

Newsletter

December 2017

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.

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Meeting on compulsory purchases

Camden Civic Society has organized a meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday 13th December 2017 at St Pancras Church Hall, 1 Lancing Street NW1 1NA. HS2 has been evicting owners from their properties before any payment of partial compensation, leaving them without the money to find new housing. Please come along to this meeting if you are likely to be affected by compulsory purchase as there will be legal representatives there to answer questions.

Air quality study

Imperial College is working with Camden on a research proposal to investigate the health, environment and transport impacts of HS2. Members of the local community interested in feeding into this proposal are invited to join small group discussions at 1-2 p.m. on Tuesday 12th December

2017 at the Crypt Centre, Munster Square, NW1 3PL. For further details contact Ursula (sulabrown@hotmail.com) or Hebba Haddad at Imperial College (h.haddad@imperial.ac.uk).

Volunteers needed!

If you would like to help, please email charge@ughtongroup.com. In particular, at the moment we very much need a volunteer with a legal background to read the agreement that Hillingdon Council reached with HS2 so we can tell Camden Council where they need to aim higher.

Demolitions and construction

Demolitions are starting 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 HS2's most recent update is [here](#), although the four-week update is now out of date.

Cardington Street was closed on 13th November and HS2's diversion has caused near-gridlock on North Gower Street, covered below.

HS2 has now hosted several community drop-in events but has refused to provide a presentation within those events similar to the format of the former Construction Open Evenings to allow residents to ask questions and hear questions being asked by others. The Construction Open Evenings were scrapped by HS2 without consultation with residents.

HS2 will close the west side of Euston Square Gardens in **mid-January**.

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. We await HS2's response to that draft.

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 monthly 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. The 10th November meeting agreed that Keir's letter to Sir David Higgins, HS2's Chairman, should also make the point that demolition and other infrastructure works should not be happen before the revised plans for Euston and its approaches have been finalised and agreed. The letter also asked that details of the new scheme be provided to the community as soon as possible. We await a substantive response.

The meeting discussed issues that Keir should raise at planned meetings with Georgia Gould and Camden officers, including: encouraging Camden to press HS2 Ltd for details of the revised scheme for coming into Euston; seeking clarification of the scope and purpose of the agreement that Camden are currently negotiating with HS2 and underlining the need for greater transparency and consultation with the local community before anything is finalised; raising the community's concerns about Camden's approach to approving HS2 lorry routes; and requesting greater transparency concerning plans for the future development of Euston station.

We have also alerted Keir to what appears to be a growing problem of inordinate and unreasonable delay by HS2 in paying compensation to leaseholders who have been served with compulsory purchase orders.

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 have asked who within HS2 made that decision. We are very concerned to find out that HS2 is seeking a 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.

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

HS2's contractor, CSJV, notified Camden of the intended diversions down Euston Street and Drummond Street following the closure of Camden Street, without any warning or (so far as we are aware) studies of the resulting impact on gridlock, pollution and residents' health. 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.

2. Air quality, open spaces and trees

HS2 has used its new, not-yet-finalised proposal to extend the basement of the new station out under the remnants of St James's Gardens to justify chopping down all the remaining trees in the Gardens. The exhumation of 60,000 graves in the Gardens continues.

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 one lost near the station.

3. Station Design

HS2 invited community representatives to another meeting about station design, although no progress had been made since our last response. A new designer is being appointed for the next stage ('RIBA 3') of the design process and HS2 has agreed to feed through our comments for that.

We have objected at length to various aspects, 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 would otherwise 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.

4. Noise Insulation

Very little progress has been made on installation of noise insulation since Royal Assent. To the best of our knowledge, only one resident's home has 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 will suffer needless sleepless nights over Christmas while work is done to the tracks north of the station. HS2 is entirely to blame.

New draft London Plan

The Mayor of London's draft London Plan does not offer any reassurance to residents in this area, and there seems to be a shortfall in terms of the desired amount of office space. We will circulate more detailed comments in future newsletters, before the consultation period expires.

Cumulative impacts

We are very concerned about the cumulative impacts of HS2 and other projects such as Cycling Superhighway 11 and Camden's CIP programme. In that context, please note this report from the Camden Town District Management Committee on CIP:

Camden Council on Notice – Asset-stripping Somers Town is a risk too far

Readers may know that LBC Community Investment Programme (CIP) is a borough-wide initiative to fund investment in schools and homes via sale of land and/or private house sales on CIP sites. In the current political climate with no funding for civic infrastructure, CIP yields benefit. The problem is that benefits are diminishing and it is the most disadvantaged communities who are losing out most.

The litany of HS2 chaos in our area is significantly increased in Regents Park and St Pancras & Somers Town wards, particularly the latter where the Central Somers Town CIP has commenced bulldozing our community assets, selling our park to a private developer to build a grotesque skyscraper and destroying our trees - yes, more, many more trees are facing the axe in a very tight area around Euston.

To add insult to injury, we recently heard of LBC plans to use money raised from our community and that should be reinvested in our community, the most deprived in Camden, to cross-subsidise development elsewhere.

At a DMC meeting on 6th December the Director of Development was given an unambiguous message following the proposal to asset strip Somers Town – You have already done more than enough harm. Asset stripping is a risk too far.

Lack of coordinated action will allow the intensification, gentrification and social cleaning of our entire area.

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

Vent shafts areas (Alexandra Road and Adelaide Road) – 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.