

New Chair appointed to deliver HS2

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Sir Jonathan Thompson will be taking on the mantle of HS2 Ltd chair and the responsibility of driving forward Europe's largest infrastructure project.

Sir Jonathan's appointment, which follows almost a year as deputy chair, comes at a pivotal time for the HS2 programme as the Crewe-Manchester Bill moves through Parliament and work at Euston continues to progress and regenerate the surrounding area.

In his role, Sir Jonathan will be providing strategic leadership, oversight and accountability for the HS2 programme, ensuring it is delivered on time and in budget while continuing to create jobs, boost local economies and provide much needed capacity on our railways.

Sir Jonathan brings decades of experience delivering major projects having previously served as the permanent secretary at both the Ministry of Defence and HM Revenue and Customs. This is on top of overseeing huge landmark moments HS2 has already achieved during his time as deputy chair, including providing 1,000 apprenticeships and the completion of the first one-mile of tunnels at Long Itchington Wood.

HS2 is a once-in-a-lifetime project, which will improve transport connectivity across the North of England

and the Midlands. As well as being the largest infrastructure project in Europe, HS2 is also spearheading new methods of construction such as 2000 tonne tunnel boring machines and using new technology to ensure the natural landscape across the route is left in the same, if not better, condition than it was found.

This comes just months after the Chancellor and Prime Minister set out the Government's commitment to HS2 in the Autumn Statement, and reiterated their dedication to ensuring the project provides fast, more reliable services and connects people to new job opportunities.

Transport Secretary Mark Harper said: "HS2 goes far beyond simply making journeys quicker. It is a world-leading project that is already having a huge impact by regenerating communities and creating tens of thousands of jobs across the country.

"I am delighted to appoint Sir Jonathan as Chair, and with his breadth of experience I have no doubt he will be successful in delivering our shared goals of increasing capacity on our rail network, levelling up our country and driving economic growth for generations to come."

Sir Jonathan Thompson said: "I am delighted to have been appointed as HS2 Ltd Chair. During my time on the Board, this monumental project has already achieved some incredible milestones and I've seen first-hand how it will transform not only journeys but the lives of people across the country.

"I look forward to working with our first-class stakeholders and partners in my new role, to ensure this once in a lifetime opportunity fulfils its pioneering potential."

Also appointed today is Elaine Holt, as deputy Chair of the HS2 Ltd board. Elaine is an existing non-Executive director and an expert in both transport and the service industries. She will support the chair in leading the board.

Photo credit: HS2 Ltd