

The Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP
 Secretary of State for Transport
 Department for Transport
 Great Minster House
 33 Horseferry Road
 London
 SW1P 4DR

12th October 2026

Dear Secretary of State,

Proposed multi-year closure of Old Oak Common Lane for HS2 works

We are writing on behalf of the 10,000 residents Old Oak Alliance represents in and around the Old Oak Common area and local businesses affected by HS2's proposed full closure of Old Oak Common Lane for several years.

We ask you to intervene before any irreversible decision is taken, and commission an **independent review of the legal authority, evidential basis, environmental consequences – including impacts to quality of life for local people, alternatives and value for money of the proposed closure.**

We support the successful delivery of Old Oak Common Station. Our concern is not with the station itself but with whether a **multi-year severance of this important north-south route is authorised, necessary, proportionate and represents an appropriate use of public money.**

Parliament was presented with a road closure of up to 12 months. We are now facing several years.

The Environmental Statement supporting the HS2 legislation assessed a full closure of Old Oak Common Lane lasting **approximately 12 months.**

The Parliamentary petition material also records the approximately 12-month closure and demonstrates that residents were already challenging whether all reasonable options for keeping the road open to vehicles and buses had been properly examined.

HS2's plan is now for a closure of **four years or more, with Ealing Council now indicating that the closure could be longer.**

That is not a minor programme adjustment.

It is a material change in the duration, impact and cost of the intervention from the basis presented to Parliament and local communities.

HS2's July 2026 update confirmed that the long-term closure will not begin before early 2028 and that the road must be closed to construct the railway bridges, widen and

lower the road and construct retaining walls. HS2's current information also says that it cannot yet provide a firm programme because the route-wide HS2 programme is being reset.

This raises a fundamental question for Government:

How can a closure assessed and presented to Parliament as approximately 12 months now become a closure potentially four-to-six times longer without a transparent explanation of what statutory, environmental and other approvals are required?

We are not seeking to prejudge the legal answer. But reliance on the High Speed Rail (London–West Midlands) Act 2017 in general does not in itself answer the question of whether the **powers and environmental assessment relied upon by Parliament encompass a closure of this substantially greater duration and impact.**

At an absolute minimum, this requires a clear explanation before the closure proceeds.

The community impact cannot be assessed as though this were simply another construction project

A multi-year closure would follow **years of exceptional HS2 disruption for Old Oak Common, Park Royal, North and East Acton, Harlesden and businesses and communities across the surrounding area.**

Residents have already experienced:

- prolonged construction noise, including repetitive and intrusive noise;
- dust and air pollution;
- vibration;
- light pollution;
- major construction compounds and haul routes immediately alongside homes;
- road and pedestrian closures and community severance;
- traffic congestion and displacement;
- water, power, mobile and internet disruption;
- damage to homes, gardens and paving;
- prolonged uncertainty about completion dates and the future of the area; and
- enormous amounts of residents' unpaid time dealing with HS2 complaints, meetings, claims and attempts to secure basic mitigation.

The community has already lived with the consequences of HS2 for years. The station itself is now not expected to open until substantially later than originally anticipated, while some local impacts originally described as temporary have become prolonged or repeatedly extended.

A further multi-year closure of Old Oak Common Lane would compound these impacts rather than occurring in isolation.

The consequences include:

- longer and less reliable journeys;
- bus diversions and delays;
- traffic displacement onto already congested residential roads;
- impacts on school and workplace journeys;
- difficulties for deliveries and local businesses;
- implications for emergency access;
- additional impacts on air quality, noise, vibrations and structural damage to homes close to the road lowering works;
- increase property blight;
- greater difficulties for disabled and vulnerable people; and
- further community severance.

These intensified effects should not simply be treated as though they fall automatically within an assessment based on a closure of approximately one year.

The transport case for lowering the road needs to be reconsidered

HS2 states that the road must be lowered in order to allow **double-decker buses to pass beneath the new railway bridges**.

But the transport network around Old Oak Common has changed substantially since the original design assumptions were established.

In addition, the OPDC Strategic Transport Study dates from 2015 and an updated version has been awaited by local people for many years. Transport modelling by TfL continues but with no published output.

Old Oak Common will provide exceptional rail connectivity through:

- HS2;
- the Elizabeth line;
- Great Western Main Line services;
- Heathrow Express;
- North Acton and the Central line;
- Willesden Junction and the Bakerloo and London Overground networks; and
- potentially the West London Orbital

The question therefore needs to be asked:

What is the actual future requirement for bus capacity through Old Oak Common once this exceptional rail network is operational?

We are not arguing that double-decker buses have no role in London's transport network.

We are asking whether it remains proportionate to impose several years of extraordinary disruption on this community to facilitate a particular bus configuration when the **transport network, passenger behaviour and infrastructure around Old Oak Common have changed materially.**

This question is particularly relevant given the Guardian's recent analysis of London's bus network. Its investigation found that **578 of London's 700 bus routes have become slower over the last decade**, while annual passenger journeys have fallen by more than 300 million since 2013 despite population growth. The research cited indicates that a 10% reduction in bus speed can be associated with a 6% reduction in demand.

The report identifies a potential "circle of decline": slower and less reliable buses make public transport less attractive, which reduces demand and places further pressure on the network.

Against that background, it is legitimate to ask whether closing a major west London road for several years — thereby displacing traffic and potentially making bus journeys slower — is the right transport intervention.

There is currently no transparent published options appraisal

The case for intervention is strengthened by the continuing absence of a transparent, published options appraisal demonstrating:

- why a full closure of several years is unavoidable;
- why the works cannot be phased while retaining partial access;

- whether temporary bridges or other temporary infrastructure could retain some access;
- whether alternative construction methods could shorten the closure;
- whether the scope of the works can be reduced;
- whether different traffic arrangements could materially reduce the duration;
- the incremental transport benefit of lowering the road to permit double-decker buses between Old Oak Common and East Acton;
- current passenger-demand forecasts for that intervention;
- the costs and benefits of double-decker provision compared with other bus configurations and alternative transport connections;
- the role of walking and cycling;
- the role of connections to North Acton and Willesden Junction;
- the potential contribution of the West London Orbital; and
- whether the **Eastern Access Road** could provide an alternative means of improving access and reducing pressure on Old Oak Common Lane – particularly since the closure of Car Giant means that nothing likes in its way

There also needs to be a clear explanation of the engineering case for any bridge widening or additional works beyond those assessed in the original Environmental Statement. Considering this work is nothing to do with HS2, this should have been subject to a separate consultation outside the Hybrid Bill.

Most importantly, HS2 should demonstrate **why the public benefit is sufficient to justify the exceptional harm, cost and disruption now being proposed.**

We therefore request an independent review

We ask you to commission a review undertaken by suitably qualified persons who are genuinely independent of HS2 Ltd, its principal contractors and the bodies that developed the current proposal.

The review should determine:

Legal authority

Whether the proposed multi-year closure, and the full scope of works now advanced, remain within the powers approved by Parliament and the limits of the High Speed Rail (London–West Midlands) Act 2017.

Parliamentary and environmental compliance

Whether the change from an approximately 12-month closure to a four or more year closure, potentially extending further, requires Supplementary Environmental Information, a refreshed Environmental Impact Assessment, further highway or planning approvals, or further Parliamentary or ministerial authorisation.

Necessity and proportionality

Whether HS2 has demonstrated that a full closure of this duration is strictly necessary and represents the least harmful reasonably practicable option.

Alternatives

Whether HS2 has properly assessed phased construction, partial access, temporary infrastructure, alternative engineering solutions, reduced scope of work and options that do not depend upon providing double-decker access to East Acton.

Transport case

Whether current passenger-demand and network modelling supports the asserted need for double-decker services between Old Oak Common and East Acton, taking account of alternative connections and expected passenger interchange patterns.

Environmental and community impacts

Whether air quality, noise, traffic displacement, equalities, accessibility, local-business, emergency-access and community-severance effects have been reassessed against the present proposal rather than the materially shorter baseline.

Value for money

Whether the costs of road lowering, bridge works, mitigation and prolonged traffic management are justified by measurable transport and regeneration benefits, particularly in the context of the wider HS2 reset and the need for rigorous control of public expenditure.

Pending completion of that review

We ask you to direct that:

- **no irreversible decision or approval is given for a multi-year full closure;**
- HS2, TfL and OPDC publish the complete demand modelling, engineering assessments, options appraisal, cost-benefit analysis, environmental evidence and legal-position statement supporting the proposal;
- the relevant highway and planning authorities confirm publicly which approvals are required and how the substantially amplified impacts will be assessed;
- any updated environmental information is properly consulted upon;

- the review's terms of reference, evidence and conclusions are published in full; and
- residents, businesses, local authorities, MPs and community organisations are given a meaningful opportunity to scrutinise and respond to the evidence before a final decision is taken;
- that if HS2 is to go ahead with the prolonged road closure, that residents and businesses are fairly compensated.

The burden should rest with HS2 and the relevant public bodies to demonstrate, with evidence, that a closure of this exceptional duration is **lawful, necessary, proportionate and the best available use of public funds**.

Local communities should not be required to accept several additional years of severance on the basis of unpublished modelling, unexplained programme changes or a general assertion that the HS2 Act provides sufficient authority.

Should local residents expect compensation for these immense impacts?

If this does go ahead, there needs to be major financial compensation offered to residents who will no longer be able to or may no longer wish to live with the severe impacts to their lives and whose homes will be unsellable and/or unrentable during the duration of the works. Will there be an offer of like-for-like rehousing for the duration of the closure? Will there be an offer of compensation for landlords losing their income during this period?

We therefore ask you to confirm

1. **Will you commission the independent review requested?**
2. **Will any decision on the multi-year closure be paused pending its completion?**
3. **Will updated environmental information be required and consulted upon?**
4. **Does the Department consider further Parliamentary or ministerial approval necessary given the material change in the duration and impact of the closure?**
5. **When will the full supporting evidence be published?**
6. **What compensation will be offered to residents and businesses impacted by this closure?**

This is not an attempt to obstruct the delivery of Old Oak Common Station.

It is a request that a decision of **exceptional consequence for residents, businesses and London's transport network** is properly tested before it becomes irreversible.

The HS2 project has changed substantially since Parliament originally considered it. Its scope, timetable, costs and the surrounding transport network have all changed.

If circumstances have changed, the associated infrastructure decisions should be capable of being reconsidered too.

An independent review would provide an opportunity to establish whether the current proposal remains justified on the evidence available today. It would also give residents and businesses confidence that a four-to-six-year closure has not simply become inevitable because an earlier design decision has become embedded in the project.

We would welcome an urgent meeting with the Department for Transport and representatives of the affected community and ask for a substantive written response addressing each of the five questions above.

Yours sincerely,

Tom Campbell, Daniel Crawford, Colin George, Ewa Cwirko-Godycka, Elaine Gristock, Wendy Holloway, Libby Kemp, Tamas Lanyi, Kiesha Lewis, Theresa Magee, George Mantos, Rob Newman, Ciara O'Reilly, Henry Peterson, Chris Peyton, Claire Sheedy, Amanda Souter, Bernie Timmins, Mark Walker, Alan Woolford, Rosebella Yuan, Brian, Erica, Maren, Sam, Spencer, Steve, Trevena

On behalf of Old Oak Alliance. A coalition of local community groups representing more than 10,000 residents impacted by HS2 and OPDC development: including East Acton Golf Links RA, Harlesden Town Team/NF, Midland Terrace, North Acton, Oaklands Rise, Old Oak Estate RA, Old Oak NF, Shaftesbury Gardens, St Quentin RA, TITRA, Wells House Road RA, Wesley Estate RA

