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Dear Secretary of State

Wells House Road, Old Oak Common: the case for a bespoke local settlement

HS2 is a national priority, but at Old Oak Common its delivery has fallen disproportionately on one small community. Wells House Road has absorbed impacts far greater, and far longer-lasting, than anyone was asked to accept in 2016. A fair settlement here is both a matter of basic equity and a test of how Government treats the communities that carry the cost of national infrastructure.

We are writing to request a bespoke package of compensation and support for the residents of Wells House Road. The arrangements currently available to them are plainly inadequate given the scale and duration of the impacts they face.

Wells House Road is an exceptional case. The duration, intensity and cumulative nature of the impacts are fundamentally different from the circumstances assumed when the existing compensation framework was established, and are unique to communities along the line. We ask the Department to recognise this at the outset, because these impacts are experienced together and cannot fairly be assessed, or dismissed, point by point in isolation.

When residents accepted the scheme during the passage of the Hybrid Bill in 2016, Old Oak station completion was expected some 10 to 13 years earlier than it is now. Those who accepted around seven years of disruption face close to two decades. The closure of Old Oak Common Lane, presented in the Bill as lasting 'up to one year', is now expected to last at least four years, and is one of the single greatest impacts residents face. Wells House Road is not simply a community living near the railway: it is a residential enclave immediately adjacent to a major, multi-site construction operation, surrounded on three sides by the largest construction site in the UK, and will be permanently affected by its proximity to one of the largest stations in London, with the noise, pollution and traffic that brings.

Against that backdrop, the existing compensation schemes are failing residents:

- **Prolonged Disruption Compensation Scheme.** Eligibility turns on a construction noise threshold measured over a limited period. It does not capture the traffic, severance, vibration, dust, light intrusion and loss of mature screening that residents live with daily. The Department's own 2025 review recognised the need for broader measures of disruption; Wells House Road exemplifies that case.
- **Small Claims Process.** Residents are reporting structural damage to their homes, yet small claims are capped at £10,000, and claims under Part 1 of the Land Compensation Act 1973 cannot be pursued until a year after railway operations commence and do not cover construction impacts at all. The support offered bears no relation to the scale of the damage being done, and residents should not be left to absorb the cost of harm caused by the works.
- **Need to Sell Scheme.** This addresses route blight, not the consequences of remaining in place during prolonged construction. Applicants must first demonstrate an independent need to move, so households that have endured years of disruption without a change in personal circumstances may be least likely to qualify. The 'no prior knowledge' test is equally hard to justify when purchasers were told a materially different construction timeline from the one now being delivered.

Residents also see a clear inequity with rural areas, where homeowners can access purchase and compensation schemes based largely on distance from the railway, while Wells House Road, surrounded by construction, can access none of them. The principle of a tailored solution is already established: in 2017 bespoke property schemes were introduced for the Shimmer Estate in Mexborough precisely because national schemes could not address exceptional local circumstances. Where standard arrangements fail, a local solution should follow.

Residents face being unable either to leave or to remain comfortably in their homes, with Land Registry data suggesting significant declines in local property values. They are not seeking windfall gains, only protection from disproportionate loss. The equality and wellbeing implications are also serious: road and stair closures, diversions and changes to bus routes fall hardest on older and disabled residents and families with young children. Parliament's Select Committee recognised these risks as early as 2018, yet no comprehensive wellbeing assessment has been undertaken.

Accordingly, we ask the Department to:

1. Direct HS2 Ltd to develop a bespoke Wells House Road package, drawing on the precedent established at the Shimmer Estate.
2. Reassess eligibility for the Prolonged Disruption Compensation Scheme against current construction programmes, applying exceptional circumstances provisions where appropriate.
3. Introduce a property assistance route at unblighted value for households that need to sell.
4. Remove the £10,000 cap on structural damage claims on Wells House Road and establish independent adjudication, similar to the Thames Tideway model.
5. Commission an updated equality impact assessment reflecting the current construction programme and its cumulative local impacts.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Peter Mason
Leader
Ealing Council



Councillor Dominic Moffitt
Cabinet Member for Climate Action
Ealing Council