

IN PARLIAMENT

HOUSE OF COMMONS

SESSION 2013–14

111

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 CLIVE MEDCRAFT

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 petitioner is Clive Medcraft Who resides within the Village of Harefield, Middlesex, in the Colne valley through which the proposed scheme will pass on embankment, through cuttings and on a 3.3Km viaduct. The whole area surrounding the village is scheduled to host intense construction activity and HGV logistics for approximately ten years. I moved to this locality seven years ago with my wife and six month old son purely to benefit from the unique rural character of the area and its commutable proximity to London. Today my family of two children, aged four and seven, have settled here and cannot imagine a better place for us. The schools are on our doorstep, the village shops are varied and convenient, the medical centre is within a two minute walk, situated on a site adjoining that of the world pioneering Harefield hospital and I have managed to salvage my struggling business in London by consolidating and relocating its operation to my home. My wife recently returned to full time employment and commutes via our local bus connections to work at Ealing Hospital and I rely upon the local winding country road network to travel out of the area to visit my clients. Every week day and at weekends, I take my children walking by the canal, on rural foot paths through woodland, around lakes and across acres of tranquil fields and as our children grow, we intend to enrol them in local sailing clubs and other centres of rural activity pursuits. 90% of our leisure activity is local. We have no need to sit in bank holiday traffic and our children spend very active lives out, in and around the Colne valley and not glued to TV or gaming on computers.

8. Your Petitioner and rights, interests and property are injuriously affected by the Bill, to which your Petitioner object's for reasons amongst others, hereinafter appearing.

9. There are no two ways about it. If the scheme goes ahead as set out in the Environmental Statement accompanying the Hybrid Bill, every aspect of your petitioner's and his neighbours, co-workers and just about anybody who lives or works in Harefield's, day to day lives, will be disrupted at best and rendered totally unworkable at worst. The proposed line runs south to north around one side of the village exiting the Northolt tunnel at West Ruislip, passing over Breakspear Road South, crossing fields on an embankment then cutting to dive under Harvil Road before crossing the Colne Valley on a 13 meter high viaduct that will require passage over 4 large lakes, the diversion of the river Colne, the denuding of immense tracts of woodland vegetation, the realignment of High tension overhead power lines and underground gas-main telecoms main cable and sewers. To realise the scheme, the residents, businesses, and workers will be required by HS2 LTD, to endure the following: A 24/7 conveyor system between the West Ruislip portal compound and Breakspear Road South. A light railway, temporary railhead and sidings, materials dump/storage, Breakspear Road closure (One of only four roads into Harefield) to enable overbridge establishment, a huge tunnel lining and viaduct prefabrication site, damage and contamination of the local water supply, permanent industrial scale tunnel spoil dumping on three large fields (so called "sustainable placement") covering most of the area to the south of the village raising the height to 3 meters and uncomfortably close to parts of the ancient Ruislip woods of Mad Bess and Bayhurst, that date back to pre-Saxon times and the Dogs trust grounds, the closure and complete realignment of Harvil Road (the second of only four roads into Harefield), the loss of Harefield outdoor activity centre, the long-term closure of many POWs including the canal tow path, in the Colne Valley national park, the building of a large power substation adjacent to the aforementioned and autotransformer, closure of Moorehall Road (an alternative road to Harvil Road) to allow over-bridge construction, Closure of the A412 north orbital road (the main route to Watford, the M25 and A40). At peak times, these roads are congested. Partial or full temporary closure of any one of them causes paralysis to the whole area. The prospect of the proposed long-term closures does not bare thinking about. What will happen to the hospital, schools, farms, businesses, residents and commuters? But worse still, these will be compounded by the predicted myriad construction vehicles and corresponding road closures in Adjacent areas (eg; West End Road in Ruislip, a proposed construction traffic route AND the main road out of that area!). Just this potential paralysis of the road network is sufficient to condemn the proposed scheme as unworkable, but in factoring in the additional environmental devastation, wildlife habitat destruction and loss of amenity, your petitioner can only conclude that insufficient consideration, by HS2 LTD, of the

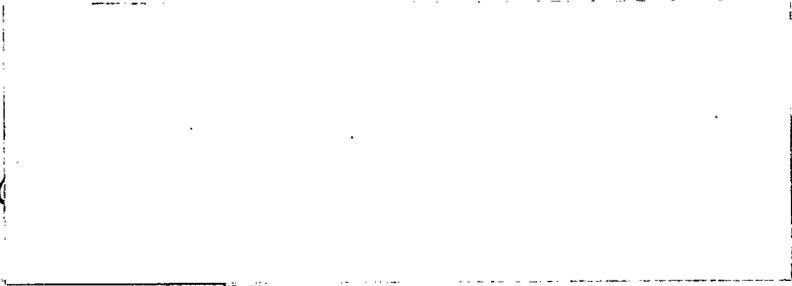
impact upon Harefield has been accounted for. Moreover, your petitioner cannot envisage how it will be possible for HS2 LTD's construction activities to function and deliver its proposed works under those same conditions.

10. Whilst your petitioner accepts that inevitably, there will be circumstances where the national interest would, potentially necessitate a disproportionate impact upon a minority of individuals, he is, in principle, opposed to the scheme, as proposed in the Hybrid Bill because in this instance, the national interest element of it seems to be predicated upon unsubstantiated, claimed benefits to the wider economy that have not been promoted in a robust, convincing and consistent manner, at an unacceptable cost to his locality, with absolutely no local benefit there and no possible avenue to pursue any kind of compensation to him to mitigate the adverse long-term effect upon him and his family . Specifically, the route duplicates the WCML intercity service that is widely reported to be operating at just over 50% of capacity in peak times, and expert analysis of other rapid transit railways shows that the associated capital city benefits more than the regions to which it connects. Therefore, the proposal will not address a capacity issue as claimed, nor will it be a catalyst for the development of regional economies. However, since the Bill has passed its second reading, to avoid the aforementioned devastating impact upon the Colne Valley and that upon the surrounding area, your petitioner would like the select committee to require the Bill to be amended to extend the Northolt tunnel beyond the whole Colne Valley area. The petitioner understands that the cost of such an undertaking would be in the region of £1.5 billion, but would point out that this sum would be off-set against the cost of the, already proposed cuttings, embankment, viaduct, road closures, diversions, temporary access road construction and light railway, overhead power cable and high pressure gas main realignment, the cost of the virtual crippling of Harefield high street, schools, the hospital, the psychological and general health impact upon residents, commuters, and local workers and businesses and the cost to the environment; the loss of precious wildlife habitat, SSSIs, the increased risk of flooding, the loss of agricultural land, the potential permanent contamination of the region's water supply and the incalculable cost of the permanent ruination of a tranquil area of beauty and leisure and agriculture resource.
11. For the foregoing and connected reasons your Petitioner respectfully submits that, unless the Bill is amended as proposed above, so far affecting your Petitioner, 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 and his rights, interests and property and for which no adequate provision is made to protect your Petitioner.

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.

Signed; Clive Medcraft



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