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CC: Mark Thurston, CEO, HS2 Ltd

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Dear Secretary of State,

We are writing to express my shock and opposition to the announcement from HS2, who are constructing a ventilation shaft at Mandeville Road in Northolt, London Borough of Ealing, that they intend to extend construction works to 24 hours a day.

Ealing Council is committed to supporting low carbon public transport, and we want to be able to engage positively with you and with HS2 to support a nationwide transport system fit for the future, linking west London with the rest of the country. However, 24 hour working is totally unreasonable and will blight the lives of our residents in Carr Road and Badminton Close who have already had to put up with so much.

HS2 construction has seriously disrupted life for these residents, who have repeatedly reported noise and air pollution, damage to fences and even flooding. Now, they are being asked to live with noisy, light polluting construction taking place all night. This is simply unacceptable.

Ealing Council have throughout done everything in our power to stand up for residents, but the HS2 Act has meant that our hands have often been tied. Nonetheless, we have urgently raised problems reported by residents, and will continue to hold HS2 to account. We have worked with HS2 to improve their communications with residents, ensuring letters are in plain English and regular updates are provided. We pushed for HS2 to provide blackout blinds and noise insulation for all affected properties, but we know that some properties need more.

However, we do not have the full range and scope of powers we need to take the action our residents require to prevent intrusive works, secure adaptations to their homes and provide compensation.





The HS2 Act, which was passed by government in 2017, removes any real ability of local councils and magistrates to control the impact of the works that take place locally. As you are aware, as Secretary of State you can simply overrule council officers.

Even where the noise and vibration threshold limits, as specified within the HS2 Code of Construction Practice, are adhered to by HS2 contractors, the proposed 24 hour works regime could still have significant negative impacts due to prolonged exposure. We strongly feel this is a dangerous precedent being set by HS2 as 24 hour working offers no respite for residents, including those with children and young families.

This also impacts Ealing residents in North Acton who have to live with the noise, dust and traffic disruption from the Old Oak Common site. Ealing Council has invested significant officer time in working with residents in both Northolt and North Acton, using qualified professionals in our highways, noise and air pollution, planning enforcement and legal teams.

We have been pushing hard for noise insulation for residents in Northolt and we recognise and acknowledge HS2 has now indicated they will be offering this, in an attempt to mitigate the impact of 24 hour working. But our residents need financial compensation and far greater noise and light mitigation, as the works have already had a significant negative impact for many.

Most of our work on behalf of Northolt and North Acton residents has come at the local taxpayers' expense, as HS2 fund only a small proportion of Ealing Council's officer time dedicated to sorting problems caused by HS2. Meanwhile, other local authorities receive significantly more funding from HS2 to employ officers to advocate for the community. We hope you agree that Northolt and North Acton residents are just as deserving.

Our residents need the plans to extend construction hours all night to be cancelled urgently. Failing that, residents, whose lives have already been blighted even without the extended hours, deserve significant compensation. The prime minister's father, Stanley Johnson, received £4.4m compensation from HS2 and we can't see why residents in Northolt shouldn't get compensation too.

Local residents also need assurances that future changes to construction hours and operations will not have any greater negative impact or be pushed through without extensive consultation and compensation. The conditions that residents have been subjected to were not made clear at the outset, and many feel that the generous permissions granted to HS2 by government legislation have been used to secure changes that would not have been agreed at the outset. HS2 must build the trust of Ealing residents, and that begins with honesty and transparency.



Ealing Council support low carbon public transport. But HS2 construction cannot continue to have such damaging and harmful impacts for our residents.

We are asking you to urgently inform HS2 that you will not agree to 24 hour working at the Mandeville Road site. We are further asking that you agree compensation for local people and additional funding for Ealing Council to ensure we can advocate for our residents impacted by HS2, both in Northolt and in North Acton.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Peter Mason
Leader, London Borough of Ealing

Cllr Deirdre Costigan
Cabinet Member for Climate Action