

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 GOVERNING BODY OF GREAT MISSENDEN CE COMBINED SCHOOL

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 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 ("the Authorised Works") are specified in clauses 1 and 2 of and Schedule 1 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 the Bill.
- 7 Your Petitioner is the board of governors of Great Missenden CE Combined School (hereinafter called "the School"). The School is a primary academy and is located at Church Street, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire, within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The School has 391 pupils currently on roll, up to 60 staff in school each day and an on-site pre-school attended by up to 50 children. School hours are 8.50am to 3.15pm, with after school activities until 4.15pm. The School also provides early morning care from 8am and after-school care to 6pm. At its last OFSTED inspection the School was graded Outstanding in every category and sub-category. The School has a one class intake for Key Stage One (ages 4 to 7) and an alternating three and two class intake for Key Stage Two (ages 7 to 11). The additional children in Key Stage Two come primarily from three feeder infant schools (Lee Common School, Hyde Heath School and Little Missenden School), the first two of which are located on the other side of the proposed High Speed Two (HS2) railway line.
- 8 Your Petitioner is concerned that the construction and operation of the high speed railway and associated development through the Central Chilterns area, particularly around South Heath and Frith Hill, poses a significant risk to the education, health and safety of the children attending Great Missenden CE Combined School. Your Petitioner is concerned that the conclusion in the Environmental Statement that there are no significant effects, either temporary or permanent, on Great Missenden is wholly wrong and demonstrates that the impact assessments underpinning the Bill are based on a flawed methodology which, for example, did not assess the impact and effects of the proposed route bisecting our and other school catchment areas.
- 9 The School is situated on the northern edge of Great Missenden, approximately 900 metres from the proposed HS2 line. The School is adjacent to the A413 (which is single carriageway as it passes Great Missenden) and the junction of the A413 and the B485 (Chesham Road), both of which will be heavily used by HS2 construction traffic and both of which are used by children and staff travelling to and from school. Our school bus routes include narrow country lanes that are proposed construction routes. As a result of the School's proximity to the

proposed route, material stockpiles and construction traffic routes the School will be subject to intolerable traffic, noise, dust, visual impact and possibly vibrations for the duration of the construction in the area - between four and five years. Once the proposed line is operational high speed trains will be passing the school at a frequency of up to one every two minutes every day, disrupting the children's learning, particularly outdoor activities, throughout their primary school career.

- 10 The primary proposed remedy of your Petitioner is that a fully-bored tunnel is built throughout the entire AONB with as few surface features and impacts as possible. Your Petitioner also proposes a number of mitigating remedies in the event that this proposal is not accepted.
- 11 Your Petitioner and their rights, interests and property are injuriously affected by the Bill, to which your Petitioners object for reasons amongst others, hereinafter appearing.
- 12 **Issue: Construction traffic and public rights of way.** Your Petitioner is gravely concerned about the effects that construction traffic will have on roads both adjacent to the School and in the surrounding area, causing severe difficulties for pupils and staff accessing the school and significantly increasing noise and air pollution. The Environmental Statement (ES) Volume 2 CFA9 predicts additional traffic delay and congestion on all the roads around the school, including the school bus routes. Your petitioner is gravely concerned that these effects will have a long-term and significant impact on the School, affecting recruitment and retention of staff and numbers of families attending the School.
- 13 **Effects on access before and after school.** The draft Code of Construction Practice states (para 14.1.1) that the impacts on the local community from construction traffic are to be minimised by its contractors and that public access is to be maintained *where reasonably practicable*. Your Petitioner is concerned that the phrase *where reasonably practicable* allows considerable latitude to the nominated undertaker and gives your Petitioner no assurance that the nominated undertaker will be required to ensure that children and staff can access the school safely and without severe disruption to their journeys.
- 14 The proposed HS2 route effectively bisects the School catchment area, with a large proportion of the families that attend living on the other side of the proposed route in the villages and areas of South Heath, Potter Row, Ballinger, The Lee, Lee Common and Hyde Heath. Two of our three feeder infant schools (Lee Common School and Hyde Heath School) are located on the other side of the proposed route. The majority of the families in this area of our catchment access the school by school bus or by car via Frith Hill (which will be closed for up to two years), Kings Lane, Potter Row, the B485 Chesham Road and Leather Lane, which are all proposed construction routes, with realignment also proposed for Kings Lane, Chesham Road and Leather Lane. Furthermore the re-routing of the Frith Hill footpath, used by some families in South Heath to walk to school, will increase children's walk to and from school by 400 metres, a

significant additional daily distance for primary school children, who will also be contending with the disruptions to their home lives caused by the construction work in South Heath. Another feeder infant school is in Little Missenden, with families of children moving on from there to Great Missenden needing to access the school via the A413 – a proposed construction route adjacent to the school's boundary. Up to sixty members of staff work in the School each day and will be travelling to work on routes including the B485 Chesham Road and the A413, designated construction routes.

- 15 These temporary closures, road realignments and construction routes will result in considerable delays and disruption to traffic, directly affecting staff and pupils of the School by causing severe difficulties for them getting to and from school and for parents who after taking their children to our School and siblings to other local schools then need to get to work. In many cases, all of these journeys will be affected by the disruption arising from this project. The increase in HGVs on the Chesham Road, Potter Row, Frith Hill, Kings Lane and A413 will make these roads unsuitable and unsafe for staff and students walking and cycling to school. Your petitioner is particularly concerned about the safety of children as young as seven waiting at and walking to and from bus stops on Potter Row, Frith Hill and Kings Lane, sharing these narrow country lanes with large numbers of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs). These lanes are school bus routes for our School and four local secondary schools. It is important to note that the lanes are narrow with limited passing places so just a single HGV could have a disproportionate effect on journey times due to the difficulties of passing oncoming traffic. With the school bus journey times made unpredictable by construction traffic children will be waiting for extended periods along these narrow lanes serving as HGV routes, further increasing the risks to their safety.
- 16 **Effects during the school day.** Your Petitioner further objects because the use of both the A413 and B485 for construction traffic will cause inevitable and severe tailbacks at the Great Missenden roundabout and along the A413, which runs along the School boundary, having negative health effects on staff and pupils and adversely affecting the daily life of the school for several years, particularly on children's break times and sporting and other outdoor activities and the ability to open windows to ventilate classrooms. Furthermore your Petitioner is concerned that the significant increase in heavy traffic on the A413 and around the Great Missenden roundabout will increase response times for emergency services, should they need to attend an incident involving school staff or pupils.
- 17 **Proposed remedy:** Your Petitioner submits that a fully-bored tunnel built throughout the entire AONB, with as few surface features and impacts as possible, will effectively mitigate against these impacts, removing the need to temporarily close or realign local roads and significantly reducing construction traffic around the School and the wider catchment area.
- 18 In the event that all bored tunnel proposals are rejected your Petitioner requests that:

- Construction routeing in the area avoids rural lanes as far as possible, and that large goods vehicles do not use school bus routes or roads adjacent to the when the school buses are operating before and after school. Your Petitioner requests that at peak times construction and non-construction road users use separate routes.
- Instead of HGVs using narrow country lanes and school bus routes including Potter Row and Kings Lane, temporary access roads are constructed between the A413 and the major construction compounds. The alignment and design of any alternative route must be agreed with the local community and the local highways authority in order to minimise landtake and ensure it is appropriate for the location. When the road is no longer required for construction traffic your Petitioner requests that it is reinstated to the former land use.
- A temporary bridge is built over the HS2 trace at Frith Hill rather than closing Frith Hill completely for two years as in current proposals.
- The nominated undertaker makes a binding commitment to school health and safety training for the construction and operation of the high speed railway and associated development including agreeing a travel plan with the relevant local authorities for children attending school, to ensure safe and continued access to school facilities.
- A hotline is set up to enable families, staff and other road users to report travel issues and the relevant local authority should be informed of all reports to ensure issues are addressed in a timely and appropriate manner.
- Large vehicles as well as other construction traffic must be strictly controlled, having regard to the particular sensitivities of the local area. Your Petitioner therefore requests that the nominated undertaker should be subject to binding mitigation measures in relation to the control of all construction traffic, assessment of suitability of roads for construction traffic, routeing of lorries and other vehicles in accordance with a list of routes to be agreed with the nominated undertaker, your Petitioner and other direct affected Petitioners in the area. Binding mitigation measures on the nominated undertaker should include traffic management plans to be agreed between the nominated undertaker, the relevant local authority and the relevant highway authority, to be monitored and enforced by environmental health officers.

19 **Issue: Noise and Dust.** Your Petitioner is concerned about the effects of noise on staff and pupils of the School, arising from the *construction* of the high speed railway and associated development including heavy lorry traffic. Your Petitioner is also concerned that the *operation* of the high speed railway will give rise to significant noise, affecting the children's learning and outdoor activities in particular. Further, your Petitioner is concerned that noise levels both during construction and operation will particularly affect and impact the learning of our children and their siblings living in close proximity to the proposed line. There are around 100 households within South Heath and Potter Row, one of the

School's main catchment areas, which are highlighted as being severely adversely affected by both construction noise and train noise once the line is in operation. One aspect of the noise disruption is potential 'tunnel boom' occurring at the portal to the 'green tunnel' at South Heath. Pressure waves on entering and exiting the tunnel have not been taken into account either in the noise modelling exercise or on the sound contour maps and your Petitioner is concerned about this due to the school's proximity to the tunnel portal.

- 20 Your Petitioner is gravely concerned about the impact of the proposed working site and in particular proposals for temporary material stockpiles on the hillside between Great Missenden School and South Heath. Your Petitioner anticipates that the School site will be affected by dust from the site and material stockpiles, disrupting learning and posing a risk to the health and safety of children and staff.
- 21 **Proposed Remedy:** Your Petitioner requests that in order to prevent severe adverse affects caused by noise and dust on our school children and staff a fully-bored tunnel is built throughout the entire AONB with as few surface features and impacts as possible.
- 22 In the event that all bored tunnel proposals are rejected your Petitioner requests that the best means available for minimising noise, dust and air pollution (and vibrations) both during construction and operation are utilised. This should include measures to mitigate against possible 'tunnel boom' at the South Heath tunnel portal. Your Petitioner also requests that the suitability of the current proposed material stockpile site on the hillside below South Heath and above the School is reviewed.
- 23 Your Petitioner requests that a new community impact assessment is carried out; that following this new assessment noise, dust and vibration monitoring equipment is installed at the School for the duration of construction and that a monitoring programme agreed with the local authority is undertaken, with appropriate action taken if noise/air quality thresholds are exceeded.
- 24 **Issue: Waste/'sustainable placement'** Sustainable placement of excavated material is the method proposed in the Environmental Statement where material cannot be reused beneficially and where it cannot be removed by either rail or along the construction corridor. This is, in effect, the on-site disposal of spoil. One of the sites assessed as suitable in the Environmental Statement for 'sustainable placement' is at Hunts Green, within the School's catchment area and within the Chilterns AONB. This will alter the landform in this nationally designated area. As an eco-school with Green Flag status situated within the AONB your Petitioner submits that this is wholly unacceptable.
- 25 **Proposed Remedy** Your Petitioner requests that excess excavated material is removed from the sources by rail and is disposed of outwith the AONB, in consultation with relevant local planning authorities.

- 26 **Issue: Effect on local communities** Your Petitioner contends that the full impact of the proposals on the communities of Great Missenden its surrounding villages and hamlets have not been properly considered and assessed. Assessment did not take into account the proposed route bisecting the catchment areas of Great Missenden School and other local schools, nor of construction traffic operating on school bus routes on narrow country lanes without pavements. The village of Lee Common and our feeder school Lee Common Infant School are not mentioned in the Environmental Statement Community Impact Assessment despite Lee Common being situated, like South Heath and Ballinger, on the other side of the proposed route and their residents needing to access Great Missenden daily for amenities including our School, local shops and Great Missenden Railway Station. The proposed route will have a significant isolating effect on those villages, changing the relationship between Great Missenden and those areas of our catchment and will disrupt and negatively affect the lives of the children attending our School and their families for much of their childhood. The combined effects of the current proposals on Great Missenden School pose a risk to staff recruitment and retention and therefore to the education of the children in this area.
- 27 Your Petitioner submits that the conclusion in the Environmental Statement that there are no significant effects, either temporary or permanent, on Great Missenden is wholly wrong and demonstrates that the impact assessments underpinning the Bill are based on a flawed methodology.
- 28 **Proposed Remedy** Your Petitioner submits that a fully-bored tunnel built throughout the entire AONB, with as few surface features and impacts as possible, is the only effective mitigation against the socio-economic impacts on the local community served by the School.
- 29 Your Petitioner requests that the Environmental Statement Community Impact Assessment is performed again to take account of the omissions noted above, and its conclusions revisited in respect of the impact on Great Missenden and, in light of this, the case for a fully-bored tunnel built throughout the AONB.
- 30 Your Petitioner requests that the green tunnel route proposal put forward by Chiltern District Council in association with Aylesbury Vale District Council, Buckinghamshire County Council and the Chilterns Conservation Board is accepted. However if this request is not granted your Petitioner's next preference would be for the bored tunnel extension put forward by Chiltern Ridges Action Group (CRAG) referred to as the CRAG T2 tunnel extension in the Environmental Statement. If Parliament decides against this then your Petitioner requests that the bored tunnel extension proposal put forward by Residents Environmental Protection Association (REPA) and referred to as the (South Heath Chilterns Tunnel Extension (SHTCE) in the Environmental Statement is accepted. If Parliament decides against any additional tunnelling then your Petitioner requests that Parliament revert to the original alignment put forward in the 2011 HS2 route plans.

31 Your Petitioner requests detailed assessment of the health and socio economic impacts on communities of the proposed high speed rail line construction and its operation, as well as assessment of what can be done to assist affected communities. For example your Petitioner suggests that a community fund be set up which could include funding for school communities within the immediate vicinity of HS2 to help deal with the many issues arising from construction and operation of the proposed line.

32 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.

Catherine May, Community Governor
on behalf of the Governing Body of Great Missenden CE Combined School

IN PARLIAMENT
HOUSE OF COMMONS
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HIGH SPEED RAIL
(LONDON-WEST MIDLANDS)
BILL

PETITION OF The Governing Body of
Great Missenden CE Combined School

AGAINST. By Counsel. &c

