

MINUTES OF ORAL EVIDENCE

taken before the

HIGH SPEED RAIL (CREWE-MANCHESTER) BILL SELECT COMMITTEE

on

PETITIONS AGAINST THE BILL

Tuesday, 21 March 2023 (Afternoon)

In Committee Room 8

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

PRESENT:

Andrew Percy (Chair)

Tahir Ali

Dr Lisa Cameron

Antony Higginbotham

Grahame Morris

Holly Mumby-Croft

Martin Vickers

FOR THE PROMOTER:

Timothy Mould KC, Lead Counsel, Department for Transport
Peter Miller, Director of Environment and Town Planning, HS2 Ltd

The Promoter's exhibits referred to during the hearing can be found [here](#)

FOR THE PETITIONER:

- Councillor Hazel Faddes

The Petitioner's exhibits referred to during the hearing can be found [here](#)

IN PUBLIC SESSION

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(At 2.02 p.m.)

1. THE CHAIR: Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to this afternoon's Committee. We've got Councillor Hazel Faddes with us and, of course, Tim Mould here on behalf of the promoter. Hazel Faddes is the petitioner this afternoon. Around the table we've got members and clerks. The same as we did yesterday, Mr Mould, we'll commence with you for your brief scene setting – there's an emphasis on that word there – and then we will move on to you, Hazel, for you to present your petition, at which point Mr Mould will then respond and there'll be an opportunity for members to ask questions and for you to question the promoter and vice versa, if you so desire. So Mr Mould?

2. MR MOULD KC (DfT): I have a feeling that the brevity of my openings is a work in progress.

3. THE CHAIR: No, it's fine actually because the reason we're doing, Hazel, the scene setting is it just allows Mr Mould to provide us with an overview with the maps and the presentation he has available of the particular section we're discussing today. But you were fine yesterday, Mr Mould.

4. MR MOULD KC (DfT): Well, that's very kind of you.

5. THE CHAIR: If you continue in that vein, but slightly briefer.

Councillor Hazel Faddes

6. MR MOULD KC (DfT): Yes, I thought that's what it was. Yes, so Councillor Faddes is the ward councillor, I think, for Crewe East ward. She's a councillor on Cheshire East Council. That ward is where the Middlewich Street vent shaft is proposed. I'll put up P109. I think the Committee will recall this from your visit.

7. THE CHAIR: We went to see it. It's near the shop. There's a Londis shop, is it? And then there's the two cottages on the left and the green space.

8. MS FADDES: Yes.

9. MR MOULD KC (DfT): And there you are; you can see this is from the operational map, so this is the finished article as it were. You can see the footprint of

the vent shaft itself and the apron, and then, shown on this plan, landscape planting, though that is, of course, subject to approval and modification, as I shall explain in a moment.

10. That location is a public open space at the present time. It's called Yellow Park, I think, and as I'm sure Councillor Faddes will explain to you, it is a well-used area of public open space for the local community. I'll just take you to P110, just so you get a sense of – the area which is outlined with a blue dotted and dash notation and then coloured orange, that is the worksite, and the blue line is essentially showing where we expect the hoarding line to go and you can see that it does take a very substantial area of the existing open space.

11. If we can just put the cursor right up in the top right-hand corner and just move towards the right-hand side, there is an area of the park, another smaller triangular area, which lies to the north – that is, to the right on this plan – that is not directly affected by the HS2 works, but the main area of the park, as you can see, is going to become a construction site for, I think, up to six years, whilst the vent shaft is constructed.

12. THE CHAIR: That other area, Mr Mould, is a green area, is it, then?

13. MR MOULD KC (DfT): It is. It's a green area.

14. THE CHAIR: That was in the corner that was full of bushes. Is that right? It was quite busy or there were some trees.

15. MR MOULD KC (DfT): The area that I understand to be full of bushes, it's got a lot of brambles and some fruit trees, I think. That actually is an area that lies where the arrow is now.

16. THE CHAIR: Right, okay, right.

17. MR MOULD KC (DfT): But if you go right to the top of the triangle, if you go up towards the West Coast Main Line, and then if we can just push the arrow to the right, there you can just make out the outline of another triangle on the space. That is a smaller area of the park that, as I say, isn't affected directly by the works and it has a children's play space in it.

18. THE CHAIR: Right, okay, yes, I do remember.
19. MR MOULD KC (DfT): Yes. Then P112 – nearly there – P112 gives you – there you are, you can see the smaller area I’m –
20. THE CHAIR: Yes, the nursing home, that’s right.
21. MR MOULD KC (DfT): Yes, Bentley Manor and Sherbourne Court to the north. That plan shows you the respective areas of the permanent land take, which is currently estimated at 0.46 of a hectare, and the residual land left over once the HS2 works have been completed, around 0.73 of a hectare.
22. The only other thing I need to show you now is an assurance offered to and accepted by Cheshire East Council themselves, which is at P115. This assurance, as you can see in paragraph 1, subject to certain conditions, the promoter will require the nominated undertaker to seek to provide enhancements to the open space land in order to improve the amenity of that land as open space. The open space land there is Yellow Park. All of Yellow Park, including the area that isn’t directly affected by the works but excluding the children’s play space – because it was thought that the right thing to do was to leave that as it is and to make a commitment in relation to enhancements in relation to the remaining land, that remaining area of 0.73 of a hectare that I showed you on the previous slide.
23. THE CHAIR: So that 0.73 of a hectare is the children’s playpark bit.
24. MR MOULD KC (DfT): If we just go back to P112.
25. THE CHAIR: Which would remain open during the construction period.
26. MR MOULD KC (DfT): That’s right, yes. You can see, the 0.73 is everything shown green on that plan.
27. THE CHAIR: Okay.
28. MR MOULD KC (DfT): Excluding the grey and excluding the children’s play space, if that makes sense.
29. THE CHAIR: Which bit would remain – and all of the green bit would remain

accessible during construction?

30. MR MOULD KC (DfT): No, no.

31. THE CHAIR: No.

32. MR MOULD KC (DfT): The green bit is what would come back into public use after construction. But the area that would remain accessible during construction, on our current plans, is the smaller triangle.

33. THE CHAIR: Right, that top triangle with the pink children's play area.

34. MR MOULD KC (DfT): What is also possible is to maintain a footpath along the West Coast Main Line, which would have the security fence of the railway on the left-hand side and then the hoarding of the worksite on the right-hand side. It would be possible to keep a footpath open there and it would also be possible to keep a footpath open, to provide a footpath from just where the box, approximately 0.46 of a hectare, is on this plan. Can you see in the centre of the plan, there's a box saying 'approx 0.46 of a hectare'? It would be possible to maintain a footpath along that line there, which is the area that you have currently got extensive brambles growing on it and some fruit trees, but all of that is subject to design development and none of those matters is fixed. What is fixed is that the smaller triangle is an area that isn't subject to any HS2 works. So that residue is, if you like, safe for the duration of the works.

35. MS MUMBY-CROFT: Can I just ask one question on that?

36. THE CHAIR: Holly.

37. MS MUMBY-CROFT: So, at the moment, how would people access that smaller triangle, who lived over the area like Ridgway Street or the area that's going up the side of the shop? Are they able to walk through the large triangle and directly into the smaller triangle or is it two separate pieces? I know we went and looked at it but I'm just –

38. MR MOULD KC (DfT): I'm sure Councillor Faddes will correct me if I've got this wrong but my understanding is that they can make that journey. They can walk directly. There's also an access point to the smaller triangle from the north, where the

arrow is now, and that access will remain unaffected by HS2, but what will be affected will be the entrance that you've just mentioned, that is to say from Ridgway Street. One would have to either go along a footpath along the West Coast Main Line or –

39. MS MUMBY-CROFT: How would you get from the Ridgway Street entrance to that footpath along the West Coast Main Line then?

40. MR MOULD KC (DfT): You would either walk along to Middlewich Street itself, which is the unnamed street that runs parallel.

41. THE CHAIR: Where we went –

42. MR MOULD KC (DfT): There you are, yes. So you come from the access point marked on the plan, just below – that's right. You'd come along there, turn right, down Middlewich Street and then, I suppose, turn right again into Audley Street West.

43. MS MUMBY-CROFT: So, would there be access from Audley Street West down that very part of the triangle, down to where there's a little F at the bottom of the map.

44. MR MOULD KC (DfT): Yes, there would. That is the back lane or the back alley that I think you may have seen.

45. THE CHAIR: Yes, we saw.

46. MR MOULD KC (DfT): There are some short-lived utility works required along that road but those works will not require the closure of that alley to pedestrians. I think that it has public rights over it. I think it's a privately owned alley but it has public rights over it on foot. So you would be able to make that journey throughout the works. There may be some short-lived management of pedestrian usage of that alley when there are trenches being dug, that kind of thing.

47. MS MUMBY-CROFT: In which case, I guess somebody would have to go one street down where we can't actually see on this map, but whatever the next street down after Audley Street is, and then join it, would they?

48. MR MOULD KC (DfT): Yes. Just where the arrow is now –

49. MS MUMBY-CROFT: Yes.

50. MR MOULD KC (DfT): – there's a property known, I think, as Cumberland House and my understanding is that you can come in along the – where the arrow is now, the alleyway continues on a curve and joins on to Middlewich Street just to the south there, I think, so you would be able to make the journey you've just mentioned. Alternatively, of course, if you go back to the access road, to Ridgway Street itself, you'd turn left, walk up Middlewich Street and make your way along past the care homes and into the smaller triangle that way, which obviously is a much longer journey on foot than is currently the position.

51. THE CHAIR: Okay.

52. MS MUMBY-CROFT: Thank you.

53. THE CHAIR: Thank you.

54. MR MOULD KC (DfT): I wasn't going to say any more.

55. THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Mould. Excellent. Councillor Faddes, it's over to you. Obviously, we're very keen to hear from you what it is you want from the Committee this afternoon and what your continuing concerns are, following what Mr Mould has said are the assurances that have been given to Cheshire East Council.

Submissions by Ms Faddes

56. MS FADDES: Thank you very much, Chair. I'm going to say thank you for allowing me to speak to you today and I am petitioning in support of the residents in Crewe East, who will be directly affected by the loss of some of the Middlewich Street open space in Crewe, which is known as the Yellow Park. To be honest, it was just the play area that's known as the Yellow Park but, from now on, the whole area will be known as Yellow Park because I think it makes sense.

57. If you can possibly show an exhibit of mine, please, it's A12(1). Now this map shows the open space as we know it, where the Middlewich vent shaft will be located. To the west lies the West Coast Main Line and there's a footpath alongside that, and this comes from the Sherbourne Estate, which is to the top of the Bentley Manor Care Home. See the Bentley Manor Care Home there. Just below the Bentley Manor Care Home is that expanse of brambles that you did mention and I know you saw. Now, to

the right are all the houses of Middlewich Street, Mellor Street, Micklewright and so on. They're all terraced houses, they all have small gardens and most of those actually do use the open space. If you've got a dog, or you want to take your children playing football, you will go to the open space. And, I agree, at the moment you will walk across the grass, but when the work's going ahead, you may have to walk a little bit further but I have been assured that it will only be for a certain time, a couple of weeks in each area in the backs, so that shouldn't be too much of a problem of getting there.

58. But if I can carry on, it is in an urban setting and it's a vital and well-used facility for the local community. Now, I cannot stress highly enough how residents value this near to their own properties. Now, given the extent of the proposed work, and the significant and long-lasting detrimental effect the works will have on residents, as well as to the character and the function of the area, I would like to ask for the utmost enhancements, if possible, for this local community.

59. During construction, hoardings will be placed adjacent to the paths running either side of the open space. I feel that the hoardings will cause blind spots and I would like these to be well-lit and for the corner points to curve. Ideally, I would like Perspex hoardings with some artwork. I have seen these in other areas and I think it would make it safer for those who are using the path. I'm very concerned at the moment about antisocial behaviour here and the hoardings would encourage this, so I would ask the nominated undertaker to liaise with the local police on the requirement for CCTV, due to the issues that they face in this area.

60. In the north of the Yellow Park, near to the Bentley Manor Care Home, these brambles have taken over a lot of the area. But it is of the utmost importance that brambles, trees and shrubs are retained for a width of several yards around the whole perimeter of the care home to ensure security for the residents and staff there.

61. Now, I welcome wildflowers and more trees in Crewe East but planting on the Yellow Park should ensure that people are able to still walk in the open space and, quite importantly, to leave some land for the local children to play. Local authorities do see their budgets stretched more and more each year, with little funds for tree maintenance and, if an orchard is not maintained, the area will not be usable and it will become unsightly and possibly dangerous, as you may have seen when you had a look at the

brambles.

62. The nominated undertaker should engage with local people, Cheshire East and the Woodland Trust, to ensure trees are suitable for the area and that they are planted where they will not cause future issues. I do actually live in an estate where all the streets are named after trees and I can promise you that, if we don't plant the right tree, we do get a lot of issues. So I would like an assurance that all trees planted will be home-grown – I don't want any diseases brought in – and that any mature trees which are already there, which you did see, can be retained, if possible.

63. For enhancement of the area, I propose the installation of a hardstanding path and this would run across from the path from the West Coast Main Line to the backs behind the houses because, as you can appreciate, people from the terraced houses do want to walk across and we want to make sure that they can do this in all weathers.

64. THE CHAIR: Can I just interrupt there, Hazel?

65. MS FADDES: Of course, you can.

66. THE CHAIR: Where would the path run from then? So from the West Coast Main Line trail across to where those brambles are now.

67. MS FADDES: Yes, more or less through the area where the brambles are.

68. THE CHAIR: Up to the back of the terraced houses on – I can't read it.

69. MS FADDES: Mellor Street.

70. THE CHAIR: Right. So it would effectively go parallel to the care home really.

71. MS FADDES: Yes.

72. THE CHAIR: Across there, right, okay.

73. MS FADDES: I've walked across there many times myself and it does sometimes get quite boggy, and I do appreciate that people want to walk their dog and they don't want to maybe walk all the way around so I think that would help. And I have spoken to an awful lot of residents and they say that would be quite nice; they'd like that. So if we could have a hardstanding path, that would be great but shorter paths, leading into

the orchard. I'd also like benches to be placed along the path, if possible, maybe a bin, which would be quite helpful, but leaving enough space for games in the park.

74. Now, I would ask the nominated undertaker to engage with the local community to add enhancements to the small open spaces of the nearby estate. This is the Sherbourne Estate, which is just to the top of the estate. You can just see a few of those houses there. They've all got very small gardens but there are little courtyards with grass, so it's a community area for maybe 10 houses. So if we could enhance some of those, it would make a difference to the people who are losing that great community amenity, the Yellow Park, and I really want them to be safe, so especially during the construction period, if we could enhance these little areas, it would make people, especially the children, want to play there, rather than to try and go to the Yellow Park when they can't do much there.

75. I feel that the proposed loss of some of the Yellow Park will be seen as a hardship for many who desperately need a place to run around, walk their dog or to get some exercise. The alternative open spaces suggested in the promoter's response are not suitable for most families and I will explain that later. But putting enhancements in place on the Yellow Park, and the nearby estate and areas, will ensure residents can access any remaining land of the open space, after construction of the vent shaft, and ensure those residents who walk past the construction site are as safe as possible. That's the main crux of what I would like the enhancements to be.

76. Can I now explain why I think these mitigations are required?

77. THE CHAIR: Yes, please.

78. MS FADDES: Okay. Obviously, I've said the locals highly value the Yellow Park. There are few affordable community facilities in the area so the Yellow Park is used for recreational activities, which aid both physical and mental health. Now, there's little for them to do on the Sherbourne Estate. There is a small playpark there but that's just for young children. It was specifically built with young children in mind, so that they wouldn't have antisocial behaviour, because it was thought that the older children wouldn't want to be seen on small equipment.

79. THE CHAIR: I'm guessing that didn't come to pass, knowing what I do of parks

myself.

80. MS FADDES: I was going to say, I don't agree with that.

81. THE CHAIR: Quite.

82. MS FADDES: But, yes, so there's little for the older children to do, so they do go to the Yellow Park to play football and in the past, weekly football matches and practice evenings were organised on the Yellow Park and they were very popular, encouraging some exercise for the children but also a get-together, a social occasion, that they really enjoyed that. Now, the need for activities for young people is an issue which our local PCSOs have been discussing and they were hoping to make use of the Yellow Park for organised games.

83. Residents regularly use this field for dog walking and many people from the Sherbourne Estate actually use the footpath along the West Coast Main Line as a quick route to town. In essence, the Yellow Park is a well-used amenity for the whole local community and one which is very important to them.

84. I wonder if you can show exhibit A12(2), please? Now this is the promoter's map of the area showing the permanent extent, so it's just to show you really how much of the field we will use. I've heard different measurements of how much it will be, so it would be interesting to find out exactly how much is proposed, whether it's 46 hectares or 66.

85. THE CHAIR: The grey area is the bit that's permanently lost because of the vent shaft.

86. MS FADDES: It is, yes, and I think that's 46. So, yes, it's quite a bit. If we can go to exhibit A12(3), please. Okay, I've put in a Google map so you can actually see the extent of the brambles and the trees between Bentley Manor and the field in the open space. So years ago, there was an orchard planted here and some of these trees are still remaining. You can see the darker spots. They are the trees that are still remaining, some very nice mature trees and I hope we can try and save those, but they are surrounded by an abundant growth of brambles and these have taken over the land, making it inaccessible. Each year it grows a little bit more extensive because the

grasscutter can't get to them, so I think this has been an issue. So it gives an idea of the area of brambles which have been encroached and this is due to a lack of maintenance really. So there is a fear that without a manageable plan, we could have the same situation in here in years to come if the Yellow Park can't be maintained.

87. But, saying that, around the perimeter fence of Bentley Manor, there is some hedging. There's a selection of trees. You can see quite nice trees and they do provide safety and privacy for the residents of Bentley Manor. At all costs, I would like the hedging right next to the perimeter fence to remain or to be replaced because the brambles here do discourage antisocial behaviour. I've spoken to the staff at Bentley Manor and they have had some youths actually in the car park of their property, and we have got people with dementia there and I can't imagine how frightening it must be if you see some youths there, whatever their reasons for wanting to be there.

88. So if we can go now to exhibit A12(4), please. Thank you. This is what you saw, the brambles, and as you see, it does show the need for maintenance. So this is why I want to make sure that any trees that are put there are maintained properly and, if possible, if we can save some of these trees – we've got cherry trees here, we've got alders, elders, silver birch, some very good mature, and they are native, fruit trees as well. So it would be good if they can be saved and possibly – I know you're planning to put the orchard at the other side of that, so that's really nice, but if it was a hardstanding path across the Yellow Park as I mentioned before, it would allow residents to actually access this because, in the past, the only way they could access it is if they walked across the grass. It wasn't always possible so having a hardstanding path there would be very nice with benches along it, and I even thought the carers from Bentley Manor could go across there and take the wheelchair-bound residents over the path to have a look and that would aid their health and wellbeing.

89. And then if we could have some narrow paths in and out of the orchard, that would be nice but, again, the brambles do actually help. In another area of Crewe, we have planted an orchard. The residents group planted 17 trees two years ago and, unfortunately, they have all been destroyed. So they were saplings from the Woodland Trust so it wasn't a great extent, but it just shows that we need to think very carefully about where we put the trees and how we protect them.

90. Can I have a look at exhibit A12(5), please? Now, this is the playpark, okay? I note that it won't be affected during construction of the vent but most families and their children don't use this playpark. It's not the best. It's a little bit dilapidated. It's quite dated. There are some missing pieces of equipment. There are some broken pieces and it's partly because it's in a hidden corner of the Yellow Park. It's only got the houses behind it that you see, maybe four or five houses, from the Sherbourne Estate. Obviously, it's got the expanse of the brambles, then Bentley Manor. So it is an area that we do worry about. It does see a lot of antisocial behaviour. So even though it is not going to be affected by the construction and by the vent, it's not the best area to send your children and most parents have actually said to me, 'Can you pull it down?' We hope to do something with it. We do hope to do something with it but it's having the money.

91. THE CHAIR: You say 'do something with it', as in have it modernised or have it moved to another part of what would be remaining.

92. MS FADDES: We've actually – I'm a member of the Crewe Town Council as well. What we have looked at in the past is we've looked at spending money on playparks. So, each year, we spend a certain amount of money on a playpark in Crewe and we did spend some money on a playpark in another part of Crewe East last year. It produced a lovely playpark from a park that hadn't been touched for 40 years. It's made a great deal of difference to the local children there but we really think, with the residents, and we've got residents' groups there, that this park is not quite in the right area. I know nearby residents have said to me that, when there were bins in the area, the children would empty everything out and play drums on the bins. They set fire to the bins and it's not the children from the local area. Because if you're a child, if you're a young person in –

93. MR ALI: Chair, sorry to interrupt. If this has got nothing to do with HS2 –

94. MS FADDES: Okay, sorry.

95. MR ALI: – then what's the relevance of this?

96. MS FADDES: No, I'm just saying that children don't use that in fact, yes.

97. MR ALI: No, but I'm at a loss.

98. MS FADDES: Sorry.

99. MR ALI: If it's got nothing to do with HS2 and this Committee, why are we even discussing it? Maybe I'm a bit harsh.

100. THE CHAIR: I think the point is, whether or not you're seeking a commitment from HS2 to enhance the park potentially.

101. MS FADDES: No.

102. THE CHAIR: Which would be something that –

103. MS FADDES: No.

104. MR ALI: No.

105. THE CHAIR: No, I mean if you are, that would be a relevant consideration for us because obviously your petition is about what you're seeking from HS2 for improvements or changes to the area. I get that what you're saying is perfectly in order in terms of asking for further enhancements, possibly a path or something like that, which is something that we could require HS2 or ask HS2 to provide. Just on Tahir's point with regards to the park, are you seeking from HS2 some commitment to enhance or improve the park as a result of the works that they are doing and taking away quite a substantial amount of the area?

106. MS FADDES: Yes, if possible, I would. I would like an enhancement to that playpark but I was told that we had to have a community grant to apply for funding for the park or community facilities.

107. THE CHAIR: Right, okay.

108. MR ALI: Have discussions taken place between you and HS2?

109. MS FADDES: Yes, yes. I did ask whether they could be previously and I was told, no, it has to be – so, sorry, I was just explaining why children – and I do go on a bit.

110. THE CHAIR: No, no, you're fine. I think Tahir was just trying to establish whether this is relevant to what you're asking from us today, but I think what you were saying was perfectly in order in the sense of you're seeking to explain the enhancements or the things you would like HS2 to do as a result of their works, which are going to take away a very substantial part of your park.

111. MS FADDES: It is, yes.

112. THE CHAIR: Now, what you would like them to do, to leave behind something that is enhanced, which I think is the point you were making.

113. MS FADDES: Yes, yes. I was just saying children wouldn't use this park so the fact that it is not going to be affected is not a great deal of help for parents who live in the area.

114. THE CHAIR: Right. But if it were enhanced, improved, modernised –

115. MS FADDES: Yes.

116. THE CHAIR: – or something like that, then that would be seen, potentially, as a proper recompense for the fact that HS2 are taking away quite a lot of the park.

117. MS FADDES: Yes, that would, actually, yes. That really would.

118. THE CHAIR: I think that's the point you were making.

119. MS FADDES: Yes, and something to encourage the older children to behave better. Can we look at the promoter's response, exhibit P110, please? Now, you've already seen this exhibit. It shows the extent of the open space, which will be required for, I was told, four and a half years during construction of the vent shaft. The effect for users of the open space will be significant. So we're going to have hoardings of 2.4 metres high and they're going to be placed round the perimeter of the field. The amount of land taken up means that there will be hardly any space for children to play during the construction period.

120. Local people do use these footpaths here regularly and these routes should be as safe as possible. Unfortunately, I feel that the corners will be blind spots, so each of the three corners of the triangle will be blind spots, whilst the hoarding is in place. I have

asked if the hoardings could be taken in a bit, if the space could be decreased slightly. I do believe, if you can see the backs, which is from the Cumberland House to number 59 Middlewich Street, that area there, it's going to be – you'll have the muddy path that people walk along anyway; we're used to walking along there, but you will also a very small six-metre-wide path for dogs to walk along, rather than the whole field that they were used to. It will give them a bit of a shock really, and when people used to walk across the field, now they can't so they'll have to go all the way round.

121. Now, there have been some serious assaults in this area, so isolating the footpaths will make it more dangerous, especially in the evenings. I would worry about people's safety. We have schoolchildren walking along here, if they live in the Sherbourne Estate, which is to the – where it says the Middlewich Street vent shaft, they walk along the West Coast Main Line towards the Cumberland House, which takes you to the town. So to make it as safe as possible, that's why I would like Perspex hoardings. I've seen them in other areas and they have little leaves on them, artwork, and I think that would make it safer because you can see who's coming round the corner. Also, the men who are working on the site, men or ladies who are working on the site, would be able to see what was going on outside. Lighting here would be as much lighting as we could possibly have, and I would also like if the corners could be curved so that they don't go to a point.

122. THE CHAIR: Can I just interrupt there to ask –

123. MS FADDES: Of course you can.

124. THE CHAIR: Maybe HS2 can answer, Mr Mould. If this is a construction compound, would it have 24-hour security on site?

125. MR MOULD KC (DfT): Yes. This compound will have CCTV camera coverage, which will cover both the construction site within the hoarding line but also the area beyond the hoarding line. It will also have 24-hour security lighting covering both the interior of the construction site and also the area around. So that path that Councillor Faddes is concerned about that I showed you earlier, along the West Coast Main Line, that will be covered by CCTV cameras and also by security lighting, 24 hours a day, throughout the duration of the operation of that compound. And the design of the hoarding, ordinarily the hoarding is 2.4 metres high but I see no reason at all why, at the

corners of that hoarding, why consideration shouldn't be given to providing some degree of rounding of the hoarding. I'm not giving a firm commitment to that effect but I'm sure that that is something that could be taken into account by the nominated undertaker and the contractors.

126. I mean, for some significant period during the construction of a vent shaft, there's going to be a very large and deep hole within that site. I don't need to say more than that in terms of the imperative need to see that that site is properly secured and looked after to avoid trespassing, for health and safety reasons.

127. THE CHAIR: Will you have security on site in the form of a person?

128. MR MOULD KC (DfT): It would, yes, yes. So there's common cause here in relation to that. The only point I'm going to ask where I think there may be problems in terms of meeting the requests that have been made is whether the hoardings can be Perspex, but I'm going to ask Mr Miller in a moment just to deal with that for you.

129. MS MUMBY-CROFT: Can we – sorry.

130. THE CHAIR: I'll bring Holly in in a moment and then when we come back to you, Hazel, if you can get to the final points of your petition and to what you're seeking from us today in terms of solutions, that would be really helpful.

131. MS FADDES: Yes.

132. THE CHAIR: Holly?

133. MS MUMBY-CROFT: I just want to understand what the – obviously the curving of the corners, that's something we're not entirely sure what's possible or not, but, as regards the lighting and the CCTV and the on-site security, is that in line with what you want, because it sounds like it is.

134. MS FADDES: Yes. Yes, I'm happy with that, yes.

135. THE CHAIR: Okay.

136. MS MUMBY-CROFT: Right, so we can cross that off.

137. MS FADDES: Yes.

138. MS MUMBY-CROFT: Okay.

139. THE CHAIR: Tahir?

140. MR ALI: Just to avoid any doubt, the CCTV that the site benefits from, is it actually monitored by someone and, if so, for how long? And if there is a security guard or security person on site, is it for 24 hours or part of the day?

141. MR MOULD KC (DfT): If you just allow me.

142. THE CHAIR: Allow you to have those discussions while Hazel continues with the remainder of her point. But if you just hold on, we'll just allow Mr Mould – because he'll need to hear what you say as well, but we can wait a moment. We can chat amongst ourselves.

143. MS MUMBY-CROFT: Has some of this basically been agreed before today?

144. THE CHAIR: It seems so. Yes, we'll come to that.

145. MS MUMBY-CROFT: Because it seems to me that that's – what was on that list that I read before we came is already done.

146. MR MOULD KC (DfT): Would you like me to answer the question now?

147. THE CHAIR: Yes, I think so, probably.

148. MR MOULD KC (DfT): Okay. Personnel on site 24 hours a day, CCTV monitored and also there will be periodic security patrols around the outside of the hoarding as well.

149. THE CHAIR: I would have thought that you would have had to, for a deep hole, have 24-hour presence.

150. MR MOULD KC (DfT): I agree. I just wanted to check that I was – yes.

151. THE CHAIR: No, that's important. Right, so we're fine on the hoardings. So back to you, Hazel, on what your final requests are for us to look at today and then we'll hand over to Mr Mould.

152. MS FADDES: Okay, can we look at the promoter's response, exhibit P114, please? Yes, this shows the alternative open spaces that the promoter suggests the local community could use during the construction of the vent but all three of these alternative open spaces can only be accessed by crossing busy roads and children would not feel safe or have their parents' permission to walk to the suggested open spaces and they'd miss the freedom of getting to the Yellow Park as and when they pleased.

153. Now, when I looked at this exhibit, I noticed that the distance from the Yellow Park to one of the locations, the Badger Avenue Park, is stated to be 600 but it's not correct. It's double that because it's going across the West Coast Main Line. You have to go round of course. But the Badger Avenue Park would be very suitable for woodland planting because it's an area of undulating land. I'm not sure if you looked at that.

154. If you could quickly look at exhibit A12(6), please, that's just showing how important the fencing and the greenery is behind Bentley Manor but exhibits 12(7), (8) and (9) are actually the ward profiles for Crewe East. Now Crewe East is a ward of diversity but it's very disturbing to read that many people in this ward have health challenges or are at risk of poor health. So only a small percentage of the population are considered healthy. I think it's about 4%. It's terrifying. So people living in nearby Wheelock in Sandbach have a life expectancy of 10 years higher than in parts of Crewe. This is partly down to the access of the green space that they enjoy so we need to keep as many green spaces as we can.

155. So, in conclusion, it's important to save patches of green in urban Crewe but they have to be easily accessible and to ensure that their function meets the needs of the local people. So I would like to seek reassurances that the views of residents, their representatives, Cheshire East and the police will be listened to sympathetically and considered; that mature trees are kept if possible; and that the barrier of brambles around the perimeter of Bentley Manor can be kept in place; also any new tree planting must be consulted on to make sure it's not going to cause future issues; and, as the alternative open spaces are too far or too dangerous for children to go to, can we please improve some of the spaces on the Sherbourne Estate, which would allow the local families to make use of it?

156. I would like to thank you for listening to me. I'm grateful that the road safety issues in my petition have been addressed and I'd like to thank my petition adviser and the team who really helped me an awful lot. Thank you.

157. THE CHAIR: Excellent, thank you very much, Councillor Faddes. That was really useful for us to get an understanding of the issues. No, genuinely, I think we're all clear on how strongly you feel about the piece of green space and we look forward to hearing now from Mr Mould, the promoter, in response.

Response by Mr Mould

158. MR MOULD KC (DfT): What I'm going to do, if I may, is ask Mr Miller to come and help to –

159. THE CHAIR: Take the stand.

160. MR MOULD KC (DfT): Yes. Whilst he does that, I am able to confirm that the area of the public open space which is lost permanently to the vent shaft is 0.46 of a hectare on current plans and the construction site will be in existence for up to six years. As I said in opening, I want to confirm that that is the position. As you know, as the detail of the design and programme for the railway develops, those numbers may change but they will not be going out, because we take a reasonable worst-case approach for the purposes of planning the railway and the Bill. So, in other words, 0.46 may come down and six years may come down. They are not expected to go up.

161. THE CHAIR: Right, okay.

Evidence of Mr Miller

162. MR MOULD KC (DfT): Yes. Mr Miller, can we just deal with the construction phase and put up P110, if we can? Can we deal first of all, please, with the question of Perspex hoardings? What can we say about that?

163. MR MILLER: Well, first of all, I think I should say something generally about hoardings. We've got quite a good reputation for site hoardings alongside our construction sites and we do encourage art work, which hopefully chimes with Councillor Faddes' comments just now. We haven't put up any Perspex hoardings

alongside our sites. There are a couple of reasons for that but I think the principal one is the kit and equipment that we have on site, we don't want to encourage people to actually try and breach the hoardings and get in and steal plant and equipment, or even damage plant and equipment, and I'm afraid to say, on Phase One of the project, an awful lot of this actually has taken place. It's part of the reason why we're so strong now on security around these particular sites. So, whilst we'll continue the discussion about the hoarding type –

164. MR ALI: Can I come in on that?

165. THE CHAIR: Yes.

166. MR ALI: If you've got CCTV and security personnel there 24 hours, surely some consideration can be given to maybe having a see-through window.

167. MR MILLER: Yes.

168. MR ALI: Because if you get out of Euston and go towards Drummond Road, if you go past the hoardings, at certain stages, you can see what's happening inside.

169. MR MILLER: Yes.

170. MR ALI: So, completely not being able to see inside, I think, is also perhaps not useful to the community that's living round there.

171. MR MILLER: So, you're right, and we will always provide windows into our construction sites, but we won't have full-height Perspex screens. So there will be some visibility and we will be very visible on that site, just to reinforce the construction and security perspective that was talked about earlier.

172. MR MOULD KC (DfT): Now, can we just look at the issue of the brambles and the existing trees, and if we can just remind ourselves, perhaps with the cursor, that we're dealing with, I think here, the boundary with the care home, the Bentley Care Home.

173. MR MILLER: That's right.

174. MR MOULD KC (DfT): Now, first of all, can we give a realistic assessment on

the basis of our current plans, as to how much of that boundary, both in terms of brambles, hedging and trees, is likely to be able to be retained when this worksite is set up?

175. MR MILLER: At the moment, on that particular plan, the vast majority of that will disappear but alongside the fence, which Councillor Faddes showed, to the care home, I think there's a good opportunity to retain the trees and the hedgerow alongside that boundary fence. What I should say is that, and I think you've got this from a couple of the discussions that we've had today, is that the plans that we show you here are in a certain state of detail and there's more detailed design to come. And I think what's going to happen on this site is, we will look to locating the vent shaft itself further south, so towards the left of this drawing, and it may well be that the final design of that vent shaft will have a slightly smaller footprint and if we can move it back, have a slightly different footprint, then there's a chance we could bring back the hoarding once again, but we can't guarantee that at this moment in time. But through the design process, that's what we would look at doing and the reason why I say that is that the vent shaft itself is a key design element in planning terms and we will have to consult, broadly in this local area, about the final look of that vent shaft site and the final look of that open space and whatever mitigation we put in alongside that vent shaft. So there's a bit more to come on this when we get into the detailed planning.

176. So I think we – I won't promise it now but I think we will look to try and move it a little bit further south and, in which case, I think we might be successful in retaining some more of those trees, which are there on site, and possibly some more of that bramble hedge.

177. MR MOULD KC (DfT): I mean, if you look at the plan, on plan, there is a corridor between the hoarding line as shown along that boundary and the boundary line with the care home. So is it possible to say that it is realistic for consideration to be given to retaining at least an element of that existing hedging, if that is consistent with the needs of the contractor, to be able to establish that site and to construct the vent shaft in a timely way?

178. MR MILLER: Yes, and the contractor will want to work with the community. They've got the planning stage to get through. They've got a consultation stage to get

through and they will be very willing to try and accommodate whatever is existing out on site and we've been fairly successful along the line of the route so far. So, yes, I think we'll get more retained. I'm not promising exactly what that will look like at the moment but there will be an edge that will be retained, in any case.

179. MR MOULD KC (DfT): You mentioned the fact that the vent shaft building itself will be a key design element and there will be some local involvement in that. What's the project's stated policy on community engagement in relation to the key design elements?

180. MR MILLER: Well, that is wider local consultation. So those people in close vicinity will have an opportunity to look at the plans as they're coming forward, offer up their views on what that final look of this site and the final look of the vent shaft itself will be, once it's put up for that planning approval.

181. MR MOULD KC (DfT): And we remember that structures of this kind require the local planning authority's approval under paragraph 2 of the planning schedule. And the community engagement that you've just mentioned is a policy commitment, which I think is set out in information paper D1. It's over and above that statutory regime, isn't it?

182. MR MILLER: Yes, you're right. It is above and beyond the ordinary planning, yes.

183. MR MOULD KC (DfT): Yes. Can we then turn to the permanent position, which is P112? And first of all, can you just help the Committee? Just as you mentioned with the construction phase, there's a detailed design stage, which may result in some changes in the hoarding line for the construction site. Is that a relevant point so far as the permanent land take is concerned as well?

184. MR MILLER: Yes, it is, yes. I think we would be looking to minimise the land take that's currently shown on these plans and I think this is quite a good plan where you can see that. You've got a grey area of the vent shaft. It will be a building above the ground, light grey and red outline, and then you've got a bit of a walkway round that building and, presumably, a couple of car parking spaces and that sort of thing. And I think that here, although we showed it quite central, I think that we will look to see

whether we can move it further south and tuck it into that tight triangular corner at the end. It won't go right to the end of that because of the location of the tunnels but I think that's what will happen. And, as a consequence, if you can move all of that back a little bit, the likelihood is that you'll be able to either retain a little bit more green up to the construction hoarding or, indeed, provide a little bit more space to replant and bring back a little bit more of that open space into operation.

185. MR MOULD KC (DfT): If we then just put up A12(10), this is Councillor Faddes' description, I think, on plan of the details she would like to see incorporated, that is to say the tree planting along the boundary with the care home and also the provision of a hard surface path. If you imagine what you've just told us about the opportunities that might be there to reorganise, through detailed design, the footprint of the vent shaft itself, is it realistic to see this as a potential part of the enhancements that are the subject of the Cheshire East assurance which we saw earlier.

186. MR MILLER: Yes, I think what's on the plan here is a very good approximation of what I've just described. So I think that there is an emerging consensus view on this that we will try and move in that direction. I'm not going to promise exactly what that will look like but I think we can go some way to meeting what's on the plan there and hopefully that goes some way to reassure Councillor Faddes and the local people in that area that we're going to take this seriously.

187. MR MOULD KC (DfT): In terms of the selection of tree species which are appropriate for new planting in this location, does the project have a developed position on selecting suitable species and so forth?

188. MR MILLER: Yeah, I think I'd just simply put that as we'll look at the local provenance of the trees. So whatever is growing in the area, we will replace or enhance the planting with. So there won't be anything sort of alien to the area.

189. MR MOULD KC (DfT): If we turn to P114, Councillor Faddes told the committee why she's not terribly keen on taking account of some of these other open spaces in this context because of the distance from the community which currently is served by the Yellow Park open space, but she did mention the possibility of some work in the Sherborne Road Estate, I think, and we can see the area of that estate shown on the plan here.

190. MR MILLER: Yes.

191. MR MOULD KC (DfT): Again, I think, Councillor Faddes, in essence, was talking about some small-scale improvements to informal open space on that estate. Any thoughts on that?

192. MR MILLER: Yes, I think what I'm getting from that conversation, and we were talking about it just before we came into the Committee, is trying to have some local enhancements on the estate which are relevant for people who are close by to those remnants of open space, and they are quite small compared to the Yellow Park. But it seems to me that there is room for conversation through the consultation process for our plans on Yellow Park to perhaps think about that, the money that we have allocated for that restoration plan and enhancement, to perhaps find its way into different initiatives.

193. I can't imagine what that might look like at the moment. I know Councillor Faddes has some ideas about that but I think we would want to leave that over to that further discussion, in consultation with local people, to find out what they want from the grass roots, and help them establish some better outcomes locally.

194. THE CHAIR: What's the budget for the enhancement works, the restoration works?

195. MR MILLER: The budget allowed for the restoration is £480,000.

196. THE CHAIR: For Yellow Park?

197. MR MILLER: Yes, that's the Yellow Park enhancement; that's the enhancement works once we finish the vent shaft works. So I'm going to suggest to you that there is room to manoeuvre within that number, because we haven't fully defined what that looks like. And I think I've said in this Committee before that we sort of build up our prices from – it's not an actual costing – it's a built-up kind of price. So we factored that in, essentially. And I think there is room to manoeuvre for perhaps broadening the benefit in this local geography.

198. THE CHAIR: To include the Sherborne Estate green areas – is that what you mean?

199. MR MILLER: Yes, it seems to me that there are some small squares and verges on the Sherborne Estate. They're probably not big enough, and they're probably not the right spaces to encourage ball games and things like that, but it might be able to be enhanced with a little bit of seating. We were talking about wild flowers, planting things like that, given that the National Trust have got an exhibition just outside in the lobby here, so maybe something that could be developed along those lines, which I understand has happened on a previous occasion in this area. Maybe we could get behind that.

200. MR MOULD KC (DfT): Just to be clear – can we just put up P115(2)? The allocation that you've just mentioned is the costing that was ascribed to delivery of the assurance that I showed the Committee earlier. That's right, isn't it?

201. MR MILLER: Yes, that's right.

202. MR MOULD KC (DfT): So in terms of the assurance which is currently being offered to and accepted by Cheshire East Council, that is the allocation that has been ascribed to the provision of the enhancements that are there referred to.

203. THE CHAIR: It doesn't mention the figure though, does it?

204. MR MOULD KC (DfT): It doesn't, no. There's no mention of the figure in the assurance. And I think the point that we're making is, in the current form of the assurance, those enhancements are enhancements to Yellow Park, excluding that play area. You remember I told you that earlier. I think, Mr Miller, the point you're making is, if Cheshire East Council consider that there is merit in bringing a wider set of enhancements into that assurance, reflecting the points made by Councillor Faddes, then that is something that the project would be willing to consider.

205. MR MILLER: Yes, and I think there's a real opportunity for that, because of the consultation of the lands in that local area, so I'm pretty sure that Cheshire East will be amenable to having that discussion.

206. THE CHAIR: Why isn't the play area included? I mean, in our area in North Lincs where we are, we've had every playpark redone in very large part, thanks to funding from SSE because of their very large wind turbines that they've peppered all

across our beautiful countryside; we've managed to have all of our parks enhanced as a result. So surely HS2 could enhance this park. You've taken away an acre of what is basically a two-acre site. So I'm just wondering why the park isn't involved.

207. MR MILLER: I think the way that we were looking at it, and as I understand the way the local discussions went, was to look at the enhancement of the sort of green open space, rather than interrupting a facility which already exists.

208. THE CHAIR: It doesn't look very well maintained.

209. MS MUMBY-CROFT: What's the enhancement?

210. THE CHAIR: I mean, I get the enhancement might be like some more planting, possibly this hard surface, but the play area obviously looks – as Councillor Faddes' pictures provided us – were very old. It doesn't look like any in our area, does it now, because we've had them all modernised? I'm just wondering why this can't be –

211. MR MILLER: Possibly to help you, I think what we're pushing at is that the discussion could go wider for the type of enhancements that could be provided.

212. THE CHAIR: Could the funding pot go wider then? You're spending more money over a bigger area, particularly over – I mean, enhancing and redoing up a playpark is normally about £80,000 to £100,000 – it's relatively large. So £480,000 doesn't – particularly if you want to involve the Sherborne Estate as well.

213. MR MILLER: Well, we've looked at it and we think the £480,000 could be looked at a little bit differently.

214. THE CHAIR: In an upward direction. Is that what you're hinting at?

215. MR MILLER: I can't give you that assurance.

216. THE CHAIR: Well if you're going to you look at it differently – it's either going to go down or it's going to go up.

217. MS MUMBY-CROFT: What does 'could be looked at differently' actually mean? I don't know what to do with that when we come to making decisions.

218. MR MILLER: Well the point I'm making is that there's further consultation for

this vent shaft site and the outcome in this location. And we've got committed to enhancing Yellow Park on the basis of the open space loss, and to replace that with open space, not a playpark. But what I'm saying – and the conversation I'd had earlier with Councillor Faddes to understand what might be looked on favourably in the Sherborne Estate – is some different types of enhancements. And what I'm suggesting is that the money that we have allocated, which is pretty substantial for that area, could be looked at to see whether we could accommodate that, as well as the open space enhancements.

219. MS MUMBY-CROFT: When you say 'for that area' –

220. MR MILLER: Because we haven't designed it at all.

221. MS MUMBY-CROFT: Do you mean its geographical size or its – what do you mean by it's a substantial amount of money for that area?

222. MR MILLER: For the geographical size on the Yellow Park.

223. THE CHAIR: I mean, effectively, you're compensating the people of this area for taking 0.46 of an acre, whatever it is, of their land away – over half of the park – so these people need to be compensated, I think, is the direction you're getting from the Committee here. And you accept that through the £480,000 fund. I suppose what members are questioning – and we'll have a private discussion on this afterwards – is whether that compensatory amount offered is sufficient, and is broad enough to address the issues that have been raised, and also is expansive enough, in terms of does it include the park or not?

224. MS MUMBY-CROFT: I still don't feel like I understand whose viewpoint it is that the park should not be included. Is it HS2's viewpoint or has it come from a wider discussion?

225. THE CHAIR: It was an assurance given to Cheshire East, wasn't it?

226. MR MOULD KC (DfT): Can I come in on this because I just want there to be no doubt about this? The assurance that I showed you earlier was an assurance that was the product of discussions between HS2 Ltd, the promoter, and Cheshire East Council. It does not reflect a deliberate and conscious judgment on the part of HS2 that no money should be allocated, or no enhancement should be delivered, to the playpark. It is the

position that was arrived at following those discussions.

227. Now, what we have heard today is that Councillor Faddes, speaking as ward councillor, has suggested that there is a case for carrying out improvements to that play area, and indeed, as we were aware, making some improvements to the Sherborne Estate. I accept your characterisation of the underlying context here. Effectively, we're looking to provide something in exchange for the loss of quite a substantial area of open space, which is valued and important to the community. We're not able to do that to any material degree through a quantitative exchange. We can't identify other land in Crewe that would do the job.

228. We tried to, but as Councillor Faddes has said to you, and we don't challenge it, the other areas we've looked at are not really sufficiently close to the users of this park to be of value. So we're looking at qualitative improvements to what's there at the moment. And the £480,000 costing is for those qualitative improvements that we had contemplated would come forward through the delivery of the assurance offered to Cheshire East.

229. I am very happy indeed to take further instructions, in the light of the mood of the Committee, which is very clear, if I may say so, that there is a case for looking to broaden that assurance so that it extends to appropriate works to enhance the play area, and also to specify some appropriate and targeted works to the Sherborne Estate, and to review what the cost allocation should be so as to ensure that the overall package, if you will, is one that is appropriate to give in exchange for the impact on public open space, as we have all of us benefited, if I may say so, from the careful and detailed exposition of what that impact was likely to be from someone who is best-placed, with local knowledge, to explain it to us.

230. So that's how I would propose to respond to you. I can't give you that today because I have to receive instructions from the promoter in relation to what I can offer, but if that is convenient to you, I will take those points away and I will seek to report back to you as expeditiously as I may on those points.

231. THE CHAIR: Sure, I will comment in a moment, but Grahame and Lisa and Tahir as well – Grahame.

232. MR MORRIS: Thanks. Well, I just wonder if we might seek some assurance in relation to the request for the enhancement, including a path across the field. Is that within your calculations, and the suggestion about perhaps some benches as well?

233. THE CHAIR: You said that that is possible, didn't you?

234. MR MOULD KC (DfT): Yes, the position on those matters, they would certainly fall within the scope of the Cheshire East assurance, because they would fall within the open space land. You see, the commitment is to seek to provide enhancements to the open space land. That open space land extends to the whole of the open space, save for the play area. So that would answer your question, Mr Morris.

235. Whether that path can be provided in precisely the location that is shown on Councillor Faddes' drawing, and the location and number of those benches, is not something, I would suggest it would be prudent, with respect, to commit to now because it does depend on the construction site and the final land that is available. But, certainly, we're ruling those in as components of the package.

236. THE CHAIR: I think, before I bring my two colleagues in, just to respond to your direct point as to whether that's something to have – and you're hearing through the Committee – I think that would be welcome. I think what we've seen here, because of the maps that have been provided, in particular the socioeconomic issues in this area and the amount of land being taken, I think there is a heightened responsibility to ensure that what is left behind on the remaining land, given the challenging socioeconomic and health issues that have been highlighted, are perhaps enhanced somewhat.

237. We're happy to discuss it privately ourselves afterwards but I think that you hearing that from the Committee, we would welcome – I'm not hearing any noes from my colleagues – we'd welcome you to do that. Lisa?

238. DR CAMERON: I was just going to make a comment about enhancements to the park which have been mooted, that as chair of the Disability All Party Group in Parliament, playparks under best practice guidelines now are expected to be fully inclusive for people with disabilities. And I was just wanting to point that out and hope that any improvements would follow that guidance and be inclusive, particularly given the socioeconomic issues that have been highlighted for residents in terms of local

children with disabilities.

239. MR MOULD KC (DfT): I'm sure Mr Miller will be able to help you with –

240. MR MILLER: Yes, they will; they're all taken into account.

241. THE CHAIR: Tahir?

242. MR ALI: Lots of open spaces are given; there's no taking away of them, but also you've got six years of disruption, noise, disturbance. The community, ahead of their benefit out of this HS2 line –

243. MR MOULD KC (DfT): Well, there will be a –

244. MR ALI: I know what you're coming to, but getting from London to Manchester in a quicker time does nothing for the community that lives there. Providing them with an updated, a new park, that at the moment attracts anti-social behaviour, would be a legacy, would be something that we can point to and say, 'This is what HS2 gave us'. And in the scheme of things, it's a pittance, what we're arguing about.

245. MR MOULD KC (DfT): Well, as I've said, first of all, the assurance that's on the screen in front of you is seeking to respond directly to that point; it's seeking to leave a legacy, if you will. I've explained to the Committee, to the Chairman, and I think received, with cautious support, that I will ask for instructions as to whether that package, if you will, can be extended, whether it can be extended both in terms of the geographical reach of the enhancements, and also whether, if you will, the budget that is available to deliver those enhancements can be proportionately increased as well.

246. In terms of what Crewe gets out of this, and this is a community within Crewe – it is a community that is obviously relatively deprived within Crewe, and within the country as a whole – Crewe will become a station stop for HS2 services. And although you didn't hear evidence from Cheshire East Council, you heard a statement from that council read out by the leader of that council, I think, a fortnight or so ago – less than that, less than a week ago – in which the leader of that council emphasised the importance that they attach to the coming of HS2, and why they were very keen that the Secretary of State should give some appropriate commitments to them about exploring what was the right way, in future, of enhancing the station at Crewe, how to

accommodate most appropriately additional passenger demands at Crewe, when these improvements to the railway network – not only HS2, but also Northern Powerhouse Rail, which is also due to benefit Crewe – how to realise those enhancements, those opportunities, both in terms of Crewe station itself, but also their own plans for taking advantage of the regeneration opportunities.

247. And the thinking, as I understand it – I mean, I don't speak for Cheshire East Council – but the thinking as I understand it is that the coming of HS2, and later of Northern Powerhouse Rail – in other words what this Bill in part is seeking to deliver – will provide real opportunities to address socioeconomic deprivation, to improve the local economy, to improve the regional economy, to improve life, if you will, in the most basic sense, for those who live and work in Crewe and in the wider area. None of that is controversial. That is one of the stated ambitions of the Cheshire East Council, as I understand it, and it is also necessarily an ambition of the Government's policy and integrated rail plan, of which this railway – this Bill – is a central component.

248. THE CHAIR: Thank you. I want to just remind everybody in the room that we're not here, of course, to discuss the benefits or otherwise of HS2; the Committee specifically isn't allowed to do that. Parliament has decided this railway line is happening; we're here to, of course, deal with the responses to the petitions that are put before us. So I will cut off the debate there on the general benefits or otherwise of HS2, and Mr Miller is indicating.

249. MR MILLER: Yes, I was just going to say that the story in this location doesn't stop just with the design and the enhancement of the open space, whatever shape that finally takes. You may have missed it in opening and my teach-in, but we have a community environment fund. That's specifically geared around getting funds to those communities who are affected by the disruption of construction. So anywhere which is affected by six years of construction, I'm going to suggest, is going to be high on the table of eligibility for getting some further funds forward.

250. I think that has been discussed with Councillor Faddes. That does mean there's a bit more work from the community at a point in time, but we've seen along the line of the route so far that these sorts of communities have been very successful in getting enhancement moneys forward, to work for them in the way that they want HS2 money

to work locally.

251. THE CHAIR: Thank you for that. When we did the teach-in on the community enhancement fund, you will remember, I think, one of the concerns I did raise about that is how we ensure that, in poorer communities where perhaps people are less confident, less able sometimes, to form a group and perhaps sometimes have the confidence to put in the application for some of these funds, it can often miss out. So that's the concern I've raised about that.

252. I think it's a very good thing – don't get me wrong, absolutely – but we need to ensure that that proper support is given to areas where perhaps there isn't the same level of confidence in some of the groups applying for funding, but I think the – I won't call it assurance – but the words Mr Mould has given to us about some further work around this, I think you've got the general gist of where the Committee is on this issue. And I think we can be satisfied with that and, presumably, that will be provided back at some point.

253. MR MOULD KC (DfT): I'm going to see if we can respond, we can write back to you on that, and also obviously to Councillor Faddes, as soon as possible, whilst it's fresh in your minds.

254. THE CHAIR: Yes, that would be useful. Thank you. Anyway, Mr Mould, anything else you wish to –

255. MR MOULD KC (DfT): No, that was all, thank you.

256. THE CHAIR: Councillor Faddes, is there anything you wished to –

257. MS FADDES: No, just to thank you all. I'm sorry, I didn't get your name, sir, but I completely agree that it's going to be six years of disruption. That's a great part of a child's life really. So whatever we can do to make the lives of the people – in quite an area where we have been left behind, it would be appreciated; it really would. And I do thank you all for listening to me today. It's been a pleasure.

258. THE CHAIR: Thank you too, Councillor Faddes; thank you, Mr Mould, Mr Miller; thank you, everybody, for attending today. We're very grateful. And on that basis, I will now close the Committee.