

HIGH SPEED RAIL (CREWE-MANCHESTER) BILL

STATEMENT

ON BEHALF OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

IN SUPPORT OF

THE APPLICATION FOR DISPENSATION WITH STANDING ORDERS

1. In the case of the High Speed Rail (West Midlands – Crewe) Bill (“the Bill”), which was introduced in your Honourable House on 24 January 2022, the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills have reported that certain Standing Orders have not been complied with.
2. The applicable Private Business Standing Orders which have not been complied with in relation to the Bill are:
 - (a) relating to the publication and service of notices (SOs 4, 4A, 10, 10A, 11, 12, 12A, 13, 14 and 15); and
 - (b) for deposit of plans, sections, book of reference and environmental statement (SOs 27, 27A, 29, 33, 34 and 36), the estimate of expense (SO 45), the housing statement (SO47) and copies of the Bill (SOs 39, 41 and 42).

A summary of the Standing Order requirements is at Appendix A.

3. As regards all the standing orders referred to in paragraphs 2(a) and (b), non-compliance has been found in relation to the timing of the publication and service of notices and the deposit of documents. That is because in the case of a hybrid Bill that is not deposited on 27 November the time frame for Private Bills, set out in those Standing Orders, cannot be met. Details of the actual date of publication, service or deposit are set out in the note at Appendix A. It is not considered that any person will be prejudiced by the non-compliance as to dates. The period in which documents are available for inspection and the period of consultation on the environmental statement is not shortened as a result of the later commencement dates. Further, since on a hybrid Bill the petitioning period does not start running until Second Reading of the Bill, the later dates for publication, service or deposit do not prejudice any affected person in preparing a petition.
4. Further non-compliance was found in respect of Standing Orders 4 (Contents of Notice) and Standing Order 36 (Deposit of copy of plan, etc., in certain cases with certain local authorities).

Standing Order 4

5. Standing Order 4 requires that the newspaper notice lists offices in certain areas, where the Bill can be inspected and obtained, being the offices required by SO 4A (Copies of Bill to be made available). Prior to the deposit of the Bill HS2 Ltd. liaised with the relevant Local Authorities and Libraries to confirm deposit locations for the Bill documents for the purposes of compliance with the requirements of SO 4A(d) and to confirm the office location details to be listed in the newspaper notices for the purposes of SO 4..
6. Once publication of the newspaper notices listing the agreed Local Authority and Library deposit locations had occurred HS2 Ltd. were informed by Trafford Council that their offices (listed as a deposit location in the newspaper notice) had been closed to members of the public due to Covid-19 restrictions. In consequence, and as requested by the Council, anyone visiting to view the documentation would be directed to Partington Library, a short distance away, where the

documents are available for inspection as stated in the newspaper notices. The live list of deposit locations, to which members of the public were alerted to in the body of the newspaper and landowners notices, was updated accordingly.

7. It was further discovered following publication of the newspaper notices, during HS2 Ltd's mystery shopper exercise, that four further Local Authority offices were closed to members of the public, due to Covid-19 restrictions, and that anyone wishing to inspect the Bill documents were being directed to a local library where the documents are available for inspection as stated in the newspaper notices. Once again the .gov.uk website was updated to reflect this.
8. A detailed note on this can be found at Appendix B. In all these cases therefore, for reasons outside the Promoter's control, documents were not available for inspection at the Local Authority offices listed in the newspaper notice. Nevertheless, it is not considered that any person will be prejudiced by the non-compliance. The newspaper notice had included notice warning people that there might be temporary closures due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and told them how they could find an alternative deposit locations. In each case members of the public were directed to a local library already listed in the newspaper notice within the same local authority area where they would be able to view the Bill documents and these libraries have remained open.

Standing Order 36

9. Standing Order 36 requires the deposit of plans, sections and a book of reference with certain local authorities including parish councils. HS2 Ltd. were made aware prior to the deposit of the Bill that two Parishes (Tatton and Bostock) did not have functioning Parish Councils. It was therefore impossible for HS2 to comply with the requirements of this Standing Order. To mitigate this, the deposit for these Parish Councils were made with the closest library, so that residents would have a local deposit location to view the Bill documents. This deposit location information was confirmed in the published Standing Order 4 newspaper notices and the Standing Order 13 owners notices. A detailed note on this can be found at Appendix C.
10. In these circumstances it is respectfully requested that the Standing Orders, insofar as they have not been complied with, may be dispensed with so that the Bill can proceed.

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07 March 2022

**IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS
SESSION 2021 - 22**

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