

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 QUAINTON PARISH COUNCIL

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 Although your petitioner is aware that the Select Committee of your honourable House is unable to consider cases which object to the principle of the Bill, your petitioner wishes to express its objection to the principle. Your petitioner is seriously concerned about the business case for HS2, particularly the fact that it represents poor value for money to the taxpayer, in a country which cannot afford such expenses. Your petitioner instead supports the alternative solution to HS2 produced by 51m. This alternative represents a much better business case including lower initial costs and a much greater benefit cost ratio, as reported by WS Atkins working for the Department of Transport

QUAINTON

- 8 Your petitioner is the Parish Council for the parish of Quainton in the county of Buckinghamshire being six miles from Aylesbury. It represents the interests of approximately 1,200 residents who will all be directly or indirectly affected by the works to construct a high speed railway between London and the West Midlands.
- 9 Most reside in the village of Quainton which rises up the Quainton Hills looking over the proposed railway. The village has an actively maintained 19th century windmill and a village green. It also benefits from a school, pub, two shops, two churches, village hall and a smaller hall aimed at activities for young people. There are tennis courts, football pitch, skate park and play park for young children.
There is a very strong sense of community ranging from fairs on the Green to drama productions in the village hall or from rebuilding and maintaining the windmill to several sports teams.
- 10 The main village is within 1.5km from the proposed line at its closest point. However Station Rd, which leads eventually to the neighbouring village of Waddesdon and the A41 main road, is lined with houses up to the point where a bridge crosses the existing railway line used by 4 to 6 freight trains per day. The last house is approximately 350m from the proposed line.
- 11 At this point is the entrance to the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre, a

working museum and restoration centre for all types of railway engines and rolling stock from the early part of the last century. It is a major attraction for tourists.

- 12 Across this bridge the proposed railway will cross the road partly traversing land used as an overflow car park by the Railway Centre and on the other agricultural land owned by the Winwood Trust. The income from the Trust's land is used to maintain cottages for the village elderly.
- 13 Within 100 metres the proposed line starts to run parallel with the existing railway line.
- 14 It will then continue passing through agricultural land and a wildflower meadow close to two Grade II listed farmhouses from the 16th and 17th centuries. It then passes closest to the Grade II* listed Doddershall House which dates from the early 1500's.
- 15 This western half of the parish includes five farms operated by families, who are longstanding residents and which will be adversely affected through land loss and disruption to access endangering their continuing viability
- 16 One of the SSSI sites – Finemere Wood is bordered by the existing railway line and a country lane to Edgcott. Where this road crosses the railway line (known as Woodland cuttings) it is proposed to construct an electricity sub-station and auto-transformer station on either side of the road at the point where a National Grid transmission line crosses the road and the existing and proposed railway lines
- 17 It then continues close to three SSSI sites which house a number of endangered species, but especially, the Bechstein's bat which exists close to its northerly European range and has been shown to criss-cross the planned route between eleven small woods split almost equally either side of the of the proposed railway. This bat and many other species such as Barn owls, cross the route at many different points. The Bechstein's Bat is accorded the highest level of protection under European law.
- 18 The proposed line leaves the parish close to the former brickworks whose pits are used for land fill and which is currently the construction site for an Energy from Waste facility.
- 19 Quainton village is situated at the centre of the Parish and benefits from seven roads leading to it from all directions. None are A or B classified and six of the seven will be disrupted by the proposed railway. Three of these poorly maintained country lanes will be used by construction traffic.
- 20 In numerous meetings between HS2 Ltd in the Community Forums sponsored by them and in bi-lateral meetings the Parish Council has been

frustrated by the lack of understanding at the damage that will be caused to the Parish and the lack of mitigation offered. The proposed railway will bring no benefit to the Parish of Quainton nor its residents.

STATION ROAD BRIDGE

- 21 The first objection of your petitioner concerns the point where the proposed line crosses the existing Station Road close to the Railway Centre and an existing bridge over the existing line. The Railway Centre operates on both sides of the existing railway line and, between which, it needs to transfer stock, including heavy engines on very long low loader lorries. These amount to at most 10 movements per annum, while the partial but significant loss of car parking on special event weekends will seriously damage the finances of the Railway Centre. The car park currently holds approximately 600 cars
The affected road is used by 1,500 vehicles per day (source Bucks CC traffic surveys) and early proposals diverted the road over the lines a few metres to the West and alongside the existing road and bridge. In its original form this prevented access to the southern part of the Railway Centre and to the farms at Doddershall.
- 22 After consultation with the Railway Centre and not the village HS2 introduced at a Community Forum a new route to the West, rising up on embankments to cross the proposed and existing lines close to an existing bridge at Fiddlers Field Road before swinging back to rejoin Station Road opposite the last 20 houses in this road. This involves a distance of approximately 1 km
- 23 Objections by residents at the forum were voiced and continually repeated at subsequent forums to no avail. Your petitioner has also met separately with HS2 Ltd and representatives of the Railway Society but has been unable to reach agreement on our case.
Your petitioner contends that this solution, although beneficial to the Railway centre is very injurious to the residents of the parish.
- 24 There will be a greater land take from neighbouring farms and a resident's paddocks in Station Road leaving unusable strips of land for the latter. The residents at the end of Station Road will be left in a dead end with two junctions facing their houses. At weekends all the Railway Centre traffic will pass their houses whereas at present much comes up from the A41 turning into the Railway Centre before the start of their houses.
- 25 The raised embankments for the extended road will be intrusive and visible in the otherwise flat landscape and will add an estimated 200,000 km to annual journeys. This extra distance may also adversely affect the marginal subsidised bus service.

ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL FOR STATION ROAD BRIDGE

- 26 Your petitioner proposes a new route leading off of the existing bridge after it has crossed the existing railway and paralleling the existing road until it rejoins the current road at a repositioned cross road with Fiddlers Field Rd and Quainton Rd further south. Before crossing the proposed railway there would be a road looping off to return under the existing railway arch and use existing access to reach the property of the Railway Centre.
- 27 A drawing illustrating this proposal is attached and was prepared by a resident of the village who is a retired road engineer.
- 28 The advantages of this proposal are the substantial reduction in distance, substantially reduced land take, reduced cost, reduced adverse visual impact on the countryside and no impact on the residents of Station Rd. There will also be impacts on response times of emergency services.
- 29 The proposal would be further facilitated if the vertical alignment of the proposed railway were lowered by at least 1 metre to reduce the incline necessary to traverse the proposed railway. This lowering of the track bed would have beneficial effects further along the line at Doddershall House and at numerous crossing points for the Bechstein's Bat and other protected wildlife. The lowering would have to start at Fleet Marston closer to Aylesbury and your petitioner believes such lowering would not adversely affect any other interest between there and Quainton
- 30 The proposal will adversely affect the Railway Centre in that they lose the greater part of their overflow car park. Your petitioner believes that on the opposite side of the existing road there will be parcels of land owned by the aforementioned Winwood Trust rendered of little useful benefit that could be used to increase car parking space. Your petitioner proposes that this land be acquired under the Bill for the benefit of the Railway Centre.
- 31 Your petitioner has considered alternatives to the access required by the low loaders carrying very heavy steam engines to enable access between the two halves of the site. One concerns the use of the agricultural bridge at Needles farm and construction of a track to reach the railway centre. This however would require the acquisition of more agricultural land owned by the Winwood Trust.
- Another proposal involves a restricted level crossing over the existing Network Rail line with permissive access given by phone for the very few occasions when there is a movement by low loader between the two sites. We are told the extra expense in signalling is prohibitive but may be justifiable and allow a reconfiguration of our plan when access is only needed for light vehicles.

NOISE

- 32 Quainton village, which runs up the Quainton hillside overlooking the route of the proposed railway and the existing Network Rail line, is within 1.5km of the proposed railway and outside the arbitrary 1km boundary decided for noise mitigation and abatement. The experience of the residents is that prevailing south westerly winds ensure that the noise of the 4 freight trains per day is both carried to the village and reflected off the hillside.
- 33 Despite requests no baseline noise monitoring was carried out within the village. In rural areas the ambient noise level is frequently as low as 30-35dB at night and, even at this level, sometimes during the day. HS2 have produced noise level maps which only go down to the 40dB. Based on assumptions, that average noise level contours are 75dB 25m from the track and that the peak pass noise level is 95dB at this point, we estimate that ambient noise levels in the village will increase by 20dB to 50-55dB. Furthermore peak noise levels will be significant and intrusive as the proposed line plans to schedule up to 18 trains in each direction meaning a frequency of one train every 1 minute 40 seconds. These estimates do not take into account the effect of prevailing winds.
- 34 Your petitioner asks that bunds and other noise prevention screening is provided from the south east and to the west of the village on the northern side of the proposed railway.

ELECTRICITY SUB STATION AND AUTO TRANSFORMER STATION

- 35 An electricity sub-station and auto transformer station are proposed on the eastern side of the existing Network Rail line and on either side of the road leading from Shipton Lee, Quainton to Edgcott. They are in close proximity to the SSSI of Finemere Wood and Doddershall House which is a listed building (Grade II*) dating from the early 1500's. Both sites would destroy maintained wild flower meadows which would be further damaged by the associated construction sites. Your petitioner understands this site was determined by National Grid by its proximity to a suitable voltage power line and within the required distance from other sub stations along the line. The edge of the site bordering the existing railway has hedges which are home to the Black Hair Streaked butterfly which is a protected species.
- 36 Your petitioner understands that HS2 Ltd has already purchased the nearby Woodlands Farm house and further north alongside the proposed railway and existing railway is planning to purchase land to facilitate the dumping of spoil.
- 37 Your petitioner submits that these would be more suitable for the siting of the sub-station and auto transformer station. However care would be needed in rerouting the power line to avoid intruding on Finemere Wood.

- 38 Your petitioner understands that some residents across whose land the electricity power lines run have been notified that their land along this route is required during construction.
- 39 Your petitioner maintains that there are already way leaves in place with National Grid and that these temporary acquisition powers are unnecessary.

CONSTRUCTION SITES AND TRAFFIC

- 40 Construction sites and their associated traffic will affect Station Road, Fiddlers Field Road, Lee Road and its continuation towards Edgcott. These poorly maintained and narrow country lanes are used by local and through traffic from nearby villages, scheduled and school buses, farm traffic, horses, cyclists and pedestrians.
- 41 Your petitioner is unable to suggest alternative routes or alternatives to the construction sites, but requests that adequate parking be provided on the sites to prevent parking of workers vehicles along the lanes and also to prevent lorries queuing to enter the sites.
- 42 Your petitioner requests that access be maintained to Finemere Wood SSSI for walkers and that the current limited parking opposite the footpath access to the wood not be prevented.
- 43 Your petitioner also requests that the nominated undertaker must maintain the quality of the road during construction and return it to its original character and width and all damage repaired after its use for construction traffic is ended. Furthermore a hotline should be set up allowing road users to report any damage to the road and the highway authority should have access to the reports to ensure these are addressed in a reasonable length of time.
- 44 Your petitioner is also concerned that very large transformers for the sub-station are to be delivered along Lawn Hill from Edgcott, where there is a recently reinforced low bridge. In the absence of any explanation how this bridge is to be negotiated your petitioner asks consideration be given to delivering the transformer by the nearby existing railway.
- 45 Your petitioner has expressed concerns about the damage to farming land wildlife sites and protected species. Your petitioner understands that the farmers and wildlife organisations will be submitting their own petitions and supports them in the knowledge that they have better experience of these matters.

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.



E.A. Evans (Chairman)



J. G. Knox (Councillor)

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