

IN PARLIAMENT
HOUSE OF COMMONS

SESSION 2005-06

CROSSRAIL BILL

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 Mr Frank Browne

SHEWETH as follows:-

1. A Bill (hereinafter referred to as "the Bill") has been introduced and is now pending in your honourable House intituled "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 presented by Mr Secretary Darling, supported by The Prime Minister, Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, Secretary Margaret Beckett, Mr Secretary Hain, Secretary Alan Johnson, Secretary Tessa Jowell, and Derek Twigg.

Relevant Clauses of the Bill

3. Clauses 1 to 20 of the Bill make provision for the construction and maintenance of the proposed works. They include provision for compulsory acquisition, planning permission, heritage issues, trees and noise.
4. Clauses 21 to 44 of the Bill deal with railway matters, making provision for modifications to the existing railways regulatory regime.
5. Clauses 45 to 59 of the Bill deal with miscellaneous and general matters.

Your Petitioner and his interests

6. Your petitioner is the Leader of Wokingham District Council and is a district councillor for Remenham and Wargrave. The Bill would adversely affect train journeys to London from Twyford and Wargrave stations, which are in the area for which Wokingham District Council is the local authority. Your petitioner and his interests, and the interests of his constituents, and the interests of other residents of Wokingham District are all injuriously affected by the Bill, to which your petitioner objects for reasons amongst others, hereinafter appearing.

7. As a resident of the area served by Twyford and Wargrave stations, the personal interests of your petitioner are injuriously affected by the Bill. However, perhaps because Wokingham District Council is not within the area covered by the proposed works, it was not fully informed about the impact of the Crossrail project on transport within its boundaries. The Council did not become aware of the scale of reduction of through services to London sufficiently early to hold a Council meeting to enable it to petition against the Bill. Your petitioner would respectfully request that he also be heard in his capacity as Leader of the Council in order to put to the Committee the wider concerns of his Council and of residents within its boundaries.
8. Your petitioner is hopeful that his concerns can be met by agreement with the Promoter.

Your Petitioner's concerns

9. Clause 23 allows the Promoter to specify minimum operating levels for Crossrail passenger services, and clauses 26 and 27 provide for the Promoter and the Office of Rail Regulation to modify access contracts to allow Crossrail passenger services to operate.
10. Your petitioner is concerned that the Promoter could specify minimum operating levels for Crossrail such that it takes over paths on the Great Western Main Line that are necessary to maintain the present level of direct service between Twyford and London Paddington station.
11. Your petitioner is also concerned that modification of existing access contracts could result in the loss of paths on the Great Western Main Line that are necessary to maintain the present level of direct service between Twyford and London.
12. Your petitioner notes that, among the "Crossrail Bill Supporting Documents" published by Cross London Rail Links, the Environment Statement describes proposals for works at Slough station to construct "a new bay platform for a terminating service from Reading". Cross London Rail Links have also published proposals entitled "Great Western Corridor Service Improvements" which shows that almost half of the trains from Twyford travelling in the direction of London would in future terminate at Slough rather than at London Paddington. Your petitioner is concerned that passengers travelling to London who would be forced to change trains at Slough will suffer unacceptably long journey times as well as inconvenience. Your petitioner is further concerned that this will lead to severe overcrowding in the peak hours on the remaining "through" trains between Twyford and London.
13. Your petitioner is not aware of the planned journey times from Twyford to London Paddington after Crossrail services start operating, but note that the document "Maidenhead Service Improvements" published by Cross London Rail Links shows a journey time of 41 minutes for Crossrail trains between Maidenhead and London Paddington. Your petitioner is concerned that this exceeds the present average journey time from Maidenhead to London Paddington. Your petitioner wishes to ensure that ways are found to provide services from Twyford to Paddington with average journey times that are no longer than the average for existing services. This is particularly important in the peak periods.

14. Your petitioner notes that the document "Great Western Corridor Service Improvements " published by Cross London Rail Links proposes a service of two trains per hour from Twyford to London (in both peak period and off-peak) and a service of two trains per hour terminating at Slough. This is considerably worse than the current service available (Summer 2005), which offers seven direct trains to London between 7am and 8am. At off-peak times there are currently four direct trains to London. Your petitioner seeks to ensure that the commencement of Crossrail services leaves sufficient capacity on the Great Western Main Line to permit the present number of non-stop and semi-fast services to operate between Twyford and London in the morning and evening peak periods.
15. Your petitioner is further concerned that if passengers perceive a deterioration in the train service between Twyford and London, some may choose to change their journeys to work, for example to drive to Maidenhead station. This could undermine the viability of the train services to and from Twyford, and also the viability of the Wargrave and Henley branch line. Other consequences could be an increase in traffic on the District's roads and impacts on the economic impact vitality of Twyford and the surrounding area.
16. Clause 31 of the Bill provides that the Promoter may give directions requiring a facility owner to enter into an access contract that allows Crossrail passenger services to use the owner's railway facilities. Your petitioner is concerned that the Promoter may include the Heathrow Express railway and its extension to Terminal 5 as a facility that may be subject to an access contract entered into at his direction.
17. Your petitioner is further concerned that in making such a direction, the Promoter may require that Crossrail be granted access to facilities at Terminal 5 in such a way as to prevent (or make less likely) the development of proposed rail connections to the airport from the west (including Wokingham).
18. There are other clauses and provisions of the Bill which, if passed into law as they now stand will prejudicially affect your petitioner and his interests and for which no adequate provision is made to protect your petitioner.

YOUR PETITIONER THEREFORE HUMBLY PRAYS your Honourable House that the Bill may not be allowed to pass into law as it now stands and that he may be heard by his Counsel, Agents and witnesses in support of the allegations of this Petition against so much of the Bill as affects the interests of your petitioner and in support of such other clauses and provisions as may be necessary or expedient for his protection, or that such other relief may be given to your petitioner in the premises as your Honourable House shall deem meet.

AND your petitioner will ever pray, &c.

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Of

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AGAINST, By Counsel, & c