

Tom Harris appointed to the HS2 Ltd Board

August 9, 2021



Transport Secretary Grant Shapps has appointed Tom Harris as a Non-Executive Director to the High Speed 2 (HS2) Limited Board.

Tom has been appointed for a 3-year term, commencing on 1 July 2021, following an open and fair competition.

Tom, who has been a Non-Executive Director on the HS2 Ltd Board since July 2020, was appointed as a community engagement leader to strengthen the company's focus on community engagement, further ensuring that those impacted by HS2 continue to be listened to and treated with the respect they deserve.

Tom, a former parliamentarian, was also a member of the Expert Challenge Panel supporting the government's independent review of the railway industry, which recently resulted in the publication of the government's plan to transform the railways in Great Britain, the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail.

This appointment has been made in accordance with the Governance Code for public appointments. It follows the recent appointment of several other non-executive directors to the board to strengthen oversight and scrutiny of the UK's largest infrastructure project: Sir Jonathan Thompson in April this year, and Ian King and Elaine Holt last year.

HS2 Minister Andrew Stephenson said: "I am delighted that Tom will be able to continue his important work ensuring that the company remains fully focused on the people the project impacts.

"HS2 is committed to continuously improving its engagement with local communities and minimising the impact of construction wherever possible, through new best practices and cutting-edge innovation."

Tom Harris said: "I'm delighted to have been appointed to the HS2 Ltd Board. I've enjoyed being a part of this project over the past year, helping to strengthen the company's focus on community engagement and ensure everyone impacted by the new railway feels they are being listened to and treated with respect.

"As HS2 moves north, with work now underway on Phase 2a extending the line to Crewe, and the bill for the leg to Manchester currently being drafted, it's more important than ever that HS2 Ltd is clear, concise and respectful in its dealings with those affected, and I look forward to ensuring that happens."

The process to appoint a new Chair of HS2 Ltd is underway, following Allan Cook's departure on 31 July 2021.

The vacancy for Chair of HS2 Ltd is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Following the publication of the independent Oakervee review in February 2020, which recommended proceeding with HS2, Prime Minister Boris Johnson confirmed the project would go ahead to deliver better connectivity across the country, greater capacity on the rail network and shorter journey times.

Construction of Phase One of HS2 is now supporting over 16,000 jobs and more than 650 apprenticeships, with the project expected to have a lasting impact on jobs, skills and businesses in the UK, as part of the government's Plan for Jobs. Over 2,100 companies now have contracts to deliver work on HS2 and 97% of these are UK-based businesses. In February 2021, the Phase 2a Bill was given Royal Assent in a historic milestone that will bring the new high-speed railway to the north.

Photo credit: Department for Transport