

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 Maria Holmes and Chris Holmes

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 petitioners are the freehold, owner, occupiers of 17 Hillside, Harefield, Middlesex, UB9 6AU. Your petitioners' property was purchased in 2007 intending it to be their permanent home; therefore your petitioners have invested much time and money making necessary structural and visual improvements. Your petitioners purchased this property to gain easy access to work in Uxbridge, enjoy a better quality of life, and take full advantage of the rural activities (sailing at Hillingdon Outdoor Activity Centre, cycling along the Grand Union Canal), and for the local village amenities and nearby access routes into and out of London for the purpose of other petitioner's own company business where a car is the only form of transport that can be used due to heavy equipment being transported. Your petitioners' property is in close proximity to several construction sites proposed to be used under the Bill, to Moorhall Road and Harvil Road proposed as routes for construction traffic for these sites and land safeguarded for sustainable placement of spoil. Therefore your petitioners' property will be subject to intolerable noise, light pollution, dust and vibration for at least seven years during the construction period and have restricted access to their property and to their places of employment. Your petitioners' property is adjacent to land proposed for the construction of a National Grid Feeder Station; this will be approximately 350 metres from your petitioner's property and will be clearly visible from your petitioners' home. This land is proposed for the 'temporary' realignment of national grid electricity pylons for an undisclosed indefinite period; they will be placed close to your petitioners' property. Your petitioners' property is situated approximately 600m from the centre of the line proposed to be constructed on a viaduct. During construction your petitioners will suffer intolerable noise, dirt and dust. Thereafter spoiled views, increased noise levels and no longer have access or use of bridleways used for bicycling access to the petitioner's workplace in nearby Uxbridge.
8. Your petitioners' property rights, interests and property are injuriously affected by the Bill, to which your petitioners object for reasons amongst others, hereinafter appearing.
9. Your petitioners oppose the Bill in principle. Whilst your petitioners acknowledges that the principle of the Bill is established at second reading, your petitioner's views on the subject are so strong, they must be recorded in this petition.
10. Your petitioners object in principle because of the following reasons.
Your petitioners are seriously concerned over the business case of HS2, particularly the fact that it represents poor value for money to the tax payer the majority. Your petitioners supports the alternative solution to HS2 produced by 51m, this represents a far better business case including lower initial costs and a much greater Benefit Cost Ratio, as reported by WS Atkins for the Department of Transport. Your petitioners object to the loss of local business and amenities that will be caused by HS2.

Construction Traffic and Sites

11. Your petitioners' property is situated between two streets, The Furrows leading onto Harvil Road and Dellside leading onto Moorhall Road. Moorhall Road and Harvil Road are the only roads that give your petitioners access in and out of Harefield and the only roads that allow access to the south of the Borough. Your petitioners are concerned

about the adverse impact construction traffic will have on the accessibility to everyday and essential services. One of your petitioner's uses Harvil Road to commute by car, bus or bicycle to access local transport links to Uxbridge for work and to access services in other surrounding towns. Construction traffic will result in considerable delays and cost in loss of working hours which would affect your petitioner's daily commute to work and access to essential services. The other petitioner runs his own business from home and needs to access routes to all areas of the United Kingdom. If the routes are obstructed this will result in delays in the petitioner getting to work destinations in an expeditious time which will incur a loss of income.

12. Two construction sites are proposed along Moorhall Road and the construction of the proposed viaduct across this road. Your petitioners use Moorhall Road by car on a regular basis to access the M25, M4 and M40. Alternative transport by bicycle to work in Uxbridge via the Grand Union Canal, the alternative to motor transport, will also be impeded by the construction traffic and sites. Your petitioners are concerned that access in and out of their property will be severely and adversely impacted by the volume of heavy goods vehicles due to the presence of the construction sites and their presence could increase the risk of road traffic accidents causing further misery.
13. Your petitioners regularly use the U9 and 331 London Bus services. Part of the U9 route is along Harvil Road and the 331 along Moorhall Road. Your petitioners are concerned that this facility will be withdrawn for a number of years due to the delays that will be caused by construction traffic. There are no other alternative routes for this service in South Harefield.
14. Your petitioners submit that if a tunnel were constructed in this area, the construction sites would not be necessary and therefore construction traffic will be reduced, alleviating the above concerns and the related knock on affects to surrounding areas. If your Honourable House decides against a tunnel, your petitioners submit that only one of the roads be used for construction traffic at one time and this will monitored for compliance.

National Grid realignment

15. Your petitioners are concerned about the realignment of the National Grid bringing electricity pylons closer to the petitioners' home for the purpose of constructing the HS2 viaduct. HS2 Ltd has not consulted or made it clear to your petitioners when this work will start only that it will need to commence prior to the 2017 start date. HS2 Ltd has not indicated in any public document how close to the petitioners' home the electric pylons will be placed or consulted in any way with the petitioners regarding this. HS2 Ltd has not made any reference to how temporary this arrangement will be. Your petitioners are concerned about an increase in noise and dirt when this work starts and an increase in risk to health and noise pollution once in place.

From your petitioners' property, your petitioners enjoy views of open fields and two copses which will be spoilt prior to and during construction phase. The National Grid will be clearly visible from your petitioners' home. This will have a significant negative impact on the view enjoyed by your petitioners and the value to the property.

16. Your petitioners submit that a tunnel in place of a viaduct would prevent the need to realign the National Grid. If your Honourable House decides a tunnel should not be an option, then consideration should be made to realign the National Grid away from the petitioners' home and this residential area generally.
In order to minimise the impact of the proposal, your petitioners request that prior to construction, your petitioners and other local residents particularly from Hillside, should be consulted meaningfully and have access to detailed plans outlining when the grid will be moved and the exact positioning of it and the reasons why this is the preferred position. It must be placed and screened as sympathetically as possible to cause minimum disruption to your petitioner, other residents and be sympathetic to the local environment.

Structural design - National Grid Feeder Station

17. Your petitioners are concerned about the proposal to construct a permanent National Grid Feeder Station and access road on land adjacent to their property. Your petitioner is concerned about the design and height of the National Grid Feeder Station which is outlined in London - West Midlands Environmental Statement Volume 2 / Map Books CFA7 / Colne Valley. The height or design of the construction has not been released by HS2 Ltd within the public domain. Your petitioner is concerned this structure will be clearly visible from your petitioners' home, and surrounding footpaths used by your petitioners, and that it will be unsympathetic towards the surrounding environment. This will have a significant negative impact on the landscape, and ruin the natural beauty of the local environment. Your petitioners are concerned about the noise and dirt pollution during construction and noise pollution thereafter.
18. Your petitioners request this structure is constructed in an alternative position away from this residential area and the petitioners' home and that sympathetic screening, mainly trees, are planted around it to minimise the adverse visual impact and in keeping with the local surroundings. If your Honourable House decides this is not an option then can consideration be made that in order to minimise the impact of the proposal, your petitioners and other local residents, particularly from Hillside, prior to construction must be consulted meaningfully on the detailed drawings and plans for the National Grid Feeder Station. It must be designed sympathetically to fit in with the surrounding environment, and be maintained to a high standard. Visual screening must be put in place, and this must also be maintained to a high standard, in order to minimise the noise and air pollution generated by it.

Viaduct

19. The proposed line is planned to pass your petitioners' property on a viaduct at a distance of approximately 940m away from your petitioners' property and approximately 600m at its closest route to Moorhall Road.
20. The journey of the proposed line will continue over the Grand Union Canal and Moorhall Road in the form of an arc. This arc is in close proximity to your petitioners' property, with an estimated 36 trains every hour travelling up to speeds of 320km per hour over large bodies of water. Your petitioners are concerned about the noise pollution that will surround them which will be heightened due to the trains travelling over the water. Your petitioners believe that the promoters of the Bill have not properly considered this factor when estimating noise impacts.
HS Ltd has proposed that there will be a 1.5 metre high sound barrier on each side of the viaduct where it crosses the Grand Union Canal. It is proposed that a 4 metre sound barrier will be placed on the far side as the viaduct crosses Moorhall Road. Your petitioners are concerned that this will generate even more noise pollution towards their property.
21. Your petitioners regularly walk across the land adjacent to their property where the proposed viaduct will be built. Your petitioners regularly walk or drive along Moorhall Road. The viaduct will pass directly overhead at a height of 15 metres carrying up to 36 trains per hour. The promoters have not indicated the decibel level of the trains in this circumstance. The ES accompanying the Bill suggests 90 Db. at 25 metres. Your petitioners believe the noise level of passing overhead trains could be damaging to health and hearing, making Moorhall Road and the Grand Union Canal Towpath unusable on foot.
22. The proposed Colne Valley viaduct that will be clearly visible from your petitioners' property and a part of a bridle path that is not subject to closure. This will spoil the tranquil views and peaceful walks your petitioners enjoy from their property.
23. Your petitioners submit that a tunnel in place of a viaduct would be sympathetic to the surrounding environment, remove the health implications associated with dangerous noise levels, and prevent closure of public rights of way and bridleways. If your Honourable House decides a tunnel is not an option the viaduct must be designed and constructed sympathetically and maintained visually to a very high standard i.e. by regularly funding removal of graffiti.
The speed of the trains travelling across the viaduct should be reduced to a speed that does not generate a dangerous decibel. The frequency of the trains should be reduced to

allow pedestrians to pass through between intervals when noise pollution is not at its worst.

24. The land adjacent to your petitioners' property where the proposed Colne Valley viaduct is to be constructed along with a National Grid Feeder Station is a migratory path for thousands of Canada geese, landing here every year. Your petitioners enjoy this spectacle and fear the viaduct and National Grid Feeder Station will cause harm and distress to these birds along with local wildlife that will be affected by the clearing of land.
25. Your petitioners request a tunnel in place of a viaduct.

Sustainable Placement

26. Your petitioners live in close proximity to Park Lodge Farm on Harvil Road and its surrounding countryside and woodland. This land has been safe guarded for the sustainable placement of spoil from tunnelling. Your petitioners are concerned because the safeguarded area is equivalent to the size of Harefield village. Your petitioners are concerned that the volume of HGV traffic will be furthermore increased when the disproportionate amount of spoil is transported within Harefield. This will cause further traffic congestion and more air and noise pollution. The height they propose to dump the spoil, at 3 meters, is great cause for concern due to the risk of flooding close to the petitioners' property in an area that is already considered a flood plain. The petitioners are concerned this area will not recover from the dumping of spoil and that it may be contaminated with toxins.
27. Your petitioners request that the promoters give more consideration to their decision as to where to dump the spoil. The spoil could be transported by rail and placed in an area where it would cause no adverse effect. This would also alleviate the heightened traffic, noise and dust pollution.

Air and light pollution

28. Your petitioners moved to Harefield (Hillside) to enjoy a healthy active lifestyle using the surrounding open green space, public footpaths, bridleways and woodland. Your petitioners are concerned that the air and light pollution generated during the construction period of at least seven years, further aggravated by the disproportionate and large amount of construction proposed for such a small area, will increase to the petitioners' risk of ill health and also many other residents in Harefield.
29. Your petitioners request that your Honourable House consider a tunnel instead of a viaduct to reduce the risk of ill health and amount of air and light pollution caused during construction.

Flooding

30. In early 2014 your petitioners witnessed flooding in Moorhall Road. One proposed construction site will be on land that serves as flood water storage for Moorhall Road and surrounding properties when the River Colne and surrounding lakes flood. In early 2014 Moorhall Road was closed for approximately one week due to flooding. Your petitioners are concerned that there will be a further risk of flooding with the loss of this flood water storage area. Your petitioners are concerned that flooding will cause further traffic congestion and a risk of heightened flooding in close proximity to their property.
31. Your petitioners suggest that a tunnel instead of the proposed viaduct would obviate this risk. If your Honourable House decides a tunnel is not an option the promoters of the Bill should consider this risk and make a more informed decision with regard to how many construction sites should be sited in a relatively small area within a high risk flood area. The promoters could consider placing one larger construction site in an area where there are no such risks.

Crime and Cost of Policing

32. Your petitioners are concerned the construction of the viaduct from the start will result in the rise of crime in Harefield, and neighbouring Colne Valley area. Your petitioners are gravely concerned about the impact of the proposed residential construction site based on the A412 along with six other non-residential construction sites proposed for the local area. The residential site will result in an increase of at least 200 workers, likely to be mostly transient workers. The construction work is likely to attract hostility, increasing the risk of public order type offences committed by protestors venting their frustration. These crimes are likely to occur in the vicinity of the residential site and in and around Harefield Village. The workers themselves may become targets of hostility when they choose or need to use local amenities. HS2 Ltd only briefly mentioned when questioned at a community forum, that it would provide a security guard to ensure construction workers behaved reasonably and were law abiding. Your petitioner is concerned a security guard will not have the sufficient power or resilience to be effective and will be at risk. The non-residential sites housing expensive machinery will be vulnerable targets for theft and criminal damage type offences. Your petitioners are concerned because historically, major construction works particularly where areas of natural beauty are threatened, have seen protestors come from outside to support local opposition. Construction work in Harefield and the Colne Valley is likely to start earlier than 2017 and will experience the loss and destruction of beautiful natural habitat. Your petitioner is concerned this area will attract much media attention and draw in protestors to highlight what will occur further along the proposed line. Your petitioners are concerned that they will be directly affected by this potential threat of crime and violence due to their property being in such close proximity to the construction.
33. Harefield Village has one designated Police officer and one Police Community Support Officer. These officers are based at Ruislip, approximately four miles away. The PCSO's current form of transport to Harefield is on public transport. Your petitioners are concerned the very long delays caused by construction traffic on roads leading to

Harefield from Ruislip and a rise in crime will result in totally inadequate policing in the area and be unable to provide a swift response, placing residents, their property and construction workers at an unacceptable risk. Your petitioners are very concerned about the increase in cost that will be involved to provide necessary and acceptable law and order enforcement. Your petitioners are concerned that HS2 Ltd has failed to recognise or chosen to ignore the issue of policing and cost, evidenced by reports from previous major infra-structure projects. Your petitioners base their concerns on the following information published regarding the M11. 'The road was eventually built as planned, and opened to traffic in 1999, but the increased costs involved in management and policing of protesters raised the profile of such campaigns in the United Kingdom, and contributed to several road schemes being cancelled or reviewed later on in the decade. Those involved in the protest moved on to oppose other schemes in the country, while opinions of the road as built have since been mixed. By 2014, the road had become the ninth most congested in the entire country.'¹¹

34. Your petitioners submit that the construction of a tunnel in place of the viaduct would reduce the risk of increase in crime in Harefield and the Colne Valley area as damage to the country side will be minimised. This would, therefore, attract less media attention and less menace from protestors. Your petitioners request that your Honourable House consider that tunnelling would be more cost effective and less disruptive option to the benefit of all involved or affected.
35. If your Honourable House decides this cannot be option, Harefield Village must be provided with sufficient policing established in the locality to protect all involved from the risk of crime. Your petitioner requests thought be given to HS2 limited funding for the provision of extra officers and provide a local police station.

Rights of way

36. Your petitioners are regular users of the Grand Union Canal towpath and other Public Rights of Way adjacent to and in close proximity to their property. These are liable to be made impassable or interfered with for the purposes of works authorised by the Bill. Therefore your petitioners will lose access to this alternative route when surrounding roads will be congested at best and impassable at worst for access to surrounding towns for work as well as a valuable recreational amenity.
37. Your petitioners ask that the number of local PRoWs proposed to be stopped up or interfered with, and the duration of such interruption, be reduced significantly so that and adequate level of important local amenity is preserved. Your petitioners ask that they, along with neighbours, be consulted meaningfully about these revisions.

Compensation

38. On the 9th April 2014 the Government published an improved compensation and assistance package. Despite responding to and highlighting the mass disruption and pollutions your petitioners believe will affect South Harefield, your petitioners are not entitled to compensation. Your petitioners fear they will suffer severe disruption and stress during construction, their property will be permanently blighted and your petitioners will suffer a poorer quality of life.

39. A tunnel would reduce the negative impact. If your Honourable House decides a tunnel is not an option your petitioners ask that the compensation and assistance package is reviewed to ensure that your petitioners and neighbours are adequately compensated for years of blight and stress that will be the consequence of HS2 and also the drop in property value as a result.

40. 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.

M. Habes *J. D. King*

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PETITION OF (MARIA HOLMES AND CHRIS HOLMES)

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MARIA HOLMES AND CHRIS HOLMES

Office of the
Clerk of the House of Commons

Telephone: 01203 59628

Facsimile: 01203 643660