MINUTES OF ORAL EVIDENCE
taken before the

HIGH SPEED RAIL BILL COMMITTEE

on the

HIGH SPEED RAIL (WEST MIDLANDS – CREWE) BILL

Monday 11 June 2018 (Afternoon)

In Committee Room 5

PRESENT:

James Duddridge (Chair)
Sandy Martin
Mrs Sheryll Murray
Martin Whitfield
Bill Wiggin

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IN ATTENDANCE:

Timothy Mould, QC, Lead Counsel, Department for Transport
Alexander Booth QC, Counsel, Cheshire East Council

IN PUBLIC SESSION
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(At 4.30 p.m.)

1. THE CHAIR: Good afternoon. Before we take the first petition, I’m going to read out a decision of the Committee on an issue which we heard last Wednesday.

2. On 6 June 2018, we heard a petition from Toby and Bonnie Williams. The petitioner operates a business hosting weddings, wedding receptions and functions at their property. The Committee has found in favour of the petitioners in relation to the route; that is, the construction route.

3. The construction route should be re-routed so it does not pass through their property at points 14 and 6 on exhibit A144(5). This is a circular route allowed to be used by the business under licence by the local authority. HS2 should find an alternative solution for construction vehicles. The petitioner has demonstrated to us that a business such as this must maintain its reputation in order that potential customers have the confidence to consider this venue when planning an event.

4. We look forward to hearing that the promoter has found a better solution to this exceptional case and remind the promoter, as always, of the importance of communication on this, and important matters highlighted in our first report.

5. So we now move to Cheshire East. Mr Booth, I understand you have a statement to make?

Cheshire East Council

Statement by Mr Booth

6. MR BOOTH QC: Sir, I do. I have an agreed statement between HS2 and Cheshire East Council which I was just going to read out very briefly. I've told you that before, but it will be brief this time.

7. Following constructive dialogue between Cheshire East and the promoter, significant steps have been taken to address the concerns raised by the council in its petition. The promoter has offered the council assurances covering restrictions on the use of Sandbach station car park and the provision of up to £700,000 for an environment and landscape enhancement fund.
8. Ministers have also offered an assurance covering Manchester connectivity from Crewe. These assurances are in addition to those already offered to, and accepted by, Cheshire East in respect of Crewe hub and the assurance offered to, and accepted by, Wybunbury combined parish in respect of the possible upgrade of the proposed internal site haul route in community area 5.

9. Given the steps taken by the promoter and the Department for Transport to address the council's residual concerns, and the assurances that have been offered, the borough will be withdrawing its petition and will not be appearing before the Select Committee today. Instead, the council will continue to work constructively with HS2 as the scheme progresses in order to realise its vision for Crewe and the wider area. Thank you, sir.

10. THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. There are no questions. Mr Mould is not trying to catch my eye –

11. MR MOULD QC (DfT): No, no, thank you very much.

12. THE CHAIR: Meeting closed. Thank you.