

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 Sylvia Mary Clifford

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

proposed line and which will be greatly affected by the construction of the HS2 new line. During the construction phase my property will be affected by noise ,vibration and dust of construction traffic and furthermore ,to date there has been no reliable data to accurately

predict the way in which noise and dust will impact upon health once the trains are operating

- 8 My rights, health, interests and property are injuriously affected by the Bill, to which I object for reasons amongst others, hereinafter appearing.

The Bill has been rushed through despite warnings from auditing bodies that the figures suggested for the cost of Phase 1 HS2 are greatly underestimated .The Government has gone so far as to ban the publication of the latest audit HS2 report using no less than the Official Secrets Act to prevent its publication; hardly the act of a Government which professes transparency in all its dealings

- 9 I am unreasonably and unnecessarily affected by HS2.The current design as described in the Bill and the supporting documents,including the Environmental Statement ,is simply unsound. The proposed design has been insufficiently investigated as to the effects of the scheme at completion and more significantly no account has been taken of the enormous impact of the proposed construction of a Cut and Cover tunnel which dissects the village. This can be overcome, if we are to have HS2. , by the construction of a Bored Tunnel under the village.

- 10 My property, has been blighted since the first announcements of this proposal .Surrounding properties have failed to sell and have either been withdrawn from the market or sold at a greatly reduced price.

- 11 I have lived in the village for 25 years :the last 17 of these as a widowed mother of four .. I have suffered from asthma since childhood and have recently been diagnosed with a heart condition .Burton Green provided a healthy environment in which to live and enjoy all that the countryside and village life has to offer. The blight of HS2 has not only ruined this but seriously limited my options for planning for my future and retirement .It is unjust that residents such as myself who have worked hard and made provision for their future have

suffered distress and uncertainty as a direct result of government plans

- 12 I use The Greenway on a daily basis for walking including the local paths nearby and the local ancient woods ; this enjoyment will be lost alongside the significant losses to the woodlands and wildlife. Over the past years we have seen a great increase in the number of people of all ages from a wider surrounding area who cycle, run and walk along the Greenway.The pursuit of these pastimes reflects the growing awareness , appreciation and care for the environment which is an essential element of the education we promote in our schools .As a long standing governor of a Kenilworth school and a former teacher ,I am dismayed that swathes of beautiful and unique countryside will be dissipated by the proposed HS2 route

- 13 I am a regular user of Burton Green Village Hall which is scheduled for demolition with obvious implications for all users The relocation of the facility and the reconstruction of the same must be completed well away from the location of the line and construction routes before construction works commence.It is at the centre of our community and represents the tireless commitment of many to nurture a diverse, caring and inclusive village life

- 14 The village school will become divided from the village and the construction route will be a major problem for reasonable and safe access .This, in addition to the devastating disruption within the village will not only discourage new pupils ,but will prompt young families to move elsewhere.

- 15 I may have no choice but to leave Burton Green ,but despite many promises at the outset and full engagement in consultation on our part, there has been no official policy on compensation except for compulsory purchase of properties that are located on the line.

- 16 There should be in place at this time, a comprehensive compensation package so that people like myself have the time to consider whether to leave or stay. Surely this is our basic right, the right to choose, and one to which the government should be unconditionally committed. I request that justice be seen to be done and that residents be financially reinstated to their former homeowner status prior to the announcement of HS2

- 17 A Hardship Scheme is not an appropriate way in which to address these concerns . Why should those already suffering from the effects of the blight be subjected to the additional stress and invasion of privacy involved in a process in which there is a burden of proof. Many will fail to access such a scheme through lack of information or will become overwhelmed ,embarrassed and intimidated at a time when they are most vulnerable..This is a drawn out process which seriously obstructs, delays and restricts personal choice at a time which can often be the final precious years of life. Sadly,this is already happening and some more elderly residents are very distressed ,feeling ignored and beaten into submission.

- 18 I request restorative justice so that residents in Burton Green who are deeply affected by the

current market value of their homes had the project of HS2 never been raised. A Property Bond is the only fair way in which to protect those outside the safeguarded zone to afford them the confidence to exercise their choice to move or to stay and try to rebuild the village community.

- 19 I request that the proposals for Burton Green area be reexamined, taking account of the human and environmental costs ,and undertaken in an open and transparent manner.
- 20 Despite many requests during the engagement process, the weightings of the SIFT criteria are still unpublished .I request that these now become a matter of public record
- 21 The proponents of this scheme seem unwilling to compensate all those who are detrimentally affected by this proposal . Yet many agree that Burton Green is the worst affected location along the route and that during the years of construction life will be horrendous for its residents.
- 22 In conclusion ,I specifically request that full consideration be given to the Bored Tunnel proposal which is described as
- 23 "Option F" within the HS2 documents which I believe would mitigate many of the concerns expressed. It greatly reduces the impact on environment ,health and visibility Furthermore, the construction of a Deep Bore Tunnel would greatly reduce the amount of construction traffic and noise since it dramatically reduces the amount of earth transportation and noise. I request action to save Burton Green/
- 24 For the foregoing and connected reasons your Petitioners respectfully submit that, unless the Bill is amended as proposed above, the Bill so far as affecting your Petitioners, should not be allowed to pass into law.
- 25 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.

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HIGH SPEED RAIL (LONDON - WEST MIDLANDS) BILL

PETITION OF

SYLVIA CLIFFORD

Against the Bill – On Merits – By Counsel &c

CONTACT DETAILS:

JOE RUKIN

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]