

IN PARLIAMENT
HOUSE OF COMMONS
SESSION 2013-14

1217

HIGH SPEED RAIL (LONDON - WEST MIDLANDS) BILL

Against - on Merits - [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 Little Kingshill Village Hall Management Committee

SHEWETH as follows:-

Introduction

- 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.
- 3 The works proposed to be authorised by the Bill 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.
- 4 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 dis-apply 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.
- 5 Clauses 37 to 42 of the Bill deal with the regulatory regime for the railway.
- 6 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 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.

Your Petitioners

- 7 Your Petitioners are members of the Executive Committee empowered by the four Trustees with the management of the Village Hall ("the Hall") located in the village of Little Kingshill, which lies in the Metropolitan Green Belt and is situated entirely in the Grade 5 statutorily protected Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty ("the AONB"). Your Petitioners are all residents in Little Kingshill or the neighbouring village of Prestwood, both within the AONB and in close proximity to the route of the proposed railway.
- 8 The Hall operates under a 99-year irrevocable License, contracted in 1957 between the Buckinghamshire County Council and the four Trustees of the Hall. The management and administration of the Hall is vested in an Executive Management Committee ("the Committee"). The Hall is recognised as an important amenity for the benefit of everyone in the community, both individuals and groups. Indeed the License mandates that: "The Village Hall shall be so managed that no particular person or organisation in the area of Little Kingshill wishing to use it for any of the purposes aforesaid is excluded from a reasonable share in its use without sufficient cause."
- 9 Your Petitioners are responsible in Law and in moral obligation for all aspects of the well-being and safety of all Users of the Hall. Your Petitioners believe that the rights and interests of the Users of the Hall are injuriously affected by the Bill, to which your Petitioners object for reasons amongst others, hereinafter appearing.
- 10 Principal Users of the Hall include Little Kingshill Combined School, which has exclusive use in school hours during term, the Women's Institute, the Village Society, the Brownies and approximately ten other clubs and societies. The Hall is also regularly used for public meetings and presentations, for private events such as birthday parties, dances, dinners and wakes, and as a Polling Station for local and national elections.

Construction Traffic in District

- 11 The village of Little Kingshill lies in close proximity to the A413 main road, which is proposed under the Bill to be used as a route for construction traffic. The Environmental Statement (ES) Volume 2 CFA9 predicts that:

Construction of the Proposed Scheme will result in increased traffic flows from workers and construction vehicles accessing compounds and also temporary road closures and diversions. (12.4.12)

and that:

Increased traffic during the most intensive periods of construction will cause additional traffic congestion and delay at a number of junctions in the area including at the A413 London Road with A4128 Link Road;... (12.4.29)

- 12 Your Petitioners observe that to travel by car to and from the Hall numerous Users of the Hall rely on roads which are identified in the ES Non-technical Summary as being affected by traffic congestion, including the various junctions with the A413 in CFA8 around Amersham and in CFA10 between Great Missenden and Wendover. It is expected that the construction sites feeding onto the B485 and onto the A413, between Little Missenden and Wendover, will generate 1270 HGV and 3800 LGV movements per day. To this must be added the large numbers of vehicles from the Amersham and Stoke Mandeville construction sites. These conditions will persist over a number of years, and therefore cannot be considered as temporary.
- 13 For all the reasons stated above, Users of the Hall rely heavily upon the A413, such that the cumulative effect of the extra construction traffic causing congestion all along the route from Amersham to Aylesbury will significantly impede the ability of people to attend activities at the Hall in a timely manner. During school term time parents are likely to be seriously affected when travelling via these routes to pick up children from the after-school activities in the Hall. The Women's Institute also invites speakers to its meetings and hosts Group Meetings, and all these visitors who travel via the A413 or B485 will be affected.
- 14 Your Petitioners are very concerned that during the construction phase of HS2, vehicles of the emergency services, including ambulance, police and fire, may not be able to get quickly and efficiently to and from the Hall at any time that construction traffic is operating in the area. In particular, congestion on the single-carriageway sections of the A413 would seriously impede ambulances on the route to Stoke Mandeville Hospital.
- 15 In view of the extensive deleterious effects upon Users of the Hall of the increased traffic throughout the district generated during the construction phase, your Petitioners respectfully request that the Bill is amended to provide a full-length bored tunnel underneath the whole of the Chilterns AONB. This remedy would remove the majority, if not all, of the construction traffic from the roads upon which the said Users rely, and would minimise the consequent hazards.

Construction Traffic in Village

- 16 Your Petitioners are deeply concerned that the Bill does not guarantee that construction traffic will be kept out of the village of Little Kingshill. Users of the Hall will be subjected to the local traffic congestion, noise and increased air pollution associated with construction vehicles and other vehicles using the roads in the village as 'rat runs' to escape traffic congestion on the A413.
- 17 Windsor Lane, where the Hall is located, is a primary route through Little Kingshill to Great Kingshill, and on to High Wycombe and access to the M40, or in the other direction from Great Kingshill to Prestwood and on to Princes Risborough. Neither road is suitable for HGVs. Your Petitioners are concerned that construction traffic and other vehicles will access Windsor Lane from the A413, via Deep Mill Lane or via the old London Road exit at the Chiltern Hospital, to avoid the predicted congestion.

- 18 Some Users of the Hall are young and vulnerable (toddlers); others are old and infirm (members of the Women's Institute and similar groups). An increased amount of traffic through the village over several years, with the associated disruption, road safety risks and health risks from air pollution, would endanger these individuals and constitute a real risk to their health and safety while coming and going from the Hall. Windsor Lane outside the Hall is narrow and there is a dangerous bend within 100 metres. Many Users walk to and from Hall along the footpath on the other side and have to cross the road. For larger meetings, visitors frequently need to park their cars on the opposite side of the roadway and have to cross. Cars parked along the road make it too narrow and hazardous for HGVs.
- 19 In view of the many adverse effects of substantially increased traffic flow along Windsor Lane past the Hall, your Petitioners respectfully request that under no circumstances should any construction vehicles or construction workers' vehicles be allowed to enter the village of Little Kingshill by any route and that the Bill should be amended accordingly to make a binding commitment to this.
- 20 Your Petitioners again advocate a fully-bored tunnel under the AONB, which would protect Little Kingshill and the Users of the Hall from the adverse consequences from the potential of increased traffic through the village along Windsor Lane, upon which the Hall is located.

Security

- 21 Your Petitioners are concerned about the security of the Hall and its contents, because in the recent past the lead has twice been stolen from its roof. A construction digger chained inside a locked shed was also stolen from the adjacent First School grounds and taken out via the Hall car park. It is well-documented that construction sites attract both opportunist and organised criminal activity. In view of the proximity of three proposed sizeable construction sites to Little Kingshill, your Petitioners are concerned about the security arrangements at these locations and the adequacy of local policing, which is currently not sufficient to deal with the extra work load associated with responding to criminal activity on nearby HS2 construction sites.
- 22 In view of the risk of crime and threats to the security of the Hall and its Users, your Petitioners also respectfully request that the highest industry security standards should be mandatory and that increased resources should be made available to the local police force to enable them to maintain a greater presence in the area throughout the construction phase, to be financed by the promoter of the Bill.

Water Supply

- 23 Your Petitioners are concerned that Users of the Hall rely on the public water supply from Affinity Water, which supplies all of the region. We note that the ES Vol. 2 CFA 9 Report, *Water resources and flood risk assessment* states that construction works for tunnelling may seriously affect the chalk aquifers and therefore the quality of the water supply, with significant risk of contaminating

the potable water supply, and that no agreement has yet been reached between the Environment Agency and Affinity Water about how to manage such a risk.

- 24 Your Petitioners respectfully request that, in order to protect the Users of the Hall and all other Affinity Water customers, the Bill should not proceed to its Third Reading until Affinity Water and the Environment Agency have come to a binding agreement on an effective management strategy. Such an agreement should be written into the Bill as an amendment, endorsed by all the relevant Public Health and Environmental Health authorities associated with all potentially affected Affinity Water customers, to ensure that public health is protected in the event of any potable water contamination.
- 25 In view of the risk to the fragile chalk aquifers within the AONB, your Petitioners also respectfully request that close attention should be paid to the choice of route of the tunnel and to all engineering design specifications and all tunnel construction operations, to ensure that the aquifers are not damaged and the water supply not compromised. Specifically your Petitioners respectfully request that the Promoter should give serious consideration to the proposal by the Chiltern District Council and its partners for a Green Tunnel Route, which would minimise this risk.

Health Services

- 26 Your Petitioners are concerned that the large work force required for the construction programme will put significant pressure on the resources of the public health services in the local area to the detriment of the health of your Petitioners and the Users of the Hall.
- 27 Your Petitioners request that that increased resources should be made available to local health service providers throughout the construction phase, all to be financed by the Promoter of the Bill.

Conclusion

- 28 For all of the foregoing and connected reasons, your Petitioners beseech that the Bill is amended so that the route of the train track remains underground in the longest possible tunnel underneath the whole of the Chilterns AONB. This remedy would remove the majority of impacts on the Hall and its Users, both during construction and subsequently in operation.
- 29 For all of the foregoing reasons your Petitioners respectfully submit that, unless relevant clauses of the Bill are amended as proposed above, so far affecting your Petitioners, it should not be allowed to pass into law.
- 30 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 Petitioners in the premises as your Honourable House shall deem meet.

AND your Petitioners will ever pray, &c.

Signature of Agent for Petitioners:.....

BACK SHEET:

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SESSION 2013-14 [2014-15]

HIGH SPEED RAIL (LONDON - WEST MIDLANDS) BILL

PETITION OF THE LITTLE KINGSHILL VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Against the Bill – On Merits – By Counsel &c

Name of Agent: Lindsay MacDonald

