

Newsletter

January/February 2018

CHARGE

Camden HS2 Association of
Residents' Groups for
Engagement

By and for residents affected by HS2 in Camden

This is the newsletter from the umbrella group helping coordinate the activities of the residents' groups and TRAs affected by HS2. Find out more and sign up for updates at chargegroup.org. There was no January newsletter due to the limited amount of news over the holidays.

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Complain to HS2

You can complain to HS2 as explained [here](#). You can get their attention by ensuring that there are formal complaints about the things that are bothering you.

Tips: please specify it is to be treated as a formal complaint. Please request an escalation whenever you are not happy with their response. Eventually you can get it to the HS2 CEO and the Complaints Commissioner. Please send a copy to your CHARGE rep if you can, so we can keep track.

Air quality

The Mayor is consulting on his [proposals to improve air quality](#). Air quality on many streets in our areas is already illegally bad. Please consider responding that the Mayor's proposals should be made stronger and implemented faster.

Compulsory purchases

The Camden Civic Society held a meeting on compulsory purchases in December. HS2 had been dragging its feet on paying people before they were forced out of their homes. We gather many people have now been paid 90% of the compensation that HS2 claims they are owed, although it not clear whether everyone has. We recommend that you take independent advice immediately if you receive a letter saying that HS2 intends to compulsorily purchase your property.

Demolitions and construction

Demolitions have started with the parapet wall on Park Village East followed by the DB Cargo shed and a number of buildings to the west of the station. HS2's most recent updates are [here](#), together with four and twelve month looks ahead. Many sites adjacent to the station have been hoarded off, or will be shortly, in preparation for demolition.

Cardington Street was closed on 13th November and HS2's diversion has caused near-gridlock on North Gower Street, covered below. Camden Council has promised to institute signage to reduce traffic using Euston Street as a rat run. This would never have happened if a proper impact assessment had been carried out.

HS2 has now closed the west side of Euston Square Gardens. HS2 has felled many of the trees there to make room for a temporary taxi rank, over our energetic objections.

Daisy Froud

Daisy is the independent facilitator picked by the community and paid for by HS2. She organized a workshop with HS2 in September and has been helping the community write a draft setting out how HS2 could improve its engagement in future which will become our Camden-specific Local Engagement Plan.

Community liaison with Camden Council

We await the outcome of Camden Council's follow up with Rob Carr of HS2 Ltd about a potential 10 mph limit on a small number of residential streets that risk seeing high HGV volumes due to HS2-related traffic.

Keir Starmer

A small group of community representatives is now meeting regularly with Sir Keir Starmer MP to update him on issues of concern to Camden residents and businesses and to enlist his support in drawing these to the attention of the government and HS2 Ltd. At the most recent meeting on 12th January, Keir reported on his meeting earlier in the week with the Chairman of HS2 Ltd, Sir David Higgins. He had been assured that the keenly-awaited revised proposals for the approaches to Euston station would be published in April and that plans were firmly in hand to enable spoil and materials for the construction of the line to be moved by rail. A next meeting is scheduled for 18th April. Other issues raised by the community with Keir included the government's continuing delay in publishing its promised proposals for a construction compensation scheme in urban areas and the ongoing issues being faced by residents and businesses in and around Euston that have been served with Compulsory Purchase Orders. Keir is continuing to address these issues with government ministers and with HS2 Ltd. There will be an opportunity to take up these and other concerns with Keir at a public meeting he has agreed to attend in April; further details in due course.

HS2 working groups

After the Act was passed, various Working Groups were set up with representatives from the various residents' groups, to hold HS2 properly to account about things too detailed for the Euston Community Representatives' Group (ECRG) to be able to cover.

1. Traffic

a. Lorry routes

HS2 has declined Camden's request for a community representative to be allowed to attend pre-application discussions with Camden. We are strenuously pushing for HS2 not to be given blanket approval for all relevant roads and unlimited amounts of traffic for the entire time of the project, leaving Camden with no way to hold HS2 to account. We are very concerned that HS2 may get the right to use any TfL road without further control (these are the red routes in Camden such as Camden High Street, Hampstead Road, Camden Road, Camden Street, Euston Road).

b. Speed limits

We await the result of HS2's study of imposing 10 mph limits if lorries must unavoidably go down residential streets like Stanhope Street.

c. Traffic

The large amount of rat-running down Euston Street following HS2's closure of Cardington Street without any impact study has resumed. We have complained loudly, urgently and repeatedly to Camden and HS2 about this incompetence and we are pressing for urgent action. This sets a very bad precedent for future road closures and is not an acceptable way of planning diversionary routes.

d. Dangerous road works

HS2's contractors have now created two different sites on Hampstead Road, the layout of which had to be modified to make them safe after complaints by residents. We find it deeply disturbing that we are having to check their homework in this way. If there is an accident, it is quite clear who will be to blame.

2. Air quality, open spaces and trees

HS2 has felled all the remaining trees in the Gardens. The exhumation of 60,000 graves in the Gardens continues. HS2 has also felled many trees in the west of Euston Square Gardens in order to provide space for a temporary taxi rank.

The new draft London Plan provides that developers should replace trees felled for a development with trees of equivalent value. That is not what HS2 is doing in Camden.

The diversions put in place after the closure of Cardington Street have caused noticeable further damage to air quality in the Drummond Street area, where many trees are being removed by HS2.

We continue to press HS2 and Camden to match up to their promises to find places for replacement trees where they are being lost, including moving or re-designing intended utilities where possible, rather than pretending that a new tree in Primrose Hill is a 'replacement' for a mature tree with a large canopy, lost near the station.

3. Station Design

We have objected at length to various aspects of the current design, including the proposed lack of direct access from Drummond Street and HS2's intention to concrete over the remnants of St James's Gardens, and have made suggestions which would better match HS2's professed intention to restore green spaces as close as possible to where they have been removed.

We have also suggested improvements to HS2's proposed design for the Cobourg Street vent shaft, which looks like it may result in another antisocial blank wall on Cobourg Street similar in nature to the wall of the current TfL building on Cobourg Street between Drummond Street and Euston Street,

contrary to all good principles of urban design. It does not bode well for HS2's professed intention to create a world-class station.

We are being supported by Camden Council. HS2 is blaming TfL and TfL is blaming HS2, but TfL has so far not been willing to meet with us directly.

4. Noise Insulation

Very little progress has been made on installation of noise insulation since Royal Assent. To the best of our knowledge, only a few residents' homes have had noise insulation fitted.

Despite our appeal to basic humanity and our strong legal arguments, HS2 has clung to what it sees as its minimum statutory obligation to install noise insulation before works exceeding the noise levels triggering entitlement to noise insulation. We have been arguing all year that every home that is definitely entitled to noise insulation should have received it as soon as possible. As a result, many residents suffered needless sleepless nights over the Christmas holidays while work was done to the tracks north of the station. HS2 is entirely to blame. The first Listed Building application has been submitted by HS2 for a building it now owns on Park Village East for the "temporary" installation of secondary glazing for 15 years.

New draft London Plan

The Mayor of London's draft London Plan very oddly proposes that "scope exists to reconfigure Euston Square Gardens". We are deeply concerned that this could result in a north-south orientation for the square with building plots located on either side of it on Euston Road. This would cause much of the Gardens to be overshadowed by the tall buildings which would be permitted in the former parts of the Gardens. An official from the GLA told us that the idea must have come from Camden Council, although Camden Council has denied that it did. We have asked Camden Council to ask for the text to be clarified so that it clearly does not endorse a north-south reorientation of the Square.

Cumulative impacts

We continue to be very concerned about cumulative impacts and HS2 has given us no comfort that it has any process in place to 'budget' the impacts set out in the Environmental Statement across the different phases of the project. It is therefore entirely possible that some early contractors will cause all of the cumulative impacts (noise, air quality, congestion etc) foreseen in the Environmental Statement, which would make it inevitable that HS2 will go far beyond those limits in completing the project.

Crossrail

Crossrail has suffered a [recent setback](#) and is challenged to meet its budget and launch date target.

About CHARGE

CHARGE coordinates the activities of the various residents' groups and TRAs in Camden that are affected by HS2. It is currently chaired by David Auger. The current representatives appointed by the residents' groups from each area are:

Amphill – Fran Heron

Camden Cutting Area East Side – Phebe Robinow/Christy Rogers

Camden Cutting Area West Side – Luisa Auletta and Matt Hollier

Drummond Street and surrounds – John Myers

Primrose Hill – Jeff Travers

Regent's Park Estate – Steve Christofi and Ursula Brown

Somers Town – Slaney Devlin

South of Euston Road – Jo Hurford

North Camden Group – Tony Connor

In addition, Camden Civic Society and the HS2 into London group are currently represented by Dorothea Hackman (with Hero Granger-Taylor deputizing) and by Mary Burd or John Neve.