

**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 SOMERS TOWN NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM**

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 the Somers Town Neighbourhood Forum constituted and approved by LB Camden to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan as set out under the Localism Act 2011. Your Petitioner's contact details are:**

**Sarah Elie (chairperson), Somers Town Community Centre, 150 Ossulston Street, NW1 1EE. [Sarah@somerstown.org.uk](mailto:Sarah@somerstown.org.uk) 020 7388 6088.**

**Your Petitioner's neighbourhood boundaries include land safeguarded by HS2 that will directly and specially impact on your Petitioner's members' homes, livelihoods and health. Somers Town has a unique and diverse community. At 14.4% the proportion of school aged children is higher**

than the Camden average of 10.1%. It has a higher proportion of residents who are Bangladeshi (18.8% compared to 5.7%) and Black African (10.7% compared to 4.9%) than Camden as a whole. Unemployment is at 10.9% for the Somers Town CIP area and the average household income is some £10,000 or so below the Camden average. Life expectancy is 10 years less than in wealthier parts of the Borough. It is a designated 20mph Home Zone.

8. Your Petitioner and their rights, interests and property are injuriously affected by the Bill, to which your Petitioner objects for reasons amongst others, hereinafter appearing.
  
9. Your Petitioner strongly opposes the decision to construct the HS2 railway line with a terminus station at Euston because of the devastating impact the construction and operation of the line will bring to Somers Town. The Bill includes powers for the Secretary of State and the Nominated Undertaker to do construction works within the neighbourhood, throughout the anticipated 10 year lifetime of the Neighbourhood Plan. Your Petitioner has already spent almost 3 years preparing the Plan and is intending to submit it to LB Camden for consideration by October / November 2014. Over this period your Petitioner has secured a deep knowledge of local needs and aspirations. These inform this Petition. Under these circumstances, it is your Petitioner's strongly held opinion that, unless radically modified , the works proposed are seriously prejudicial to the submission and attainment of a viable Neighbourhood Plan .

Construction works which are estimated to take 10 years to complete will include lorry movements, the creation of dust and noise, poor air quality, and 24 hour working. Your petitioner has very real concerns about the environmental, health and amenity impact over 10 years, of HS2 construction, and associated local movement implications, for a resident / working / visiting population heavily reliant upon public transport, cycling, walking and provision for the disabled and otherwise disadvantaged.

- 1) **UTILITY WORKS IN WEST SOMERS TOWN:** Given the provisional / conditional nature of proposals and the number of planning studies yet to be completed, and the construction of a 3m wide / deep trench in Eversholt Street, you Petitioner is not yet convinced of the need for these works in West Somers Town. Chalton Street has already been identified as a Neighbourhood Hub (LB Camden Euston Area Plan) and your Petitioner is committed to working with LBC to improve local viability of, and accessibility to, the market and other services such as the Health Centre, New Horizons etc on this street. Your Petitioner is therefore strongly opposed to the proposed works on Phoenix Rd and Chalton St as these could have a catastrophic effect upon the financial viability of market traders and other small businesses.
  
- 2) Likewise the environmental and accessibility implications are unacceptable for residents and those (often sick and elderly) using the health centre, the Islamic Centre and other community facilities such as parents and children using Maria Fidelis School on Phoenix Rd. No clear and specific measures of mitigation or compensation were included within this part of the Environmental Statement (ES). Little or no information was provided in the ES on the nature of the works beyond those at Chalton Street / Phoenix Road.
  
- 3) Proposed works at Aldenham Street, Chalton Street (N) will have a direct impact upon residents and high order community facilities such as St Mary / St Pancras PS, Plot 10, Somers Town Sports Centre and Regents High School. Consequently your Petitioner is opposed in principle to such works.
  
- 4) Given the special needs of many residents in the Neighbourhood, it is unacceptable that no specific information has been provided on the “partial closure of roads resulting in traffic controls” in Somers Town.
  
- 5) **UTILITY WORKS LANCING STREET AND CHURCHWAY:** Both the Adventure Playground and the Public Right of Way under 1-31 Churchway are to be acquired for utility works. No reference has been made in the ES to the impact of the proposed works upon the underground parking and service area accessed via a ramp down from Churchway immediately to the south of Nos 1 - 31. “The duration and extent of these works is uncertain at

this time” But assumed to be 6 years (same as operation of adjoining Lancing Street Satellite Compound. Because of the nature of the activity, this Compound could, at times, be operating at night.). In principle, your Petitioner is strongly opposed to this proposal due to :-

- a) Loss of scarce, valuable, safe, play and amenity open space.
  - b) Severe environmental impact (noise, dust, pollution, potential vibration, nighttime lighting / working on closely adjoining residents in Wellesley House, 1-31 Churchway, 1-79 Doric Way.
  - c) Closure of public rights of way resulting in serious reduction in local pedestrian and cycle accessibility and convenience of movement for residents, tenants and others visiting or passing through the area.
  - d) Potential loss of underground parking / service area.
- 6) The environmental impact upon residents in the Churchway Estate appears to have been seriously underestimated / ignored. The Maverick TV and film studios referred to in para 11.4.18 of the ES (significant noise impact) lie low down on the eastern side of Churchway far further from construction activity than Wellesley House, 1-31 Churchway, 1-79 Doric Way , Winsham House, Seymour House and Buildings, Grafton Chambers, 32 - 36 Churchway which will be subject to even more significant noise impact.
- 7) AMPHILL ESTATE: In 2005 work was begun on a £20 million regeneration of the Ampthill Estate. The estate has many elderly as well as young residents. The regeneration was finished some 5 years ago and has markedly improved the quality of life for all. Security was established early on by residents, as a top priority. The works included refurbishment of the tower and low rise blocks, estate landscaping, provision of playspace, improved security including fob access and remote controlled entry system to housing blocks, renewal of external lighting. The HS2 proposals would completely undo all the regeneration that has recently been achieved. Residents - particularly in 160 flats in Gillfoot and Dalehead, and 24 units in Stockbeck and Beckfoot would effectively find themselves living in the middle of a construction site for 5 to 10 years. Construction vehicles will penetrate deep into the estate and construction workers will range all over it. The existing Tenants Hall would be severed from the estate by construction and other traffic. HS2 Ltd intend to ‘stop up’ Barnby Street which would prevent access to

estate parking. Concerns exist particularly about emergency access and for deliveries. It is not known whether pedestrian access will be maintained. Land potentially required for utility construction would result in loss of the ball court, sever the estate into several parts and render movement between blocks and across the estate difficult, and for some residents, potentially dangerous. Gillfoot is so closely situated to the proposed new rail approach cutting as to require underpinning for structural stability. The resulting environmental impact for residents of this block and Dalehead (noise, vibration, air pollution etc) will be severe (daytime for 28 months / nighttime for 16 months). In addition, and for many other residents, the environmental impact of construction activity will be equally unbearable - loss of security, periodic night time working, noise dust, pollution etc. (daytime for 38 months / nighttime for 21 months).

- 8) Your Petitioner has concluded that these unacceptable proposals represent the maximum position of convenience to HS2 at the maximum expense of residential amenity, accessibility and security. No evidence of mitigation is apparent in this part of the Report. There has to be far better Community Involvement by HS2 in this part of the project than would appear to be the case so far.
  
- 9) **LANCING STREET SATELLITE COMPOUND:** Lancing Street currently provides cycle and pedestrian access through gates at the end of the street into and from the Churchway Estate. It also provides vehicular and pedestrian access to St Pancras Church House, the Royal George Public House and Euston House, including the Learning Tree International Training Centre. The upper hall in Church House is available for hire for meetings, as a rehearsal room and for other uses. It can comfortably seat 70 people and is an integral part of the service provided by St Pancras Church close by. The building also contains 3 residential units. The International Learning Tree Education Centre has over 30 fully-equipped classrooms on four floors of Euston House, with coffee lounges on each floor. Over 30 years, it has built an enormous international as well as national reputation providing high quality IT and management courses designed for both individuals and employees from a wide range of groups and organisations.

10)Your Petitioner supports the position taken by St Pancras Church and others in strongly objecting to these proposals and raising the issue of compensation. Not only will they impose severe environmental impact upon adjoining residents and massively constrain pedestrian / cycle movement between Churchway Estate and Euston but, on the face of it, they will also destroy the viability of the Church Hall, Public House and Training Centre. No reference is made in the Statement to compensation for such loss. All three, and particularly the Church Hall and the Public House are part of the distinctive local character of West Somers Town. They provide valuable local services both to the Neighbourhood and the wider community.

11)TREES AND GREEN SPACE: Your Petitioner is extremely concerned at the potential of the proposed works to damage or destroy mature trees and green space in the area, e.g. in Euston Square, Eversholt Street, Doric Way, Phoenix Road, Chalton Street, Churchway and Amptill Estates. Consequently the Forum would wish to see proper protection in place before construction is started.

12)AIR QUALITY AND HEALTH: Somers Town lies between two mainline railway termini and is bounded by the inner City ring road (Euston Road) to the south and Eversholt Street to the west. As a result many residents already experience above average levels of air pollution, which, due to prevailing ill health, they are least well able to deal with. Defra (Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) estimate that the annual health costs of air pollution to UK citizens is £15 billion. The main pollutants of concern are Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), Particulate Matter (PM<sub>10</sub>/PM<sub>2.5</sub>) and, to a lesser extent in Camden, Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>). There are binding National and EU Limit Values for these pollutants. London is at risk of breach of the Limits of PM<sub>10</sub> and comprehensively in breach of the NO<sub>2</sub> limits, and is unlikely to meet this until 2025. The UK is currently at risk of significant fines as a result. These pollutants are linked to cancer, heart disease, reduced lung function, and respiratory diseases. A study by the Mayor of London found that in Greater London in 2008 there were 4,267 deaths attributable to long-term exposure to Particulate Matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>). This figure is based upon an amalgamation of the average loss of life of those affected, of 11.5 years. DEFRA studies show that the greatest burden of air pollution usually falls on the most vulnerable in the population, in particular the young and elderly. Individuals particularly at risk also include those with existing respiratory

problems and chronic illnesses such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). These, together with heart disease, are particularly prevalent in Somers Town. The issue is particularly serious in Camden where the percentage of mortality attributable to long term exposure to PM2.5 is 7.7%. It is therefore of immense importance to your Petitioner to discover that “substantial adverse impacts” on air quality during construction have been identified in the ES at : A4200 Eversholt Street, Amptill Square, A502 Euston Road close to the junction with Eversholt Street. This can only exacerbate an already serious health risk to many elderly, young, and vulnerable residents in Somers Town.

13) DRUMMOND CRESCENT AND MARIA FIDELIS SCHOOL: there appears to be an assumption that Maria Fidelis Convent School can continue to operate on two separate sites. This despite operating under increasing logistical difficulty and enduring serious environmental impact from adjoining construction activity. Your Petitioner is however, aware of proposals to consolidate the school activities onto the Phoenix Road site through acquisition and development of the old Police Vehicle Depot (Site 13) immediately adjoining the Upper School. Somers Town already has a large number of schoolchildren walking along its streets to and from school, and there is some opposition to any more. Alternative proposals from local residents for future use of Site 13 concentrated on employment. They ranged from a new Construction Training Site to incubator and other units for small and medium sized enterprises / training / local job information. However, if Maria Fidelis Convent School were to consolidate on this site, it is strongly recommended that no new school entrance be formed on Drummond Crescent.

14) It is for similar reasons that your Petitioner strongly objects to any proposal to site a Euston HS2 taxi rank either temporarily or permanently in Drummond Crescent. The area (including Doric Way) is residential in character. A taxi rank - with commensurate stopping and starting of vehicles, opening and closing of doors, exhaust fumes, noise, etc. until well into the evening and at weekends, is completely incompatible with residential amenity, health, and the necessary peace and quiet required for domestic life and the educational use of adjoining land. Given the apparent decision not to replace the existing public car parking facility at Euston Station, and no on site workers parking, your Petitioner is particularly concerned to ensure that existing residents, business and visitor parking in the neighbourhood is afforded increased protection



from the requisite authorities, as there is, of course, every likelihood of such parking being commandeered by rail travellers and others over a weekend or at nighttime.

**15)POLYGON ROAD / CHALTON STREET: Significant increases in daily traffic flow more than 30% for all vehicles resulting in pedestrian severance. Major adverse impact is recorded for both Chalton Street and Polygon Road, under Construction Scenarios 1, 2 and 3. Since it is a near certainty that this extra 30% increase in all vehicles is actually not destined for Chalton Street and Polygon Road, your Petitioner requests additional information as to why there is this increase and where it is going? Are roads such as Phoenix Road and Ossulston Street to be similarly burdened as traffic exits the Neighbourhood - either as part of a deliberate HS2 traffic management plan, or as a predictive assessment of how drivers are likely to react when confronted by the congestion created by HS2 construction activity at the Euston Road / Eversholt Street junction.**

**16)Partly because of the large number of schools and schoolchildren (already referred to) and partly because of the low car ownership and deprivation of many residents, Somers Town is a designated Home Zone - 20mph speed limit with a road layout designed to prevent through traffic. Your Petitioner is totally opposed to any deliberate HS2 related routing, or rat-running of vehicles through the neighbourhood. This would completely undermine the original purpose and intent of Home Zone designation. It would utterly transform and destroy the residential environment and character of the neighbourhood, put residents, schoolchildren and others lives at risk, and damage the viability of local economic and community development. Critically, a 30% increase in all vehicles on Polygon Road / Chalton Street as an alternative N-S route through the area would totally undermine revitalisation of Chalton Street Market and adjoining small businesses / community facilities over the ten year period 2016 - 2026.**

**10.Your Petitioner objects 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. Your Petitioner requests more detailed information where stated in 9. above and requests these amendments and mitigation measures:

- 1) Ideally a terminus at Old Oak Common instead of Euston. Otherwise your Petitioner supports the position of LB Camden on alternative station design and development.
- 2) Detailed local modelling of the impact on the local road network/ public transport in Somers Town and the wider CFA 1 area.
- 3) The whole of the neighbourhood is likely to be very adversely affected particularly by the construction impact of HS2 2016-2026. It is far from clear what further railway works may or may not be required in the Euston area post 2026. Further clarity on the position post 2026 is required.
- 4) Your Petitioner requests timely opportunity to be consulted and comment on any additional or new documentation and measures produced in relation to HS2 and the Bill.
- 5) Your Petitioner supports the position of LB Camden on HS2 and in the event of HS2 going ahead would expect to be treated as a stakeholder of material significance in forward planning and in other terms, e.g. joint working / liaison with local individuals and member organisations. As such it would seek to develop a close partnership with the promoters of HS2, contractors and subcontractors to ensure:
  - a) Minimisation of environmental and traffic impact.
  - b) Maximisation of opportunities for local people and businesses e.g. through training and employment of local people, local supply and purchasing, job information etc
  - c) Your Petitioner has a Business and Employment Working Group which together with its membership such as Regents High School and other major local stakeholders, is well placed to work with HS2 / LBC to achieve these local training and employment objectives.
- 6) Given the very serious impact at Lancing Street, and the concentration of major building / engineering works compounds immediately opposite, your Petitioner would request the consolidation of compounds and all utility works at Lancing Street / Churchway Estate into the major work sites at Euston Square E and the Podium.

- 7) Somers Town has very recent experience of the monitoring and implementation of the CTRL Code of Construction Practice (CoCP). Given the extensive environmental impact occasioned by HS2 upon the neighbourhood, as a material local stakeholder, your Petitioner would invite and expect a similar working partnership to be developed with HS2.
- 8) With regard to impacts of construction on Ampthill Estate your Petitioner notes that the southern compound is doing much the same as the compound immediately to the north. This raises the question as to whether, between the northern and Royal Mail compounds, it is really necessary at all. Even if it is, whether it has to be over twice the size of the northern compound and, with a bit of ingenuity, whether it could not be temporarily accessed from the north, alongside the new Hampstead Road overbridge abutment. The proposed utility works / land potentially required for construction must be capable of rationalisation into a single much narrower corridor keeping community severance to a minimum or, ideally, accommodated into the new cutting between Hampstead Road and the Royal Mail compound and / or into a trench in Eversholt Street (N) deeper than is illustrated in Figure 7. No evidence of mitigation is apparent in this part of the ES. There has to be far better community involvement by HS2 in this part of the project than would appear to be the case so far.
- 9) Euston Station (rail / tube / bus) is used on a daily basis by residents of Somers Town and many of the schoolchildren, visitors and workers in the various facilities / organisations located in the neighbourhood. Your Petitioner is well placed to assist HS2 / LBC in securing maximum local input into the planning / maintenance of secure, convenient and attractive journeys of this kind throughout the 10 year HS2 construction period. Bearing in mind the proposed opening of an entrance to the concourse from Eversholt Street virtually opposite the junction with Doric Way, your Petitioner has already carried out local outreach and other discussions on appropriate E - W routes (Euston - St Pancras) through the neighbourhood. Your Petitioner is therefore equally well placed to work with HS2 / LBC on Local Traffic and Environmental Management Planning.
- 10) Subject to resources, in principle, through its Arts and Culture, and Business Working Groups, the Youth Forum and through its membership at large, your Petitioner is well placed to assist HS2 / LBC in the design and maintenance / updating of HS2 site hoardings / information material etc.

11)Your Petitioner is extremely concerned at the potential of the proposed works to damage or destroy mature trees and green space in the area e.g. in Euston Square, Eversholt Street, Doric Way, Phoenix Road, Chalton Street, Churchway and Ampthill Estates. Your Petitioner would wish to see proper protection in place before construction is started. In the event that such damage cannot be avoided, your Petitioner would wish to see appropriate trees / green space replaced as soon as possible, and alternative temporary provision of play and recreational space in the meantime.

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 their rights, interests and property and for which no adequate provision is made to protect your Petitioner.

YOUR PETITIONER 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 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 **Sarah Elie**

**On behalf of Somers Town Neighbourhood Forum**

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**HIGH SPEED RAIL (LONDON - WEST MIDLANDS) BILL**

**PETITION OF Somers Town Neighbourhood Forum**

Against the Bill - On Merits - By Counsel &c

**Sarah Elie, Chair of Somers Town Neighbourhood Forum**

**Somers Town Community Centre**

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