



Heidi Alexander
Via e-mail

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Dear Secretary of State

I am writing to set out the ongoing impact of HS2 works on residents in Hillingdon and to seek Government support in addressing the continued harm that is now expected over a much longer period than originally planned.

While official timelines place the start of HS2 construction in 2020, the reality on the ground in Hillingdon is very different. Significant enabling works began as early as 2017 and have been continuous since that point. These were not minor or preparatory works in any sense.

They involved large scale tree clearance across wide areas, major utility diversions and extensive ground investigations through residential communities. All this activity brought with it prolonged disruption, including sustained protestor action and the need for significant security measures. From the outset, residents have experienced the noise, traffic impacts and loss of local amenity normally associated with full construction. The result is that our communities have, in practical terms, been living with the impacts of HS2 for a decade already, without any meaningful break in that disruption.

As the first above ground section out of London, the impacts in Hillingdon have been particularly acute. Once formal works commenced, the borough was required to accommodate some of the most intensive and visible elements of the scheme. This included activity to support the Northolt tunnel, with large volumes of excavated material dumped on local land. Alongside this, residents have had to live with major construction projects such as Copthall Green tunnel excavation and the Colne Valley viaduct.

The scale of these works has been significant, affecting a wide geographic area yet concentrating disruption on the same communities. The consequences have been profound. We have lost much valued facilities such as Hillingdon Outdoor Activity Centre and Ruislip Golf Course. In their place, residents have faced years of heavy plant,

construction traffic, noise, visual intrusion and general disturbance, with very little respite. The resilience and patience of these communities is beyond commendable.

It is important to add that in our role as a public authority overseeing the works, we have permitted extensions beyond the limits set by the Act, onto Council owned land, to reduce costs to the public and support more efficient delivery of the project. We have also allowed work outside core hours, despite the disruption to residents, to help keep the project on schedule. Throughout, we have worked closely with the contractors to progress the project as quickly as possible.

Despite all that, we now understand that SCS, the main contractor for the Ickenham and Ruislip area, is expected to remain on site for at least a further four years. This will then be followed by the rail systems phase for potentially another 5 years. It is important to note that this next phase will not simply pass through the area laterally. Rail systems fit out is intended to be delivered from a new hub railhead in Ickenham. The track will be laid both east and west from that locations meaning activity will continue to be centred on these communities for a prolonged period.

Taken together, this suggests residents could face around 19 years of disruption, compared with the original 10-year programme presented to residents and the Council during the parliamentary petitioning process.

At that time, the Council secured a bespoke £2 million amenity fund in recognition of the impact of a 10-year scheme. Given the scale and duration of the additional disruption, we believe there is a strong case for this to be formally recognised through further funding for the Hillingdon amenity fund, to support appropriate compensatory measures for what is now likely to be another decade of disturbance.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter with this important community with you and can be available to meet at your convenience .

Yours sincerely,
Cllr Steve Tuckwell
Leader of the Council
London Borough of Hillingdon

Yours sincerely



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