

IN PARLIAMENT
HOUSE OF COMMONS
SESSION 2013–14

HIGH SPEED RAIL (LONDON - WEST MIDLANDS) 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 THE DRUMMOND STREET TENANTS AND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

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 Mr Secretary 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, and 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 the construction of works, highways and road traffic matters, the compulsory acquisition of land and other provisions relating to the use of land, planning permission, heritage issues, trees and noise. They include clauses which would disapply and modify various enactments relating to special categories of land including burial grounds, consecrated land, commons and open spaces, and other matters, including overhead lines, water, building regulations and party walls, street works and the use of lorries.
4. Clauses 37 to 42 of the Bill deal with the regulatory regime for the railway.
5. Clauses 43 to 65 of the Bill set out a number of miscellaneous and general provisions, including provision for the appointment of a nominated undertaker (“the Nominated Undertaker”) to exercise the powers under the Bill, transfer schemes, provisions relating to statutory undertakers and the Crown, provision about the

compulsory acquisition of land for regeneration, reinstatement works and provision about further high speed railway works. Provision is also made about the application of Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations.

6. The works proposed to be authorised by the Bill are specified in clauses 1 and 2 of and Schedules 1 and 2 to the Bill. They consist of scheduled works, which are described in Schedule 1 to the Bill and other works, which are described in clause 2 of and Schedules 2 and 3 to the Bill.

7. Your Petitioners are the Drummond Street Tenants and Residents Association. The Association was formed in 2012 under the aegis of Camden Council, and its constitution formally approved. It represents the community living in Drummond Street, Cobourg Street, Starcross Street, North Gower Street and associated streets in the immediate vicinity. It is a small and distinct area immediately adjacent to Euston Station on the west side, with a multi-racial community, mostly living in social housing, and a mix of small businesses, particularly South Asian restaurants and food shops. Many families live here, including older people and small children. This means there are many people at home during the day. Part of Maria Fidelis School is on Starcross Street, as is the local mosque.

This is a settled community. Among the residents of the block nearest to the stations are the following:

(a) Kathleen Ullah is 72. She has lived in the area for 50 years and in her current home for 30 years. She is a widow and in very poor health. She does not see how she can stay in the area with the construction site on her doorstep, and she may have to ask the council for a move, even though she has very strong connections with neighbours and local services.

(b) There are three generations of the Miah family, the older parents, three adult children, and the daughter's three children. The daughter, aged 33, is also a science teacher at Maria Fidelis School. She and her two brothers were born and have always lived in this flat. They feel that life may become intolerable, but any move would have to be very local because their whole lives are here.

(c) Sue Sommers is 65 and works locally. She bought the flat and moved here in 1995. She hopes to retire in the next year or two and is likely to try to move away, if this is possible financially. If the flat value is blighted, she may have no option but to stay.

(d) Mr Khan is 40 years old. He lives with his wife, daughter, mother and brother in the home he has lived in since the age of 4. He is Chair of the Drummond Street Tenants and Residents Association. He and his family have strong links to the area, and he says that although they would want to move away from the construction work, they would like to relocate within 500 yards. He has bought his own home, so he will only be able to do this if values are not blighted.

(e) Mussie and Julie Khasay have three young children and have lived in Cobourg Street for 5 years. The two older girls attend school locally. The family is very worried about the pollution and noise, and they may have to ask the Council for a move.

8. Your Petitioners consider that their rights, interests and in some cases property are injuriously affected by the Bill, to which your Petitioners object for reasons amongst others, hereinafter appearing.

Impact of construction works

9. Your Petitioners are concerned in particular by the proposal to extend the western border of the station from Cardington/Melton Street to Cobourg Street. This will mean that the Drummond Street/Starcross/Cobourg Street block of flats will be within about 5 metres of the border of an enormous construction site. Early years will be taken up with demolition of a number of local buildings, including a large Ibis hotel, and will be followed by work that includes significant deep excavations. It is understood that the works are scheduled to last until 2026, but, with Sir David Higgins' new proposals, could last until 2034. There is permission to work up to 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. 50 dwellings, according to HS2's own estimates, will suffer noise levels higher than the noise insulation trigger levels.

10. The extreme proximity of the site to a residential population means unacceptable levels of building noise, dirt, dust, vibration, loss of daylight, street congestion and diminished air quality for a period estimated at 19 years. This will put intolerable stress on local people, particularly those who are housebound, and young children, who will be expected to spend the whole of their childhood in this situation. We expect that residents will develop problems of psychological stress, and that their physical health will be affected. Those with existing respiratory problems will suffer particularly because of the impact on air quality.

11. In addition Drummond Street, which is small local street mostly serving local businesses, is to be used for construction traffic. This will add to the noise, vibration and pollution, in addition to the loss of parking for both businesses and residents.

12. Local streets are to be subject to extensive utility works covering the range of services, which will add to local residents' difficulties and stress.

13. Other negative effects will be increased accident risk and the impacts on pedestrian journey times, vehicle movement and traffic flow, because of the double effect of the heavy works traffic and of closing off Drummond Street (for non-construction traffic) at the Cobourg Street intersection. Your Petitioners are also concerned about access for emergency vehicles to the eastern end of Drummond Street during construction work.

14. The effect on businesses is likely to be similarly adverse, with a huge impact on amenity and probable loss of trade. The small local businesses in Drummond Street cannot easily relocate and are unlikely ever to be replaced.

15. Your Petitioners consider that there has been insufficient regard taken by HS2 in its local meetings either to the impact of the construction work or to the impact of the completed station on the area. The Drummond Street area will experience some of the most severe and long-lasting impacts of the whole HS2 route.

Impact of completed station

16. Your Petitioners also have concerns about the impact of the completed station on this small community. It is planned that Cobourg Street, currently a quiet side street, will eventually become the new side exit of the station and a through route to Hampstead Road. The new taxi rank will be located there. There is expected to be an increase in rail passenger numbers at the station of up to 46% in the mornings and 58% in the evenings by 2041. This will have an enormous knock on effect on onward travel on foot, by LU, bus, train and taxi, some of which will spill over into our streets. Significant increases in road traffic quantities and noise are predicted, with the associated effects on air quality.

17. Your Petitioners will lose St James' Gardens, which are to be swallowed up into the new site. This is the only green space in our immediate area.

Mitigation sought

18. Your Petitioners respectfully submit that the Bill should be amended or undertakings required so that the construction strategy for the project is reviewed in the light of its impact on our community, as set out below.

19. Your Petitioners ask, in particular, that the station plans should be redesigned to keep the western station boundary within its existing footprint. This would constitute a major reprieve for the whole of our residential community, as well as for local traders. A number of proposals have been put forward for alternative plans, including the Double Deck Down option, which your petitioners believe have been inadequately explored.

20. Your Petitioners ask that further consideration be given to the use of Old Oak Common as a temporary or permanent terminus, again to relieve pressure on the Euston area.

21. Your Petitioners ask that the Drummond Street area be considered a special case in terms of compensation arrangements:

(1) during the construction works: affected residents who wish or need to should be enabled to move away from the area for the duration of the works. For leaseholders and freeholders this could be a rental allowance to permit them to relocate until the works are over, or appropriate purchase arrangements, or a property bond to facilitate a private sale. For tenants, compensation would be needed to enable Camden Council to arrange relocation.

(2) in terms of the overall development: your Petitioners ask that, in view of the exceptional disruption they face, they be given equal compensation rights to those proposed for rural areas.

22. Your Petitioners ask that detailed and objective assessments of the cumulative impacts of the work be made for all potentially affected properties before major work starts, and that these assessments be used to decide which residents should qualify for the additional help proposed above, and which should qualify for other help and support, such as triple glazing.

23. Your Petitioners ask that HS2 be required to give an undertaking that working hours be restricted to normal daytime working hours except in very exceptional and limited cases, agreed with Camden Council, and that clear advance notice on working hours should be given at all times during the construction work.

24. Your Petitioners ask that HS2 be required to commit to weekly local environmental management plan meetings which local residents and traders are able to attend, to resolve and discuss issues as they arise.

25. Your Petitioners ask that a community liaison officer be available by telephone at all times the site is operational, so that complaints of disturbance at unsocial hours can be dealt with immediately.

26. Your Petitioners ask that agreed limits should be negotiated with independent advice on noise, dust, air pollution, vibration, loss of safe access, loss of amenity and daylight, construction traffic, congestion, hours of work, overall time taken to complete the project etc., and that HS2 should be liable to pay compensation at agreed levels for breaches of those limits.

27. Your Petitioners ask that HS2 compensate Camden Council appropriately for the enhanced street cleaning and pest control work that will be required throughout construction.

28. Your Petitioners ask that HS2 be required to undertake that pedestrian access to the station through the building site to the station is wide, well lit, well signposted and well designed, and covered by CCTV at all points, for the safety of those using it.

29. Your Petitioners ask that consideration be given to using rail for the delivery of materials and removal of waste as far as possible, to reduce the impact on our residential streets of large volumes of construction vehicles.

30. Your Petitioners ask that the new taxi rank be relocated underground, to lessen pollution and disturbance to properties on Cobourg Street.

31. Your Petitioners ask that HS2 undertake to ensure there is no loss of residents' parking in the area as a result of the works.

32. Your Petitioners ask that over-station development should include a sufficient quota of social housing, by agreement with Camden Council, to ensure that the local character of the area is preserved.

33. Your Petitioners ask that plans for green space for our immediate area be incorporated into the plans, to compensate for the loss of St James's Gardens.

34. There are other clauses and provisions of the Bill which, if passed into law as they now stand will prejudicially affect your Petitioners and their rights, interests and property and for which no adequate provision is made to protect your Petitioners.

YOUR PETITIONERS therefore humbly pray your Honourable House that the Bill may not be allowed to pass into law as it now stands and that they may be heard by their Counsel, Agents and witnesses in support of the allegations of this Petition against so much of the Bill as affects the property, rights and interests of your Petitioners and in support of such other clauses and provisions as may be necessary or expedient for their protection, or that such other relief may be given to your Petitioner in the premises as your Honourable House shall deem meet.

AND your Petitioners will ever pray, &c.

Signed



Name: Sue Sommers
60 Cobourg Street, London NW1 2HB

Representative for Drummond Street Tenants and Residents Association

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