working days, compared to 96% of 295 complaints over the same period in 2019.

100%

of complaints were concluded at the first stage of the complaints process, the same as in 2019.

Our complaints process in more detail

Our complaints procedure is available at : www.hs2.org.uk/how-to-complain



How do we compare to previous years?

2019

- 627 complaints.
- 99% concluded at the first stage of the complaints process.
- 95% resolved within 20 working days.

2018

- 447 complaints.
- 92% concluded at the first stage of the complaints process.
- 90% resolved within 20 working days.

Listening and responding

We do all we can to make sure that communities do not need to complain. But you told us that when you do need to complain, you want us to operate a clear, fair, accessible and efficient process.

In our last report we said we would	Since then	In the second half of 2020 we will
Work to resolve all complaints within 20 working days, and at the first stage of the complaints process.	We have met this target despite rising volumes of complaints, linked to construction gaining pace and concerns about construction continuing during Covid-19.	Analyse our growing complaints data in depth to learn from complaints and continuously improve how we work.

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.

How we check we're meeting this commitment:

Evidence that we are providing clear and up-to-date information about our property schemes.

Finding out about our property schemes

Communities and businesses near the approved or proposed line of the new railway have access to a range of statutory and discretionary property schemes.

We have made information about the property schemes – including the application process and frequently asked questions – available to the public at events, meetings, in our literature and online at www.hs2.org.uk

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

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 to reflect what you have told us.

Facts and figures

Discretionary property schemes from launch to 30 June 2020	Number of applications	Number accepted
Rural Support Zone	774	666
Homeowner Payment Zone	893	777
Need to Sell*	906	332

Website updates

We have updated our website to improve the content and quality of the information we provide about our property schemes. This includes matching the changes we made to our guidance documents, which gained us the Plain English Campaign's Crystal Mark accreditation.

We will improve our website content even more over the coming months by adding videos about all of our property schemes. This will allow a wider audience to access our information before making an application.

In our last report we said we would

Since then

In the second half of 2020 we will

Update our property scheme web content to match the Plain English improvements we have made to our printed materials.

We have updated our property scheme web content and made it consistent with the Plain English Campaign guidance documents.

Improve the accessibility of our web content even more by adding videos explaining our property schemes.

* The Need to Sell scheme is available for people who 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 affect them in the next three years.

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 how we make information about the commissioners' roles and contact details accessible. We make the commissioners' contact details available at all public events, on our website, on local community websites and on all public materials.

How we check we're meeting this commitment:

Evidence of how well we learn from the independent reports provided by both the Residents' and Construction Commissioners.

Listening and responding

We know that communities need clear information about how to contact us, and how to access the range of information they will need throughout the project.

In our last report we said we would	Since then	In the second half of 2020 we will
Review the commissioners' reports, consider how we can learn from them, and include this in our future progress reports.	We have reviewed the commissioners' reports and trained our Land & Property staff to improve customers' experiences. We have carried on engaging with residents remotely during the pandemic and, where possible, reduced work hours and moved sites further away from residential areas to help ease noise concerns.	Continue to review the commissioners' reports and recommendations, consider how we can learn from them, and include this in our progress reports.
Involve both commissioners in engagement activities so they can hear views on the ground as often as possible. Keep publicising the commissioners' contact details widely.	We have kept informing and involving the commissioners in our engagement activity, including events showcasing the designs for the Thame Valley Viaduct, Curzon Street Station and Interchange Station.	Inform and involve both commissioners in virtual engagement activities, and in site visits where possible, so they can hear views on the ground. Keep publicising the commissioners' contact details widely.

About the Residents' Commissioner – Deborah Fazan



The independent Residents' Commissioner holds us accountable to the commitments we have made to you in our Residents' Charter. She regularly meets with our Chair about emerging trends and concerns. You can find our Residents' Charter at www.gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-residents-charter

The Commissioner has published 12 reports as of the end of December 2019. You can find her reports and our responses to them at www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-ltd-residents-commissioner

You can contact the Residents' Commissioner at residentscommissioner@hs2.org.uk

About the Construction Commissioner – Sir Mark Worthington



The independent Construction Commissioner monitors how we manage and respond to construction-related complaints. He offers advice to members of the public about how to make complaints, and mediates any unresolved disputes between HS2 Ltd and individuals or organisations.

The Commissioner regularly meets with our Chief Executive to discuss any concerns or emerging trends related to the project. He has published 10 reports so far.

You can contact the Construction Commissioner at complaints@hs2-cc.org.uk

Commitments continued

Learning from the Commissioners' independent reports

Residents' Commissioner

The Residents' Commissioner released her latest report in April 2020. It included 16 recommendations, a number of which were related to people's experiences interacting with our property schemes and processes.

In response, we are reviewing and updating our web pages with an improved layout that clearly displays our different schemes, information and guidance. This builds on our achievement of the Plain English Campaign's Crystal Mark award for the printed guidance material about our property schemes.

We are also installing an improved IT-based case management system for handling scheme applications, and training our Land & Property staff to provide improved customer service.

Construction Commissioner

The Construction Commissioner released his latest report in June 2020. It included four recommendations. One was related to Covid-19; the Commissioner recommended that we make sure people on operational work sites are following guidelines to stop the spread, and that we stay mindful of noise and vibration from these sites, as nearby residents are spending much more time at home.

In response, we have worked closely with our contractors to continually review the work on all our construction sites in line with the latest Government guidance for the construction industry. Where the guidance meant that work could not carry on, we temporarily closed sites to keep our staff and communities safe.

We kept in contact with residents remotely and, where required and possible, we put other measures in place, such as reducing work hours and moving sites further away from residential areas to help ease noise concerns.

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

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

You can contact the Commissioner at: 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

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

Find out if you're eligible for compensation at: 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

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**

Write to

FREEPOST
HS2 Community Engagement

Website **www.hs2.org.uk**

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

www.hs2inyourarea.co.uk

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