

Hybrid Bill Petition

House of Lords

Session 2017-19

High Speed Rail (West Midlands to Crewe) Bill June 2019

Do not include any images or graphics in your petition. There will be an opportunity to present these later if you give evidence to the committee.

Your petition does not need to be signed.

Expand the size of the text boxes as you need.

1. Petitioner information

In the box below, give the name and address of each individual, business or organisation(s) submitting the petition.

Hopton and Coton Parish Council, c/o Sylvia Gibson (parish clerk), Flat 4, High Chase House, High Chase Rise, Little Haywood, Stafford. ST18 0TZ

In the box below, give a description of the petitioners. For example, “we are the owners/tenants of the addresses above”; “my company has offices at the address above”; “our organisation represents the interests of...”; “we are the parish council of...”.

We are the parish council of Hopton and Coton in Staffordshire (HPC)

2. Objections to the Bill

In the box below, write your objections to the Bill and why your property or other interests are [specially and directly affected](#). Please number each paragraph.

Only objections outlined in this petition can be presented when giving evidence to the committee. You will not be entitled to be heard on new matters.

1. Deep cutting scheduled for Mount Edge:

- The railway will bisect the village
- Although the proposed over bridge will provide some limited access on foot or by bike, Mount Edge will still, effectively, be cut off from the rest of its natural community in the village of Hopton because the over bridge will be a bridleway, not a road bridge.

2.Community health and well-being. At the moment residents are moving out of Hopton because of HS2 and the village is facing up to the fact that one part of the village is going to be cut off.

2a Major impact on Hopton residents:

- House demolitions e.g. no. 1 Mount Edge
- Compulsory purchases – 22 out of a total of 24 have now been purchased by HS2 (Full list is one of the exhibits)
- Many residents want to leave
- Some cannot face leaving / are daunted by all of the paperwork
- Residents who did not realise that their properties were going to be affected until route re-alignment in 2015

2b Hopton already has a disparate community and HS2 will make the situation worse. The following distinct groups already live in Hopton:

- Elderly residents who will stay
- Influx of people who rent (usually for a short time)
- Travellers
- Residents on new estates in the parish
- M.O.D. Personnel
- People who work on the industrial estate, Beacon Business Park and the Technology Park (all located within the parish)

N.B. The elderly residents and travellers are both vulnerable sub-groups – the elderly because they are at risk of “rural loneliness” and the travellers because they are economically deprived and already isolated, as a group, in Hopton. In other words, these are “individuals and groups who are at risk and have little or no capacity to experience the impact of HS2 without incurring a significant effect.” (Phase 2 EIA Scope and Methodology Report). These particular groups are more vulnerable to health effects.

2c Severance of one part of the community because of a deep cutting at Mount Edge:

- There is already a diminishing community spirit
- There will be a feeling of isolation because there will be a physical barrier between them and the rest of the village
- Residents of Mount Edge will experience a loss of community facilities and amenity value if they are unable to use the over bridge to walk to the church / village green/ village hall because of mobility problems. A car journey will now take even longer because residents will have to go on a diversion

2d The poor state of the village hall:

- Groups of residents who live close to the village hall will be able to access it but will see repair fund monies decrease, proportionately, as others will not be able to join them and contribute towards a fund which they have done up until now by carrying out fundraising activities
- The village hall is popular but is struggling to gain sufficient funds for its maintenance and repair or a possible extension. It is a 1980's timber-clad building which cannot be adapted in any way (see statement from the original constructors of the hall)

2e Health consequences of HS2:

- The clerk has had many emails and phone calls expressing the level of depression that people are suffering
- With some residents being cut off from the village hall they will, in effect, be cut off from opportunities for physical activity (e.g. pilates, football). These residents will become more vulnerable to adverse health effects
- Since the announcement of HS2 realignment route in 2015 Hopton residents have suffered massive increases in stress levels due to the uncertainty of their future in what has been considered hitherto as a quiet rural environment. Should they try to sell and move? How bad will construction and operation adverse effects be?

2f An aging population in Hopton:

- The Hopton community has a relatively high number of retired residents, many of whom are somewhat intimidated by the vast amount of documentation being generated by HS2 and the equally complex form filling process.
- Some inhabitants will find themselves effectively cut off from the rest of the village and its facilities and so will be facing the issue of social exclusion, particularly since many of the residents are old. Not only will some people be cut off from the rest of the village but they are facing the prospect of enduring their twilight years in the middle of a massive construction site

3 Poor Community Consultation:

The past five years has shown that Hopton residents have not had the most sensitive treatment from HS2 in any respect

4 The destruction of a beautiful rural environment:

- The decimation of countryside between Ingestre and Yarlett which includes Hopton.
- Hopton Pools is an area of approximately 0.3ha. and is designated as a meadow which supports a colony of heath spotted-orchids. It is located approximately 200m north of the land required for the Proposed Scheme. However, as the site has not been surveyed since 1983, and larger areas of potentially high value habitats are present in the area, the designation of the site is likely to change subject to re-assessment.

5 Highways issues

5a There will be two major construction routes passing either side of the village (The Sandon Road and the Weston Road) and there are fears that a linking road (Within Lane) will be used in periods of heavy congestion. We grant that it is not the intention that HGV's will use this link road. It is almost certain that some HGV's will, on occasion, ignore that stipulation as will HS2 sub-contractors:

- This link road is narrow with soft verges and no pedestrian pavement
- There are already many pot holes
- Lorries have to go up onto the verges to accommodate oncoming traffic (map provided)
- This road is not safe for pedestrians at the moment and the fear is that the situation will get worse with non-car driving residents on the caravan sites being effectively "trapped " on their caravan park with no possibility of walking to the village to visit the church, the village hall or the playground which is located within the grounds of the village hall

- The Third Special Report of Session 2017 – 19 says: “There is no doubt that Heavy Goods Vehicles and site traffic will increase on roads close to the enabling works for the Scheme. Traffic will peak at certain points”. This further convinces HPC that the traffic on Within Lane will increase.

3. What do you want to be done in response?

In the box below, tell us what you think should be done in response to your objections. You do not have to complete this box if you do not want to.

The committee cannot reject the Bill outright or propose amendments which conflict with the principle of the Bill. But it can require changes to the Government’s plans in response to petitioners’ concerns, which can take the form of amendments to the Bill or commitments by HS2 Ltd.

You can include this information in your response to section ‘2. Objections to the Bill’ if you prefer. Please number each paragraph.

- 1. A 5.6 km long bore tunnel which would mean that the deep cutting scheduled for Mount Edge would not be necessary and so, one part of the village would not be cut off from the other.**
 - Much of this devastation on people and the beautiful countryside could be avoided if part of the line was encompassed in a tunnel
 - There is plenty of tunnelling in the south of the country but almost none in Staffordshire, despite the hilly terrain around Hopton. Volume 3 “Route-wide effects” summarizes the combined impacts on each of the Phases of construction. Comparing the route characteristics of Phases 1 and 2a it is very clear that Phase 2a has far less tunnelling as a percentage of route km (only 4% versus 23% for Phase One) but a much greater proportion of cuttings, viaducts and embankments. Consequently the construction of the

Phase 2a route, which passes through a mainly rural landscape, will cause nearby communities to suffer a much higher proportion of adverse visual and noise effects.

- A tunnel would save millions of pounds because of all of the measures that are now proposed but which would not be needed if there was a tunnel in place.
- “A long tunnel would bring a reduction in adverse environmental and community effects in comparison with the proposed scheme”. This is a quote from the HS2 Tunnel Options Paper.
- A bored tunnel in place of the deep cutting would provide the best mitigation against noise and loss of landscape when the railway is in service
- HPC knows that Whitmore Heath was successful in obtaining a tunnel and so a precedent has already been set
- The Hopton retaining wall will be a visual eyesore to many residents and provide questionable acoustic screening. The original proposal for a 5.6 km long green tunnel would be much more effective
- The council understands that HS2 rejected the idea of a tunnel on cost grounds.
- The idea of a tunnel should be re-visited and this time, cost should not be the only factor. Other factors MUST include impact on the environment, the community and on individuals.
- HPC believes that the horrendous devastation that the current HS2 design will wreak upon the beautiful rural environment of our Parish of Hopton, and the mayhem that it will create on our road network during the construction phase, represent a VERY HIGH LEVEL OF HARM to both the environment of the parish and the health and well-being of our parishioners. These factors fully justify a full evaluation of a long tunnel. The environmental and human costs of the current project design must weigh heavily in the final cost versus harm appraisal.
- HPC requests that HS2 changes the design of the deep cutting, if the tunnel is rejected, so that the slopes are steeper thus reducing the amount of countryside that is lost.
- HPC requests that any mitigation planting consists of native species
- HPC requests an explanation as to why there is more tunnelling as part of the plans for HS2 Phase 1 in comparison to plans for Phase 2.
- HPC also requests the building of a new village hall.
- (please see Section 2 below)

2a – g If we cannot have a tunnel then we want something really BIG to compensate us. Major consideration should be given to the idea of HS2 funds being used in the construction of a new COMMUNITY HUB. HPC has already contacted four different architects and read some of the village hall new-build specifications produced by Sport England. Councillors have also visited a new village hall. We have received advice from different sources that a new- build costs approximately £2,000 per square metre and we have estimated that 350 square metres will be needed for the new Community Hub. Therefore we estimate that £700,000 will be needed for the new building and £6,000 will be needed to demolish the old village hall.

HS2 has already said, in its Phase 2a EIA Scope and Methodology Report that one of the objectives of carrying out an assessment is to “identify measures to enhance the positive and mitigate the negative effects on community health and well-being.” Providing a new community hub would achieve HS2’s objective. Below, we state the reasons why HS2 should consider this:

The village hall as it is now and as we want it to be in the future:

- We want better facilities than are currently available. At the moment the village hall consists of a main hall, a tiny kitchen, a storeroom and two sets of toilets.
- Current facilities enable the following groups to meet – Pilates, Knit and Natter, Wood turners, Garden Guild, the Parish Council and football teams.
- With a large new-build community hub HPC would like to keep the above-mentioned groups but would also like to provide an off-site meeting place for the local business community (which is very large and takes the form of a business and technology park – all within the parish of Hopton), a venue for parties and social events, a doctors' surgery once a week for people who find it difficult to get an appointment at their local surgery at Beaconside and whose mental health problems have increased which they put down to HS2, football and badminton facilities etc. with changing facilities, (the current football association would like to increase the number of teams that it sends to Hopton) an increased play area with additional facilities for the young and the elderly to practice sport, a place where jobless people can come and learn computer skills and help with job applications, facilities for the disabled, a venue for film nights including a stage etc. a community pub, shop and library, a youth centre, an education facility and an office for the parish clerk. None of these "expansion" ideas can be put into place with the hall in its current state.
- A new hall could act as a social hub leading to more SOCIAL COHESION
- The current hall cannot be adapted for the above-mentioned future needs. We know that because in 2018 we contacted "Wernicks" – the original constructors of the hall. They sent us a full report as to why this could not be done. One of the main reasons was that building regulations have moved on so much since the 1980's which was when the hall was built, that they would not be able to guarantee a new build if it was attached to this old wooden-clad building. Please see report as one of the exhibit materials.
- There is no room to put in a disabled toilet according to a recommended plumber who carried out some work at the hall recently. Any such toilet would have to go into a new-build.
- The wooden cladding on the outside of the building is like "Weetabix" which was demonstrated by a Councillor recently when he put his finger straight through the cladding to demonstrate to a new Councillor the scale of the problem.
- Behind the cladding is a thin layer of insulation. Behind the insulation are the plasterboards that we see on the inside of the hall. There is very little "substance" to the village hall. The wooden cladding is very brittle and worn.
- A few years ago, we asked a building surveyor to tell us what we had to do to preserve the life of the hall – the list is endless! (please see Reg Tonk's job specification as one of our exhibits)
- Currently we have very few funds to carry out even immediate repair works, let alone pay for architects' fees and a new build but we do know that "HS2's contractors will be expected to deliver a Community Investment Plan setting out how they will benefit the local areas they work in – going beyond their immediate construction role. This includes having a strong commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by investing their time, skills, people and equipment in the local community. Such activity includes.....linking with local HS2 Community and Environment Fund projects to leave a lasting legacy." (Promoter's response to the Select Committee's Third Special Report).

Community Spirit:

- Before the advent of HS2 houses took two weeks to sell and there was a big community spirit. We can provide evidence of this in the form of village picnics on the village green, the number of people who used to be in the Best Kept Village Group and the number of awards that this group received etc. (see appropriate exhibits)

- After the advent of HS2 no-one can sell his / her house. HS2 has already bought 22 houses which they then rent out on a short-term lease.
- Therefore, because of the above factors, THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY HAS DIMINISHED

There will be a disconnect in the village:

- The over bridge at Mount Edge will give access to the village but there will still be a disconnect.

There should be an acknowledgement of the levels of stress experienced by residents and there should be compensation for those residents in the form of money which can then be used in the community:

- The Technical Appendices SHOULD adequately address the question of stress and mental health problems already experienced by residents affected by the HS2 proposed route.
- HS2 SHOULD spell out what compensation affected residents should expect.

An aging population in Hopton and an influx of new estate dwellers:

- There is an aging population in Hopton
- Account SHOULD be taken of the aging population and sympathetic measures should be put in place.
- HPC would like an ASSURANCE that there will be personal visits to the elderly.
- The population of Hopton (which is a very large parish, geographically) is expected to swell by 6,000 because of the building of 3,000 houses. One thousand houses have already been built (with no community facilities) and outline planning permission has been given for a further two thousand in the next few years.
- HPC feels that this would be an excellent time to REGENERATE THAT SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Vulnerable People:

- HPC requests that we are informed about the results of a “procurement exercise to provide HS2 staff with expert advice and assistance in supporting vulnerable people” – recommended in the Second Special Report of Session 2017 – 19.

3 A more proactive approach to community consultation both now and throughout the construction phase:

- HS2 should discuss with individuals, in their homes, the various aspects of the route alignment and tell residents specifically how their properties are going to be affected. That would be proper consultation engaging with individuals rather than putting on a central event and expecting people to wade through masses of paperwork online to find the small pieces of information that affect them
- HPC suggests that HS2 representatives would benefit from walking along the proposed line of the route and its close surroundings, possibly with a small group of local residents
- HPC suggests that the House of Lords Select Committee should visit the parish in order to understand its geography and to obtain an understanding of the impact of HS2’s proposals on the parish. The Third special Report of Session 2017 – 19 says: “We found the route site visits incredibly helpful”
- HPC insists on full engagement by HS2 both now, when the construction work starts and once the trains are running

4 Mitigation to combat this magnitude of change i.e. the destruction of a beautiful environment.

- Planting woodland and compensating residents in the form of a cash sum that can be used in the community.
- HPC requests that the site of Hopton Pools is surveyed as soon as possible and that it is informed of any rare plant species and new classifications of the area and how this will affect HS2's plans. We wish the site to be surveyed by the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and we note that the Trust petitioned for funding to carry out such activities in the first round of Petitions to the House of Commons

5a A request for new road signs, either end of Within Lane:

- We need an immediate assurance from HS2 that Within Lane, the link road, will not be used by HS2 vehicles or by its sub-contractor vehicles, but, that, if this assurance does not work out in reality, Within Lane has to be massively improved. The parish council has been pressing for a weight and speed restriction along this lane and there is a request that two signs are placed, one at either end of Within Lane, saying that there should be no HS2 traffic beyond that point.

If you have already petitioned against the High Speed Rail (West Midlands to Crewe) Bill, please give your petition number.

Next steps

Once you have completed your petition template please save it and [continue on our website](#).

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