



HS2 E Update

May 2020

HS2 ongoing work

As said last month, there is already a substantial amount of HS2 preparatory work being undertaken and this is increasing. You can see the work that is taking place at the HS2 website, Commonplace section, (Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire) and also sign up for automatic alerts:

<https://hs2inbucksandoxfordshire.commonplace.is/schemes/proposals/works-in-your-area/details>

HS2 Ltd and contractor engagement and communications

HS2 Ltd has been widely criticised in the media and locally for its lack of effective engagement and communication with affected stakeholders, in particular regarding their aspiration in their Community Engagement Strategy *'to be a good neighbour every single day, by respecting the people and communities we impact and being sensitive to their needs, earning our social licence to operate'*.

We are having ongoing discussions with contractors about how this can be improved. HS2 Ltd reports that they have undergone a recent reorganisation and are moving towards Integrated Planning Teams with contractors. We have asked to see their new structures, plans and programmes and have asked how they intend to improve on their engagement.

Public Accounts Committee (PAC) report

The Committee from all sides of the House published a recent updated report saying that there is a risk of further cost increases on HS2. It goes on to say 'the project has gone badly off course and is now estimated to cost up to £88 billion, significantly more than the original budget of £55.7 billion'. It also says that the Government failed to provide Parliament with clear warning that value for money was at risk. You can view the full report here:

<https://committees.parliament.uk/work/34/high-speed-2-spring-2020-update/publications/>

Chief Executive of HS2 Ltd waives bonus

The Chief Executive of HS2 Ltd, Mark Thurston, is to waive his bonus for 2019-20.

Mr Thurston has told the Board it was inappropriate to accept the £38,000 performance award in the middle of a pandemic when so many other people have been making sacrifices.

The Chief Executive came under fire from the Public Accounts Committee over his bonus in 2018-19 when HS2 was beset with cost overruns, which he argued were inherited when he took over in 2017.

Tunnel boring machines naming competition

HS2 Ltd has launched a competition to vote for names for the first pair of tunnel boring machines. Details can be found below:

<https://www.hs2.org.uk/tbmvoting/>

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Buckinghamshire Council HS2 Webpages:

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/environment/high-speed-2-hs2/>

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