



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

John Parrott
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Our ref: NH/rg

Dear John

Thank you to you and your colleagues for a productive conversation on Thursday 31st August about your engagement with my constituents. I have since met with representatives of both the Ickenham and Harefield Residents Associations. As promised, I am writing to suggest a way forward.

You recognise there is a problem, and that is welcomed by my constituents. There is a common desire I feel to move on to a new phase where we can have meaningful conversations about how we can make current plans work better for both HS2 and the Community. To be blunt that means fast forwarding through the current phase where HS2 community engagement teams are unable to answer in any meaningful way the questions that we have. That is frustrating for you and only compounds the problem of trust that we have.

So we do feel that we should focus on arranging substantive meetings between the appointed Contractor and residents. As discussed, these need to be meaningful and your suggestion that November is the right time frame is accepted. That gives the Contractor time to climb their learning curve and come to the meeting with some well-informed views on what is possible and what is worth exploring further. There is one further suggestion from our side. Those first meetings with the Contractor will create an all-important first impression as to whether HS2 is serious about the existing agreement with Hillingdon Council, let alone seeking to improve on it. In that context, if these meetings go wrong, then that will shape the future relationship with HS2 and the degree to which you can work with the community. In that context, it is very important that the Contractor is well informed about community priorities and concerns. Both Ickenham and Harefield Resident Associations would be very keen to have a pre-meet, ideally in September, with the Contractor simply to download their view. I support this and would be grateful for confirmation that HS2 can help to facilitate this first step.

In relation to Harefield, there are two specific issues which need attention, irrespective of the contractor. The first relates to the design of the viaduct and the



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perceived inability of local communities to have a say in that process. The second relates to South Harefield, and concerns about the failure to implement advance planting that will give adequate screening to residents of Hillside, irrespective of the final location of the grid supply point. On the first point, we do know that a "specimen design" has been submitted to HS2, and we would like to know when that will be shared with the communities affected for discussion. We would also like to know what criteria were set for the production of the Specimen design. Specifically, we want to know what weighting was put on noise protection, which is the primary concern of Harefield. On the second point, I had the impression from our call that current screening plans were under review, and we would be grateful for an update. As discussed, the concern of residents is that current plans will not provide effective screening in time based on size of trees and proposed time of planting. A case of too little too late.

Finally, I would like to reinforce the point made by constituents about the need for HS2 to be on top of their game in communicating to residents in advance of the early works. Both in the case of exploratory work in Ickenham, and the first appearance of HS2 on Harvil Road the feedback from the community has been negative in terms of the community engagement. I would strongly urge you to revisit your approach and make sure that there is a very effective community engagement strategy well in advance of any works.

I look forward to your response to these points.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick Hurd".

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