

IN PARLIAMENT

HOUSE OF COMMONS

SESSION 2013–14

HIGH SPEED RAIL (LONDON - WEST MIDLANDS) BILL

PETITION

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 Carol Ainsworth and Noel Ainsworth

SHEWETH as follows:-

1. A Bill (hereinafter referred to as “the Bill”) has been introduced and is now pending in your honourable House entitled “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 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 are specified in clauses 1 and 2 of and Schedules 1 and 2 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 and Schedules 2 and 3 to the Bill.
7. 'Your Petitioners' currently reside at 33 Statfold Lane, Fradley, Lichfield, WS13 8NY and previously resided at 7 Chestnut Close, Handsacre, Rugeley, WS15 4TH. We lived happily in Handsacre for 13 years but wanted to move house to be nearer to friends and high school for our 8 year old daughter. We took the difficult decision to rent out our family home when moving to Fradley due to concerns that we would either be unable to sell our Handsacre house (as neighbours had found) or would not get the true value, due to the threat of HS2. The house in Handsacre is very close to the line and will be affected by the construction, additional traffic, the new road and building past Hayes Meadow school (on the opposite side of the line) and new road from the A515 to the new balancing pool. This will make it difficult to either sell or rent out the property in the future. Furthermore, at our current address we will be adversely affected by construction traffic at the Fradley Industrial estate and by the disruption on Wood End Lane (which one of us uses to travel to work and we all use to travel to our gym/swimming pool) and in Streethay (which we use to travel to our local supermarket and various activities in Lichfield).
8. Your Petitioner(s) and their rights, interests and property are injuriously affected by the Bill, to which your Petitioner(s) object for reasons amongst others, hereinafter appearing.

9. 1. The Bill includes powers for the Secretary of State and the Nominated Undertaker to do construction works which are estimated to take 10 years to complete and will include numerous lorry movements around the local areas. The roads between Fradley and Handsacre and between Fradley and Lichfield that we use numerous times per day are country roads that are unable to sustain this level of traffic without severe congestion. This congestion would severely affect our ability to continue with our normal family and work routine. 2. The Bill includes the construction of 2 new roads and a 'relocatable building' close to our property in Handsacre, one past Hayes Meadow school and one alongside the housing estate to a new balancing pool. This will create dust and noise, poor air quality, 24 hour working and light pollution in the area whilst construction is ongoing which will affect our tenants and our ability to rent out the property (which we need to do whilst unable to sell it). It will also leave a permanent access for future works and use of the balancing pool that creates an unnecessary visual blot on an attractive area and will affect the value of our property. 3. The Bill includes provision for the line to come out of Lichfield on a very high embankment which will gradually descend to join the West Coast Main Line close to our property in Handsacre. This will severely affect the landscape of a currently lovely area, take up a great deal of useful farmland and again affect property values in the area due to the loss of the countryside atmosphere. 4. Although not as direct and special to our own circumstances we would like to take the opportunity here to express our objection to HS2 in its entirety, as we have done through other methods previously. The business case is not proven in terms of value for money or in terms of the planned usage of the line. One of us works for a national company with offices spread across Britain. Like many other such companies my employer is very conscious of the carbon footprint of the company and is putting money, not towards increased travel for face to face meetings, but into increasingly better technology to allow meetings to take place virtually and to allow people to work at home rather than travel to an office. The vast majority of meetings are conducted by conference calls and with tools such as Live Meet and video conferencing being used increasingly face to face meetings will only reduce. Indeed, the company in question already designates one week per month as 'no travel week' to reduce the carbon footprint and I only see this travel ban increasing as technology improves.

10. Your Petitioners object to the powers that are proposed to be provided by the Bill to the Secretary of State and the Nominated Undertaker and respectfully submit that the Bill should be amended or undertakings should be required so that HS2 Limited, the Secretary of State and/or the Nominated Undertaker must review the construction strategy for the project and its related works by considering their cumulative impacts on communities. And they need to suggest necessary changes from the results of that review before works design and construction strategies have

been finalised or construction contractors employed. Re 1. above - We ask the Select Committee to require a review of the construction compound sites and the planned routes for construction traffic and for these to be sited away from residential areas and for the traffic to be routed through major roads not country lanes. Re 2. above - We ask the Select Committee to require a review of these access roads in Handsacre and for them to be relocated e.g. coming in from Shaw Lane so that they are away from the residential area and the school. Re 3. above - We ask the Select Committee to require that the embankment proposal be changed for a tunnel or cutting arrangement that would obscure the view of the track and also reduce the noise pollution. Re 4. above - We urge the Select Committee to scrutinise the business plan and determine whether the number of trains per hour, the planned number of users of the service, the estimated cost etc stand up to this scrutiny bearing in mind the points above about UK companies increasingly considering whether it is ethical for their employees to travel.

11. For the foregoing and connected reasons your Petitioner(s) respectfully submit that, unless the Bill is amended as proposed above, so far affecting your Petitioner(s), should not be allowed to pass into law.
12. There are other clauses and provisions of the Bill which, if passed into law as they now stand will prejudicially affect your Petitioner(s) and their rights, interests and property and for which no adequate provision is made to protect your Petitioner(s).

YOUR PETITIONER(S) 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 Petitioner(s) 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(s) in the premises as your Honourable House shall deem meet.

AND your Petitioner(s) will ever pray, &c.

Signed Carol Ainsworth

Noel Ainsworth

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