

IN PARLIAMENT
HOUSE OF COMMONS
SESSION 2005-06

Crossrail Bill

Petition

Against – on Merits – Praying to be heard by Counsel, &c.

To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled.

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF THE FRIENDS OF MILE END PARK

SHEWETH as follows:-

1. A Bill (hereinafter referred to as “the Bill”) has been introduced and is now pending in your honourable House entitled “A bill to make provision for a railway transport system running from Maidenhead, in the County of Berkshire, and Heathrow Airport, in the London Borough of Hillingdon, through central London to Shenfield, in the County of Essex, and Abbey Wood, in the London Borough of Greenwich: and for connected purposes.”
2. The Bill is promoted by the Secretary of State for Transport (hereinafter called the “Promoter”).

Relevant clauses of the Bill

3. Clause 1 (Construction and maintenance of scheduled works) authorises the nominated undertaker to construct and maintain the works necessary for Crossrail as described in Schedule 1 to the Bill and shown on the plans and sections deposited with the Bill.
4. Clause 5 (Temporary possession and use) authorises the nominated undertaker to temporarily possess and use land necessary for the purposes of the Bill as described in Schedule 5 to the Bill and shown in the plans and sections deposited with the Bill.
5. Clause 6 (Acquisition of land within limits shown on the deposited plans) authorises the Promoter of the Bill to acquire land shown on deposited plans for the purposes of the proposed works or for any purpose connected with or ancillary to its undertaking.

Your Petitioners

6. Your Petitioners are the Friends of Mile End Park (hereinafter called FMEP). FMEP is a voluntary group formed in 2000 with over 100 members from the local and wider community, and many more supporters. The purpose of FMEP is to promote the interests of the park, developed with the support of the Millennium Commission, and its appropriate use and enjoyment by the community.

7. Mile End Park is of major regional and local significance. It was originally conceived by Sir Patrick Abercrombie as a key component of the Greater London Plan following the Second World War. Over the last 10 years it has been extensively modernised and refurbished via various sources of funding including £23,000,000 from the Millennium Commission. Since its recent refurbishment it has rapidly become a much-loved and well-used facility which makes a significant contribution to the quality of life of communities throughout east London and beyond. The Park has been awarded Green Flag status and been praised by the judges. The Park is regularly presented as an example of excellence by the Government agency, CABE Space and others.

8. It is respectfully submitted that the rights and interests of your Petitioners, users of Mile End Park and others who live and work in its vicinity, will be injuriously affected by the Bill if it is passed into law in its present form. Accordingly, your Petitioners object to the Bill for the reasons, among others, hereinafter appearing.

Your Petitioners' concerns

9. Your Petitioners' concerns relate in particular to the Bill's provisions for:

- The use of that part of Mile End Park known as Haverfield Green, to the west of the Regent's Canal and adjacent to Grove Road, as a holding area for excavated material,
- The construction and operation of a conveyor on a viaduct or supporting structures to deliver the excavated material to this holding site,
- The siting of a ventilation shaft near the Mile End Stadium, and
- The construction of a tunnel access shaft in the south-east corner of Mile End Park adjacent to Burdett Road.

10. Your Petitioners believe that the Promoter of the Bill has attached insufficient weight to the specific impacts of the holding area in Mile End Park in terms of:

- the loss for at least four years of the only flat area of open space in the Park north of the Mile End Road suitable and regularly used for the pursuit of team games such as football and football coaching, as well as numerous public events;
- the adverse impact on adjacent wildlife habitats and landscaped areas;

- the disturbance and disruption caused to areas adjacent to the proposed site for the holding area and conveyor, including the well used canal towpath, in terms of visual intrusion, and noise, light and air pollution; and
- the effect of these impacts on the use and enjoyment of the park and its facilities.

11. Similarly, we believe that inadequate consideration has been paid to the impacts of the operational activities associated with the use of Haverfield Green as a holding area in terms of the use of conveyors to transport soil, train and lorry movements, and site safety and security. In particular, we believe that alternative means of disposal of excavated material, including waterborne options, need further consideration. If no suitable alternatives can be found, we are concerned to ensure that due consideration is given to minimising the impact of operational activities, not least in terms of prior agreement over hours of operation which minimise disruption and disturbance to surrounding local communities and users of the Mile End Park.

12. Furthermore, your Petitioners are concerned that insufficient attention has been paid to minimising the damaging impact on the enjoyment of the park of the proposed tunnel access shaft in the south east corner of Mile End Park adjacent to Burdett Road in terms of its design, construction and mitigating measures.

13. Your Petitioners respectfully suggest that the Promoter has failed to consider that Mile End Park has a ring-fenced budget and depends for its income, and from this its upkeep, upon the success of private businesses operating in the Park, and the financial contribution from directly managed facilities. The Promoters proposals will inevitably make the Park less attractive and accessible to users who will be prompted to seek their recreation elsewhere. This situation will provide a negative legacy that the Park managers and others will have to deal with long after the proposed works are completed.

14. Your Petitioners are also gravely concerned about the adverse effect that work sites will have upon user behaviour and safety, vandalism, crime and fear of crime. Prior to its refurbishment, and during the refurbishment phases, Park management and local groups contributed a great deal to overcoming the negative image and behaviours previously associated with the area. Community involvement and increasing legitimate use has largely overcome these problems. This position is fragile and would be undermined by a reduction in the legitimate use of the Park, the negative statement about the Park that the works entail, and the opportunities for anti-social and unsafe behaviour that the worksites and associated equipment would provide.

15. Accordingly, your Petitioners would respectfully suggest that adequate consideration should be given by the Promoter to alternative options to the proposed holding area and access shaft which would minimise, or avoid the detrimental impact on the Mile End Park and its surrounding communities. We believe such alternatives should include tunnelling and disposal options which would not require the use of Haverfield Green as a holding area.

16. Your Petitioners have welcomed the recent consideration given by the Promoter to alternatives to the use of the Hanbury St location as a launch site for a tunnel-boring machine (TBM). Such alternatives would, we believe, obviate the need to use Haverfield Green as outlined above. Your Petitioners do not believe, however, that adequate consideration has been given to the benefits of these alternatives in terms of avoiding the impact on Mile End Park which would arise from its use as a materials holding site if the Hanbury St location were to be used as a TBM launch site. In particular, we do not agree that benefits of alternative options would be restricted to the immediate vicinity of Hanbury St as stated in the Supplementary Environmental Statement (SES) prepared by the Promoter. Mile End Park is at least one mile from Hanbury St and the associated impacts of its use as proposed in the original scheme need to be properly assessed alongside the impacts on communities in the Hanbury St area.

17. Furthermore, your Petitioners believe that inadequate information is provided to justify the claim in the SES that alternatives would result in costs and programme delays in the region of £500m and 16 months. Even if it were possible satisfactorily to justify these figures, we would respectfully suggest that avoidance of the negative environmental impacts and associated disruptions affecting the use of Mile End Park and neighbouring communities, alongside the reduction in the impacts on communities in the Hanbury St area, would more than justify the claimed costs.

18. Your Petitioners are firmly of the opinion that end to end, or 'portal to portal', tunnelling and materials disposal would be the most suitable option for securing the construction of Crossrail with the minimum environmental impact and disruption to Mile End Park and surrounding communities. We have yet to see convincing evidence that the Promoter of the Bill has properly considered this option.

19. Furthermore, your Petitioners are disappointed that the SES pays no attention to mitigation or compensation connected with the construction of a tunnel access site to the southern end of Mile End Park, and of a permanent ventilation shaft near Mile End Stadium. The latter construction will entail the permanent loss of a recently constructed football pitch. There should be a requirement that the Promoter undertakes to provide full reimbursement of the costs of relocating this pitch and associated disturbance, and that this replacement is undertaken prior to the construction of the proposed works.

Conclusion

20. Your Petitioners submit that, for the reasons set out above, the Bill fails adequately to safeguard and protect the interests of the Mile End Park and its surrounding communities.

YOUR PETITIONER therefore prays that the Bill may not be allowed to pass into law as it now stands and that it may be heard by its officers, Agent and witnesses in support of