**Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill**

Minister of State for Rail

Great Minster House

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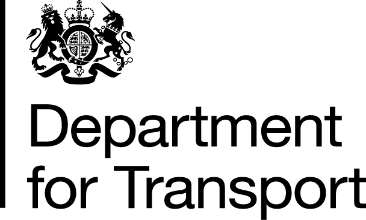
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The Baroness Redfern

House of Lords

London

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26 July 2024

Dear Baroness Redfern,

Thank you for your contribution during the Oral Question debate held on Tuesday 23 July. As promised, I am writing to provide further details on question that you raised.

Transport is an essential part of our mission to rebuild Britain and we’re committed to delivering infrastructure that works for the whole country. We will thoroughly review the position we have inherited before setting out more detailed plans in due course, including a disposal programme for land and property acquired for HS2 that is no longer required.

I recognise that building infrastructure projects can be disruptive to people’s lives and homes, and I understand the difficulties that a sizeable minority of property owners have faced – some of them for years – regarding HS2.

You raised concerns about the lack of progress in agreeing outstanding HS2 compensation claims, especially injurious affection claims. Like you, I am keen to see all claims settled rapidly and prolonged disputes avoided wherever possible. Injurious affection can be a difficult area, but any compensation payments must be based on a reasonable degree of evidence. HS2 Ltd has paid out on a significant number of injurious affection claims, but some claims received by HS2 Ltd do not identify the “injury” and instead simply refer to a previous Lands Tribunal decision (with completely different circumstances) as the basis of the claim. I will continue to urge HS2 Ltd to expedite all cases, but you will appreciate that they are able to act only upon evidenced claims.

You also expressed concern about the time taken to return land that was taken on a temporary basis. To date, HS2 Ltd has handed back 80 sites across Phase 1. Hand back of further sites will depend on the completion of permanent works, including land rights agreement, restoration of sites by contractors and agreement of that restoration by landowners and the relevant Local Authority. Hand back will also follow the release of temporary compounds and access routes in line with the construction and rail systems installation and testing schedule.

I hope the above is helpful, but please feel free to contact me again if you require more information.

I have copied all Noble Lords who spoke in this discussion and will place a copy of this letter in the Library of the House.

Yours sincerely,

A signature on a white surface

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**Peter, Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill**

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR RAIL**