

IN PARLIAMENT
HOUSE OF COMMONS
SESSION 2014-15

High Speed Rail (London – West Midlands) Bill

Against the Bill – on Merits – Praying to be heard by counsel, etc.

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

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF JOHN ANTHONY BLOOMER

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 between Euston in London and a junction with the West Coast Main Line at Handsacre in Staffordshire, with a spur from Old Oak Common in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham to a junction with the Channel Tunnel Rail Link at York Way in the London Borough of Islington and a spur from Water Orton in Warwickshire to Curzon Street in Birmingham; and for connected purposes.”
2. The Bill is presented by Secretary Patrick McLoughlin supported by the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, Secretary Theresa May, Secretary Vince Cable, Secretary Iain Duncan Smith, Secretary Eric Pickles, Secretary Owen Paterson, Secretary Edward Davey, Mr Robert Goodwill.
3. Clauses 1 to 36 set out the Bill’s objectives in relation to the construction and operation of the railway mentioned in paragraph 1 above. They include provision for compulsory acquisition, the extinction and exclusion of rights over land, the temporary possession and use of land, planning permission and deregulation in connection with, inter alia, heritage and environmental matters. Clauses 37 to 52 deal with railway matters, nominated and statutory undertakers, regeneration and reinstatement and further high speed rail works. Clauses 53 to 65 contain miscellaneous and general provisions.

4. The nominated undertaker (defined in the Bill and hereinafter referred to as “the nominated undertaker”) is authorised by the Bill to construct and maintain the works specified in Schedule 1 to the Bill being works for the construction of Phase One of High Speed 2 and works consequent on or incidental to such works. These works are called “the scheduled works”.

5. Your Petitioner (hereinafter referred to as “the Petitioner”) lives at 1a Grenville Avenue, Wendover, Buckinghamshire and has lived at this address for 10 years. He is 68 years old. The Bill would authorise the construction and operation of the railway through and near Wendover. The proposed line would run within 800 metres of your Petitioner’s property.

6. Your Petitioner and his interests are injuriously affected by the Bill, to which your Petitioner objects for reasons, amongst others, hereinafter appearing.

8. Your Petitioner has been the recipient of letters and information in the post from HS2 Ltd, which indicate that it considers that he is affected by the Bill.

9. Objection is taken to both the construction and operation of certain of the scheduled works proposed to be undertaken in and near Wendover between Little Missenden and Stoke Mandeville. These works consist mainly of an embankment between Hartley Farm and Road Barn Farm, Small Dean viaduct, an embankment between the northern end of the Small Dean viaduct and the southern end of the Wendover green tunnel and a cutting at the northern end of the said tunnel. They include ancillary works such as satellite compounds, auto-transformer stations, balancing ponds and portal buildings.

10. Your Petitioner’s main objectives are to persuade your Honourable House to lower the line into a fully-bored tunnel as it passes through Wendover and to offer a fair scheme of compensation to affected property owners.

Problems caused by the construction process of the scheduled works

11. Your Petitioner avers that during construction of the scheduled works there would be the following effects:

12. Disruption of traffic and substantial delays along all local roads, caused by around 300 HGVs per day, especially the A413, the B4009 and the A41 all of which he uses on a regular basis.

13. A serious strain on local community services such as the Wendover Health Centre which your Petitioner uses, and the police, caused by an influx of construction workers.

14. Dust caused by chalk and soil from construction and excavation. On storage chalk dries out creating dust, the effect of which will be made worse by the prevailing south-west wind, which blows directly onto your Petitioner's property.
15. Substantial damage to this part of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) with its exceptional natural beauty.
16. Substantial damage to the local cultural heritage, including St Mary's Church, which he visits for cultural occasions.
17. Disruption to power supplies caused by the need to move the electricity pylons near the line.
18. Disruption to footpaths, which your Petitioner uses on a regular basis.
19. Noise from machines digging the green tunnel, moving spoil, constructing embankments and viaducts and traffic connected therewith, leading to inability to concentrate during the day, and inability to sleep at night. Your Petitioner's wife already suffers from sleeping difficulties which are likely to be exacerbated severely.
20. Your Petitioner's wife is already suffering stress following early retirement from teaching following a breakdown. This has been exacerbated by worries over the HS2 project. When construction begins there is a real danger of serious and permanent damage to her health.
21. During the period of construction there is bound to be a severe effect on the value of your Petitioner's property. This could extend for a period of up to 10 years.

Problems caused by the operation of HS2

22. Your Petitioner avers that the operation of HS2 following the completion of the proposed scheduled works would have the following permanent effects:
23. Your Petitioner's view of the Chiltern Hills around the village of Wendover where he lives would be permanently scarred by an obtrusive viaduct and embankment. The line would be visible from numerous viewpoints in the locality. It would be overbearing and would dominate the landscape.
24. The noise from the trains would cause an intolerable strain upon your Petitioner's life and affect his sleep and more significantly that of his wife. At the distance from the line where he lives the noise would be spread over a longer time period, and thus be heard for approximately one minute in two. This is in an area which is at present one of peaceful tranquillity. The proposed green tunnel does not extend to the northern end of Wendover and

thus will have no mitigating effect on his property and will probably make noise even worse as trains enter or leave the northern end of the tunnel.

25. The value of your Petitioner's house has already been adversely affected, and will continue to be so on a permanent basis once the railway is in operation.

26. The damage to local facilities would be substantial, both those of value to your Petitioner such as St Mary's Church for its community uses, and those of value to Wendover as a community such as the cricket ground, which would be destroyed.

The benefits of a fully-bored tunnel

27. Your Petitioner proposes that part of the scheduled works be replaced by a fully-bored tunnel from Little Missenden to the end of the AONB beyond the north of Wendover. This would avoid most of the disadvantages set out in paragraphs 11-21 above and all the disadvantages set out in paragraphs 21-26 above.

28. Chiltern Ridges Action Group has proposed such a fully-bored tunnel in a report by Peter Brett Associates, and HS2 Ltd has confirmed that from an engineering and construction point of view it is feasible.

29. HS2 Ltd has said that such a tunnel would cost £330 million more than the present proposal. However, it has refused to divulge any detail of this figure, or even the tender documents on which it was based, and there is considerable evidence that the figure is seriously exaggerated.

30. Moreover, it seems that HS2 Ltd has not taken into account the value of the benefits which a fully-bored tunnel would bring, such as the money saved by not having to compulsorily purchase properties and land, or move electricity pylons, and not damaging the environment. These benefits are valued at over £500 million.

31. For the foregoing and connected reasons your Petitioner respectfully submits that, unless the Bill is amended by the inclusion of a fully-bored tunnel from Little Missenden to the end of the AONB beyond the north of Wendover, then the Bill should not be allowed to pass into law.

Mitigation for construction of a fully-bored tunnel

32. If a fully-bored tunnel is included in the Bill, your Petitioner proposes that at least the following mitigation be adopted for its construction:

33. That the operation of construction traffic on the A413 and the B4009 only be permitted during the agreed working hours, excluding rush hour (7-9am and 5-7pm) on weekdays.

34. That the number of construction vehicles using local roads be limited, and at all times be such as not to inconvenience other road users.
35. That the removed spoil should not be permitted to be dumped in the Chilterns AONB, and that all spoil should be removed by rail, not road.
36. That a traffic management plan be agreed before construction starts with the local county, district and parish councils, such plan to go to arbitration if agreement cannot be reached.
37. That the permitted working hours for all matters relating to construction be strictly limited to 8am to 6pm on weekdays, 8am to 1pm on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays, with an hour before and after for start-up and close down.
38. That acceptable noise levels be agreed before construction starts with the local county, district and parish councils and that such noise levels to go to arbitration if agreement cannot be reached.
39. That noise levels be monitored on a frequent and regular basis by an independent organisation, with the result of such monitoring be immediately made public.
40. That artificial lighting at construction areas be limited to working hours.
41. That the maximum level of toxic traffic emissions from construction traffic be agreed before construction starts with the local county, district and parish councils, such emission level to go to arbitration if agreement cannot be reached.
42. That funding be made available to Wendover Health Centre and local hospitals for the provision of any necessary additional facilities to cope with increased health problems, such as sleep disturbance, respiratory illness and hypertension, and including those caused by traffic emissions and dust created by the construction of the scheduled works.
43. That funding be made available to the local police force for increased staffing likely to be required due to the advent of a substantial construction workforce.
44. That full compensation for damage to property or loss in property value caused by construction of the scheduled works be available to all those who suffer such loss.
45. That the maintenance loop at present proposed to be located to the north of Wendover be moved to an area where there are much larger permanent works scheduled.
46. That the Code of Construction Practice, and regulations and agreements dealing with all the above matters in paragraphs 33 to 43, be legally enforceable both at criminal and civil

law, with civil law breaches being first dealt with by an Ombudsman, and the local county council having the right to bring both criminal and civil proceedings.

Mitigation for construction of the present proposal

47. However, if the proposal for a fully-bored tunnel is rejected your Petitioner proposes the following mitigation:-

48. That the existing proposed green tunnel be extended to the south and north of Wendover.

49. That the mitigation proposed in paragraphs 33 to 46 above be adopted.

Compensation for loss of property value.

50. Your Petitioner avers that the proposals for compensation to affected property owners as they currently stand are grossly unfair.

50. Currently the government proposes that your Petitioner shall receive no compensation for any loss in value of his property until at least 2 years after the railway is in full operation. That would be at least 2028. This is a totally iniquitous proposal denying your Petitioner the right to obtain a fair market price for his home, should he wish to sell it at any time in the next 14 years.

51. Anyone whose property value is adversely affected by the decision of the government to construct and operate this railway should be compensated in full at whatever time they choose to sell their home and for whatever reason. Otherwise your Petitioner and anyone else affected will be denied a right open to all other British citizens.

51. For this reason your Petitioner respectfully submits that, unless the Bill is amended by the inclusion of a fair compensation scheme as outlined in paragraph 51 above then the Bill should not be allowed to pass into law.

YOUR PETITIONER therefore 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 Counsel, Agent and witnesses in support of the allegations of this Petition against such of the clauses and provisions of the Bill as affect the rights and interests of your Petitioner and in support of such other clauses, amendments or provisions as may be necessary or expedient for his protection, or that such other relief may be given to your Petitioner as your Honourable House may deem meet.

AND your Petitioner will ever pray, etc.

[Redacted Signature]

Agent for the above-named Petitioner

BACKSHEET

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HOUSE OF COMMONS
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HIGH SPEED RAIL (LONDON TO WEST MIDLANDS) BILL
PETITION OF

Against the Bill – on merits – by Counsel, etc.

Contact details:

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