

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 Hyde Heath Infant 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 Hyde Heath Infant School, specifically the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school. It is an infant school, judged by OfSTED to be ‘outstanding’, located at Weedon Hill, Hyde Heath, Buckinghamshire HP6 5RW. The School has 66 pupils and employs 17 staff (both full and part time). It operates between 9.00am and 3.00pm each day (with pupils arriving from 8.45am and leaving up until 4.15pm because of after-school activities. There is also a pre-school on the same site with 20 young children on roll that is open between 9.00am and 3.00pm (covering a morning session to 12.00pm and an afternoon session from 12.00pm). The School is also used by Beavers and Brownies on a Monday and Tuesday respectively at 6.00pm.
- 8 The School is situated close to the Chiltern tunnel north portal satellite compounds for both Civil Engineering and Rail Systems (Mantles Wood) and less than 500m from the access to the proposed haul route on Hyde Heath Road. The Hybrid Bill and Environmental Statement show that Hyde Heath Road and B485 (Frith Hill and Chesham Road) will be used as routes for construction traffic. As a consequence, the School will be subject to noise, dust, visual and vibration impacts for the duration of the construction period, suggested in the Environmental Statement as eight years (between 2017 and 2025).
- 9 Hyde Heath village has developed in an unusual way, since almost all of the village (houses and amenities) is found south of Hyde Heath Road and Weedon Hill, whilst the School (and pre-school) are north of these roads. This means that up to 100 young children and their parents cross or re-cross the road each day, a route that could potentially be used by many vehicles involved in or associated with construction.
- 10 Your petitioner is therefore injuriously affected by both the construction and the operation of the scheme proposed in the Bill, and remains implacably opposed to the Bill and the proposals for the high speed railway between London and Birmingham. Your petitioner notes that the Environmental Statement deposited with the Bill includes a range of proposals to mitigate the effects of the proposed scheme, but is far from satisfied that the assessments made, mitigation proposed and their likely effects are adequate. Your petitioner accordingly objects thereto for the reasons, amongst others, hereinafter appearing.

Overarching impacts on Hyde Heath Infant School

- 11 Your petitioner is very concerned that the Bill proposes to end the Chiltern tunnel in Mantles Wood, with a portal so close to the village and the School. Such a proposal has a significantly detrimental impact as not only does it bring construction vehicles

close to the School (or potentially past it) but it also increases construction traffic across the area, including on the B485 (Chesham Road and Frith Hill) and the A413. These are all routes used by both staff and families who would face major daily delays once construction begins.

- 12 Any impacts upon the ability of staff or pupils to access the School would have a major effect on its viability. For many prospective/existing parents, any effects (real or perceived) would lead to a review of other schools in the area. Your petitioner is hugely concerned that with only 66 places, a fall in numbers would negatively impact upon the School's budget, therefore taking little to put its future in danger.
- 13 To prevent all of the possible circumstances described, your petitioner therefore supports, in principle, an extended bored tunnel beyond Mantles Wood. An extended bored tunnel, designed to minimise effects on other areas (thus avoiding 'problem-shifting') would be an ideal solution for Hyde Heath Infant School, avoiding all the negative effects described above. Your petitioner is keen to stress, however, that it has no desire to exacerbate impacts or reduce the quality of life for other areas or communities.

Future of Hyde Heath Infant School

- 14 Your petitioner has already described general concerns about the effects of HS2 on such a successful School. Since the OfSTED 'outstanding' designation the School has grown in popularity with a 10% increase in its size and corresponding demand for places. There were 87 applications for September 2014 admission with only 22 places available. It would take very little to reverse this position. Parents and staff, both existing and prospective, will inevitably be influenced by perceptions about the School or how easy it is to get there. Any concerns, possible delays or potential access problems will impact future choices.
- 15 Your petitioner is extremely concerned that these impacts will affect the School's reputation, reduce applications for admission and threaten the overall viability of the School. Your Petitioner has calculated that if pupil numbers fall below 55 pupils, then Hyde Heath Infant School will be unviable, leaving the School in need of financial support to continue operating with those pupils remaining.
- 16 Your petitioner therefore expects HS2 Ltd to secure the School's future viability by discussing and agreeing guaranteed compensation – based on pupil numbers – before, during and after construction (2017-2027). This would ensure that the School be maintained, and operate effectively within our existing three class structure which is vital for the future viability of the School. This is so that it can continue to serve both the local and wider communities into the future. This is not an unreasonable expectation, considering the circumstances of the School.

Access to Hyde Heath

- 17 Having reviewed the Environmental Statement and the transport impacts in and close to Hyde Heath, your petitioner is extremely worried that the suggested traffic movements associated with construction will severely affect access to the School and the village. Notwithstanding doubts about the Transport Assessment and its

assumptions, based on inadequate data and flawed assumptions, your petitioner believes that HS2 Ltd is not offering sufficient mitigation to manage impacts upon both the School and village.

- 18 Your petitioner believes that there is a simple remedy for this matter; specifically that all vehicles associated or connected to the construction of HS2 cannot operate in an area (to be agreed) between 0700 and 0900 or between 1500 and 1700. This would not only prevent conflicts with staff and families travelling to/from the School, but would also ensure that the five school buses travelling from/to the village to/from other primary and secondary schools in the area would not be delayed.

Safety concerns for pupils and families

- 19 Your petitioner has understandable concerns for the safety of its pupils and their families. However, Hyde Heath Road and Weedon Hill are not only used by young people coming to the School but also those travelling by school bus to Great Missenden, Chesham and Amersham. Your petitioner notes that the Environmental Statement states that these roads will not be used as a route for construction vehicles, but questions how this will be monitored and managed.
- 20 Your petitioner also believes that this proposal is insufficient, since it fails to take account of all traffic associated with HS2, such as local contractors, miscellaneous deliveries or worker journeys that are less easy to control and monitor. There will therefore be a significant increase in the number of vehicles travelling through the village throughout the day, increasing traffic danger in a rural area with very few footways.
- 21 Your petitioner contends that this danger can be minimised with the design and implementation of a comprehensive package of appropriate traffic calming measures to both discourage vehicles using the village and reduce vehicle speeds on Hyde Heath Road and Weedon Hill. These should begin at the proposed access road on the east of the village and end at the junction with Keepers Lane.
- 22 This traffic calming must include the provision of additional and sensitively designed footways to further improve safety for young people and their families making the journey to and from the School or school bus stops. These measures are regarded as essential and enjoy the support of the Parish Council and the wider community.

Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

- 23 Your petitioner is not convinced that the wider impacts of HS2 have been adequately assessed or measured and suitable mitigation proposed. A lengthy construction period will have noise, dust, vibration, health and emotional effects upon both the school and local community and these are not adequately addressed in the current draft Code of Construction Practice. There is insufficient detail about the development of Local Environment Management Plans to reassure your petitioner that these will properly address matters.
- 24 Whilst your petitioner appreciates that the Code of Construction Practice is still in draft form and therefore plans for Local Environment Management Plans have yet to

be finalised, it does not feel it would be unreasonable for the Select Committee to expect local community involvement to be at the heart of their development. In this instance your petitioner requests that the Local Environment Management Plan is prepared with the involvement of both school and local community representatives. This should enable suitable mitigation to be proposed, discussed and considered.

25 In light of the above, your petitioner reserves the right to raise the above matters and any other matters of concern relating to the substance of the HS2 Hybrid Bill and this petition that may arise from continuing discussions, the preparation and publication of reports, any revisions that may be made to current proposals or any other matters relevant to expressed concerns that may occur in due course and prior to representation before the Select Committee.

26 There are other clauses and provisions in the Bill which, if passed into law as they now stand will prejudicially affect your petitioner and their rights (including their human rights) and for which no provision is made to protect your petitioner, and other clauses and provisions necessary for their protection and benefit are omitted therefrom.

YOUR PETITIONER THEREFORE HUMBLY PRAYS 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 Petitioner 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 Petitioner will ever pray, &c.

Signature of Agent for the Petitioner

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