

MINUTES OF ORAL EVIDENCE

taken before the

HIGH SPEED RAIL (CREWE - MANCHESTER) BILL SELECT COMMITTEE

on

PETITIONS AGAINST THE BILL

Monday, 13 March 2023 (Afternoon)

In Committee Room 8

A video of the proceedings can be found [here](#)

PRESENT:

Andrew Percy (Chair)
Dr Lisa Cameron
Antony Higginbotham
Grahame Morris
Holly Mumby-Croft
Martin Vickers

FOR THE PROMOTER:

Timothy Mould KC, Lead Counsel, Department for Transport

FOR THE PETITIONERS:

Cllr Sam Corcoran

IN PUBLIC SESSION

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(At 4.16 p.m.)

1. THE CHAIR: Good afternoon, everybody. Welcome to this afternoon's meeting of the HS2 hybrid Bill Select Committee. Before we start today's session I am just going to place on record the Committee's decision on the right to be heard hearings which we held last Tuesday. Before I do that, I'll just say the Committee, on 91B, tried to take a permissive approach in that we believe it's important that the rights of Members of Parliament to represent their constituents are upheld by this Committee and in parliamentary proceedings. But we were very clear also that the standing orders requires a direct impact on those constituencies.

2. So last week we heard the three right to be heard challenges against a joint petition from Angela Rayner MP, Andrew Gwynne MP and Jonathan Reynolds MP, and the petitions of Graham Stringer MP and a local business, Domestic Doggess. I'm not going to rehearse the arguments or the cases put forward by the petitioners or the promoter here, as the full exchanges can be read in the transcript of the session, which has been published on our website. So I'll just make a short statement on the Committee's decision on each case.

3. On the petition of Angela Rayner, Andrew Gwynne and Jonathan Reynolds MPs, the Committee found that Ms Rayner and Mr Gwynne do have the right to be heard on their petition, as both of these MPs will have within their constituencies physical infrastructure in the form of the Metrolink stations, which will be directly and demonstrably affected through being closed for a period of two years by works which are – and those works are proposed and included in the Bill. By virtue of this fact, it is our opinion that Ms Rayner MP and Mr Gwynne MP fall within the remit of Standing Order 91B and accordingly have the right to be heard on their petition.

4. For the same reasons, we have decided that Jonathan Reynolds MP, a co-signatory of the same petition, does not have the right to be heard. While his constituency will be undoubtedly affected by the works proposed by the Bill, in this case the temporary closure of the Metrolink stations, because there are no stations in his constituency that will be directly closed by these works or otherwise impacted, we consider this to be an indirect rather than direct effect on Mr Reynolds's constituency. He can, of course, be called as a witness by Ms Rayner or Mr Gwynne should they want to do so and will be able to participate in the future scrutiny and consideration of this

Bill in the usual ways, as the legislation progresses through the House.

5. On the petition of Graham Stringer MP, we found that Mr Stringer does not have the right to be heard by the Committee. Mr Stringer did not demonstrate any direct effect on his constituency arising from works proposed by the Bill that would bring him within the scope of Standing Order 91B. He, of course, we accept, is indirect – his constituents will be indirectly affected in the same way as Mr Reynolds.

6. Regarding the traffic and congestion issues that Mr Stringer raised, these have not historically been interpreted as grounds to grant a petitioner the right to be heard. Mr Stringer should be reassured that most of the issues raised in his petition will, we expect, be covered by petitioners whose right to be heard has not been challenged, and he will, of course, be able to participate in future consideration of the Bill in the House of Commons in the usual way.

7. On the petition of Domestic Doggess, we also found that this Petitioner does not have the right to be heard by the Committee. The business in question is not within the Bill limits, and Mr Hayes, the owner of the business who appeared before us, did not demonstrate any direct or special effect on his private rights. We understand that Mr Hayes's primary proposal for a slip road into Millington Lane is also made in the petition of his local parish council, Millington Parish Council, which will, of course, be appearing for us in due course.

8. So we'll now move on to the business of today's meetings. Can I welcome Tim Mould again, on behalf of HS2, the promoter, and of course counsellor Sam Corcoran, who is the leader of the council and the subject of today's petition? And I believe I'm going to hand over to you, Cllr Corcoran, for you to read us a brief statement, as agreement between the parties has been achieved, I believe.

Cheshire East Council

Statement by Cllr Corcoran

9. CLLR CORCORAN: Thank you, Chair. Good afternoon, Chair, and good afternoon, Committee. I'm Sam Corcoran, leader of Cheshire East Council. I'm grateful for the opportunity to read a brief statement to you today, which I trust will be

of use to you in your deliberations on the Bill.

10. I see HS2 as an engine for growth that could deliver a significant economic boost to Crewe and the surrounding area. Cheshire East Council identified the benefits of bringing HS2 services to Crewe from the start and has invested significant effort over the past 10 years in making the case for HS2 services to and from Crewe, and for investment in Crewe station to make it a fitting HS2 hub.

11. But those benefits will only accrue if the trains stop at Crewe. Crewe is a railway town that has six-way rail connectivity. You can change at Crewe to go south-west to south Wales, north-west to North Wales, north up to Liverpool and Scotland, north-east to Manchester, south-east to Stoke and the East Midlands. So more HS2 trains stopping at Crewe will not just benefit Cheshire East but will benefit a much wider region.

12. The Crewe HS2 hub vision is based on five to seven trains per hour stopping at Crewe. Now, I recognise that train service scheduling is not part of the remit of this Committee, but the economic reality is that five to seven trains per hour are critical to our plans to deliver transformational economic growth in Crewe.

13. It's important to note that, although Cheshire East is overall an affluent borough, several areas of Crewe are in the 10% most deprived areas of the country, so that regeneration is important to both the local and national levelling-up ambition. The rail infrastructure to enable five to seven trains an hour is being delivered with the Crewe north junction, but currently Crewe station will not be able to cope with the extra passengers in the long term.

14. I fully believe that a transfer deck is needed to cater for the additional passengers getting on and off HS2 trains and those transferring to other trains to complete their journeys, and to adequately provide for people with reduced mobility. The transfer deck is also the cornerstone of the Crewe HS2 hub vision. I am pleased that assurances have been given that an extensive study will be undertaken to determine the costs of a transfer deck and whether that cost is justified.

15. The study will commence immediately, will be delivered in consultation with the council and will deliver designs in time to enable the delivery of a transfer deck to make

use of the planned rail blockade in 2028. That's a key deadline because carrying out works during that blockade significantly reduces costs.

16. I recognise that the Bill does not contain the commitment that we sought for a full HS2 hub station at Crewe, but I am confident that the promised study will demonstrate the sound economic and engineering case for a transfer deck at Crewe station, and I accept the sincere assurances to work with the council to deliver the outcomes of that study at pace.

17. In addition, the council has received a wider package of assurances from HS2, which will provide improved mitigation against the negative impacts that the scheme and its construction will have on Cheshire East. These include several additional highway junction and road safety improvements across the borough and a contribution to enable the delivery of the A530 greenway extension up to Bentley Motors in Crewe. I can therefore confirm that Cheshire East Council has decided to accept these assurances and withdraw the petition against the original Bill and AP1.

18. Crewe is a railway town. It was formed 150 years ago around that six-way connectivity of the rail network. I hope that today will be the first step in bringing five to seven HS2 trains per hour to Crewe to make full use of that rail connectivity, to regenerate Crewe and all the areas that connect with it. Thank you, Chair.

19. THE CHAIR: Thank you, Cllr Corcoran. Mr Mould, do you have anything to add to that?

20. MR MOULD: I don't, no. Thank you.

21. THE CHAIR: Right. Members, any issues, questions? Well, thank you to the promoter and to the petitioner for attending this afternoon, and also thank you for reaching agreement on the issues and thereby freeing up our Tuesday afternoons to engage in other parliamentary work tomorrow. So we're very grateful for your attendance this afternoon and for the statement that you have made. On the basis of that, I will close the proceedings on today's meeting.