

Our ref: HS2MC-25-1473

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP
Chair, Public Accounts Committee

via email

10 January 2025

Dear Sir Geoffrey,

Thank you for the opportunity to give evidence to your Committee on 19th December alongside Dame Bernadette Kelly and Alan Over from the Department for Transport and HS2 Ltd's new Chief Executive Mark Wild.

In the hearing I committed to try to provide further information to the Committee on the costs of mitigation schemes for great crested newts on the HS2 programme in response to a question from Luke Charters MP (Q17).

In order to facilitate efficient delivery of construction works, the provision and maintenance of habitat mitigation forms part of integrated work packages that have been competitively tendered. Within these contracts there is no requirement to segregate the costs of mitigation schemes and therefore it is not possible for HS2 Ltd to disaggregate the spending on provision of mitigation for specific species across these contracts.

Mr Charters referenced the mitigation for great crested newts at Halse Copse. I can confirm that the design of the mitigation there reflects the legislative requirements for the species in this location, whilst taking into account local planning considerations and the requirements to safely deliver the operational railway. The design of mitigation vary significantly in size across the HS2 route, reflecting the site specific requirements. Any proposed mitigations are subject to guidance and review from the regulators, to ensure it meets the regulatory and legislative requirements for protective species. It is also worth noting that the measures to address the ecological effects of HS2 were reported in the Environmental Statement and considered by Parliament during the passage of the High Speed Rail (London – West Midlands) Act.

I trust that this information is of use to the Committee.

Yours sincerely,



Alan Foster

Deputy Chief Executive Officer
High Speed Two (HS2) Ltd