

MINUTES OF ORAL EVIDENCE

taken before

**HIGH SPEED RAIL COMMITTEE**

on the

HIGH SPEED RAIL (LONDON – WEST MIDLANDS) BILL

Tuesday 22 September 2015 (Afternoon)

In Committee Room 5

PRESENT:

Mr Robert Syms (Chair)  
Mr Henry Bellingham  
Sir Peter Bottomley  
Geoffrey Clifton-Brown  
Mr David Crausby  
Mr Mark Hendrick

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IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr James Strachan, QC, Counsel, Department for Transport  
Ms Jacqueline Lean, Counsel, Department for Transport

Witnesses:

Mr Andrew Cordiner  
Mrs Susan Brown and Mr David Brown  
Mr Vincent Wolfe  
Mrs Karen Kay  
Mrs Eve Godoy  
Mrs Penny Semple  
Mr Sandra Telford  
Ms Pat Endacott  
Mr Geoffrey Aldridge  
Mr Paul Fullagar

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**IN PUBLIC SESSION**

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(At 2.00 p.m.)

1. CHAIR: Order, order. Welcome back to the HS2 Select Committee. Mr Strachan.

**Hyde Heath Village Society et al. (Cont;d)**

2. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Thank you. I'll just try to take the issues in turn, as they cropped up, just by way of brief response. As a preliminary point, there is of course a wealth of material, which is available to both the petitioners and also the Committee, in terms of the environmental statement and supporting material. Of course, it's not possible for me to take you through all of that.

3. The way in which the Bill works, of course, is that there is an environmental statement that is there to assess significant or likely significant effects on the environment. That's an environmental statement that it's for Parliament to take into account in proceeding with the Bill. It's principally a document to assist the parliamentary decision-making process and making the existing decision to proceed and any final decision.

4. Can I just deal with Mr Cordiner's points in turn? First of all, route options he referred to. He referred to his own idea of taking the route farther north alongside the M1. As the Committee will be aware, a number of routes and alignments were considered in the process before arriving at the alignment that is currently reflected in the Hybrid Bill. There's quite a lot of material that explains that. The decision and next steps document of January 2012 actually refers to that process and identifies that, after consultation, a number of other options, including those that followed other corridors, were considered.

5. Indeed, I just note in passing that route 5 is one that followed the alignment of the M1, albeit it would have to have been on a slower route. There is a considerable body of work, which I can't possibly refer you to all now, where these different alignments were looked at and considered before deciding on the current route.

6. Secondly, Mr Cordiner referred to the environmental audit committee's document,

where they made comments on the material that HS2 had produced. What Mr Cordiner didn't refer to, of course, was that there was a response to the environmental audit committee's report, in June 2014. On the particular issues of surveys, it was identified that the surveys that had been carried out at that stage reflected access that had been granted or obtained, and it was appropriate for the baseline survey work that was necessary for each of the subject matters, but of course identified that further survey work was being conducted. Indeed, that further survey work, much of it, had been referred to in the supplementary environmental statement that's being produced.

7. Mr Cordiner then referred to the NPPF. I think he referred to it as NPPF 12. I'm not aware of any such document. There is, of course, just one National Planning Policy Framework document, the NPPF. That document is something that the Committee's already looked at and certainly the promoter's taken into account in its own analysis.

8. If I just show you P7540(2), you can see that, in the analysis of tunnelling options in the AONB, the promoter certainly has taken into account the AONB designation. Indeed, that formed a considerable amount of focus in the analysis you've already had on the route and the extent of any tunnelling. You can see in the third bullet point the AONB national planning policy is summarised. It seeks to restrict major development in the AONB, unless there are exceptional circumstances and there's a demonstrable need in the public interest, which is of course something that has already been addressed.

9. You will also note in the policy that it's expressly identified in the company that the cost and scope for developing elsewhere is a relevant consideration, costs being a relevant factor to take into account in the balancing exercise, which is a process the Committee's already embarked upon in considering the other tunnel options.

10. Can I then turn to the issue of visual impacts that Mr Cordiner was concerned about? In his slides, he referred to the fact that the catenaries associated with the railway had not been part of the ZTV, as he referred to. He said he didn't know what that was, but perhaps I can enlighten him. The ZTV is simply a tool that is used, both in planning but also in this process, as a zone of theoretical visibility, and all that's being identified here is that the catenary or overhead line equipment didn't form part of the zone of theoretical visibility tool assessment, because it creates too large an area to

study. This is effective because, in reality, although the overhead line equipment is taller than the line, it's usually not something that gives rise to significant environment effects. Indeed, of itself it usually completely blends into the background, unless you see it with other infrastructure.

11. However, the catenary work or the overhead line equipment does then form part of the assessments that are carried out for visibility impacts. As Mr Bellingham pointed out and is certainly the case, in the assessment work and in the environmental statement, the overhead lines associated with the railway are part of the montages and part of the material that's taken into account in the assessment. You can see that if you look, as we did for example, at the Colne Valley viaduct and other montages. It is indeed there.

12. Likewise for construction, cranes are excluded from the zone of theoretical visibility tool for the same reason, but they are included in the assessment of construction sites. The Committee may have already seen, and it's apparent in the environmental statement, that there are montages of construction sites with indeed cranes shown in them to show the effects of cranes in those areas. Mr Cordiner's just referring to a tool.

13. I should also point out that the photo montage points, the photographic points, are ones that are generally agreed with the local authority before they are settled upon, and they are there to try to give an assessment from agreed viewpoints, as to how the railway would be seen.

14. It's on that note that I come to what I hoped would be a helpful – it clearly wasn't for Mr Cordiner – on why we say these are indeed accurate, verified montages. Of course, it doesn't preclude anyone else coming along with their own verified photo montages, but I do have to rebut Mr Cordiner's criticism of the people who take care to produce these documents and apply diligence in doing so.

15. You can see and I'll just show you – it's a rather obvious point when you can see it – this is a photo montage looking towards Annie Bailey's. As I've already explained, it's not particularly relevant anymore, given that this particular proposal's been changed, but it is an accurate image. At the top photograph, you see the existing position. The bottom photograph shows the Hybrid Bill scheme, and the Hybrid Bill scheme involves a road realignment, so the road in the top is realigned and it curves off the left, whereas

previously it went straight up into the picture. You can readily see that. Can you just go to the CT plan?

16. If I just take the arrow over here, you can see the existing road went up here – follow the cursor to the right up here, underneath – and the road that's being constructed is one now that bends round to the left. This is the corner that's being constructed. If you go back to the photographs, you can see the road's curving into the left and it's exactly the same viewpoint.

17. Could you just take the cursor up from the edge of the hedgerow, up to the top photograph along the same line, like that? You can see that that meets exactly the same hedgerow from that point and all that's happened is that the road has been realigned, and you can see that. Look at the top photograph. This point in the road has now gone down to this. It's starting to curve and it goes round to the left and it cuts off – go back into the top photograph – all of that is removed and the road has come obviously closer to the hedge and is curving round to the left. It's exactly the same viewpoint. It's a verified image. That telegraph, sorry or electricity, pole – it may be a telegraph pole – is obviously moved as part of the utility works and now sits behind the road that's curved off to the left.

18. MR CORDINER: Can I just jump in, because you had a chance to do that with me? It doesn't do that, because it's still in there.

19. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): It's not still –

20. MR CORDINER: Are you saying that telegraph pole isn't in there.

21. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): This telegraph pole here has been moved.

22. MR CORDINER: It has been removed, you said.

23. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): It's been moved.

24. MR CORDINER: No, you said it's been removed.

25. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Moved.

26. MR CORDINER: Okay, so even if it's been moved, look at it; it's still in the

picture. Look at the picture. It's still there.

27. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Sorry, I'm not sure where.

28. MR CORDINER: In the bottom picture, it's still in the background.

29. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Yes, it's no longer where it was. It's been moved to the side of the new road. The road's gone round and you move the telegraph pole, because it's not generally advisable to have poles in the middle of a road.

30. MR HENDRICK: It's not visible in the second picture.

31. MR CORDINER: Yes, it is.

32. MR HENDRICK: Through the tree, you mean.

33. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): I totally agree.

34. MR CORDINER: He's trying to win a point, okay, on something that he can't win. It's not accurate. It doesn't matter what you say or what you do, it's not accurate.

35. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Let me make my points. The Committee can decide if it's accurate. The pole has been moved. As I said, you don't have poles in the middle of the road. The road's been realigned, so you've had to put the pole, unless it's part of the utility works, to the left of the road, which is now curving around. As you'll see, the photographs marry up entirely. It's unfortunate that criticism is made of this kind of work, which is done by professionals, but there it is; you can see and you can make your own judgment.

36. CHAIR: Occasionally we get stuck on little items, but carry on, Mr Strachan.

37. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Indeed, but there you go. That's the realigned road as it would appear. Of course, that's somewhat superseded now by C6.

38. MR HENDRICK: Can I ask a question? I do apologise for not being here this morning and having heard Mr Cordiner's evidence, but Mr Connor yesterday made reference to the fact that this Committee obviously has been set up by statute. In this slide that you're showing at the moment, public authorities should have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB. Fine. Obviously

we're a public authority, but we're not set up as a planning committee. This was Mr Connor's point.

39. In that, this consideration on the third bullet point, the cost and scope for developing elsewhere is a relevant consideration. Mr Connor yesterday was trying to make the point that we haven't the same considerations as a planning committee. Therefore, he was trying to make the point that the cost and scope, as if it were a planning application, don't necessarily apply to this Committee. How would you respond to him?

40. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): In relation to the specific issue that the Committee was looking at, which was the longer tunnel options through the AONB, what we've identified is in relation to the AONB, in terms of the statutory duty, we have observed the statutory duty in our analysis of the options. We've put forward our evidence, which is an assessment of why we've chosen the tunnel options through the AONB and those bits that aren't in tunnel, and why we've had full regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB, but taking into account, as we're entitled to do, the cost and scope for developing elsewhere and alternative options.

41. The Committee is here to consider petitions from people, especially directly affected by the Bill, and to consider those petitions and make recommendations on those petitions. The primary duty is on us, as the promoter, to take account of and comply with the duty in the way we have. No doubt the Committee, as it will do, can comment on that in the final analysis, but the duty principally is on the Government and the promoter to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB.

42. MR CORDINER: I don't think you've had an answer there, incidentally.

43. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): If you don't think you've got an answer, I'm sure you'll say, Mr Hendrick.

44. MR HENDRICK: Well, I don't want to interrupt Mr Cordiner and his contribution, so I'll leave it at that.

45. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Are you asking me, 'Are you required to have

regards to...?' The answer –

46. MR HENDRICK: My answer to Mr Connor yesterday was that, whilst we're not a planning committee obviously – we're a parliamentary committee set by statute – it would be natural to have due regard to planning issues and we do. There's no doubt about that. His point was we could, if we wanted to, just say, 'Let's drive a tunnel straight through the Chilterns.' That would ideally, in theory, meet the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, which is basically what the petitions were asking for.

47. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): You can come to your own view on what conserve and enhance –

48. MR HENDRICK: I'm asking you. It was a legal point from somebody who was a former judge. What's your judgment?

49. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): I see. The answer lies in the fact that this is a hybrid bill and ultimately it will be enacted by Parliament. Parliament is sovereign and it can decide what to enact, in its judgment, whether that conflicts with earlier legislation or not. In principle, it can decide what to put into the Bill. The Committee is obviously considering the petitions and making recommendations. If you're asking me can you come to a different judgment on what conserves and enhances the AONB, certainly you can.

50. MR HENDRICK: Again, I'm asking a legal opinion here. If we said, 'Let's drive a tunnel through. We don't care what it costs,' in theory, Mr Connor was saying, we could do that. I'm saying, 'What's your judgment?'

51. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Well, you could do it. Whether you'd be complying with the duty is another matter, because the duty is to have regard to the purpose, but taken account of exceptional circumstances and demonstrable need. It's for you to consider what you think is appropriate.

52. MR HENDRICK: I'm asking your professional opinion.

53. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): If you disregarded cost, then I think you wouldn't be complying with the duty that's set up under the Act.

54. MR HENDRICK: The relevance, in terms of cost, you say the cost and scope for developing is a relevant consideration. It is under national planning policy. His point was that we're not a planning committee.

55. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Yes, but the AONB enjoys protection under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act of 1965. It's not simply a national planning policy designation.

56. MR HENDRICK: No, and we're not covered by the Town and Country Planning Act either.

57. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): You are covered by... Well, you are looking at the 1965 Act. You're making recommendations. Parliament of course can decide to cut against previous legislation.

58. MR HENDRICK: Okay, you're saying yes in theory.

59. MR CORDINER: Can I just come back on that, because I don't necessarily wholly agree with this interpretation? As I understand it, Parliament, and there is legal case law on this, particularly in relation to exceptional circumstances, which we'll discuss later, where they actually talk about how the exceptional circumstances can be created. Now, while Parliament does have sovereign ability, and everybody understands there, they're also supposed to hand down clear judgment. That clear judgment cannot be considered oppressive legislation. Law lords have ruled this; it was actually against Scotland, but there we are.

60. The key issue about that is that they determined that a case of oppressive legislation would be something that infringes on, say, something like the AONB, as example, without actually being explicit in the Act that they pass in Parliament. Namely, if you want to damage the AONB, if these guys are going to do what they want to do, in terms of the current scheme, without putting a full tunnel through it, then you have to explicitly repeal either the CRoW Act or you have to amend it as part of the Bill itself.

61. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Okay, we're getting drawn into a legal argument. That's clearly not right, because the Countryside and Rights of Way Act sets up AONBs

as a designation, but it doesn't require no development to require in AONBs; it requires a balanced decision to be made, having regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing them, but recognising, as has happened on many occasion, that major development can take place in AONBs, subject to considering all factors. There's no bar on development in AONBs. They enjoy special protection in terms of conserving and enhancing and they require, as a matter of planning policy, exceptional circumstances and need, which we've looked at. Plainly there's nothing to prevent development being approved in an AONB, which would infringe or constitute oppressive measures or legislation.

62. CHAIR: I think we've got it in the audio that there's no need to repeal the AONB legislation.

63. MR CORDINER: Mr Syms, they were at different times.

64. CHAIR: Under the same legislation. Mr Strachan, can you get back to the point with the petitioner?

65. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Yes, thank you. I think I've touched on visual impacts. Cranes, I don't need to put up the slides but, if you flick through the map book of the ES, you'll see that cranes are included in the photo montages.

66. Reference is made to a new electricity pylon in the AONB. There isn't a new one; there's a replacement one in the AONB, in order to allow for the creation of the west of South Heath portal. The existing line has to be moved slightly southwards to realign to go around the portal.

67. Water, you've heard a lot about water. I haven't necessarily followed all of Mr Cordiner's arguments, because what the slides were were extracts from various documents from 2012, from different consultants. The thrust of it appeared to be that Arup in 2012 was identifying that there are potential risks involved with groundwater and aquifers. Yes indeed there are, and those are risks that have been taken into account in the route selection and the design of the scheme. Indeed, one of the things that was done was of course a route realignment around the Amersham aquifer SPZ, and that occurred slightly farther, as we go farther south.

68. In relation to our scheme at this location, you've heard a lot of detailed evidence about the way in which we deal with groundwater and the way in which we'll have to deal with the aquifer. I know Mr Cordiner's not satisfied with our material, but the Environment Agency, as the Committee would have seen, is satisfied with what we've done and the extent of the work we've done, recognising of course that further detailed work will be done as the project progresses and of course the protective provisions in the Bill require the EA to look further at the detailed work, as we progress.

69. Of course, we're bound by our environmental minimum requirements to ensure that the predicted impacts that we're showing, i.e. negligible impacts on the aquifer and the River Misbourne, will not occur. I'm not sure of the relevance of looking at 2012 documents. You've had a wealth of material since that time and in evidence where we've addressed those points.

70. Safety and budget, I think we had a slide about safety and budget referring to cost awareness. Yes, the railway's designed to be safe. Yes, we take into account cost awareness. It would be surprising if a public project of this kind didn't. Indeed, it's a duty to take account of the public purse and is part of the overall scheme, so I wasn't entirely sure what point was being made there.

71. MR CORDINER: It's to do with the funder.

72. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): You'll get to respond in a moment. Slope instability was raised and, again, extracts from reports referring to slope instabilities. I think you've already heard from Mr Smart, but it's a feature of the environmental statement that we've put together the scheme based on the knowledge we have of the ground geology in this location, taking into account risks. There's further ground investigation work that will be done but, for present purposes, we've assumed for example that slopes that allow for slope instability, so for example a one-in-three slope in the vicinity of South Heath.

73. As ground investigations continue, if it's possible to have steeper slopes, perhaps as the Stokenchurch example indicates, if it's possible to have steeper slopes because the geology is firmer, they can be steepened up, which will potentially result in cost savings plus lesser environmental impact. For the present purposes, the environmental statement assumes a worst-case credible scenario.

74. Likewise in relation to geology, you'll again also have heard a lot of evidence about the geology, what is known from existing bore hole evidence and what further work will be done by way of ground investigations. It's on that basis – the engineers and Mr Smart have explained this – have worked out their hard average tunnelling rates of 80 metres per week, which allows for the potential, if it were to occur, of the need to do slowing tunnelling to provide grouting, etc., to eliminate risks to the aquifer or the River Misbourne.

75. There was a reference to Professor Woodward's comment on one of the slides about ground conditions for the railway slabs. I can confirm now that the railway assumes ground treatment to deal with ensuring the railway is stable. None of this should be particularly surprising, bearing in mind this is a project that follows considerable experience from other projects of building railways, but it assumes ground treatment to make the ground stable, including things such as line stabilisation, for those who have an interest in those sorts of things.

76. I'll just see what else. There was slide A1397(20), which included disclaimers from consultants on the reports that they produce. As far as I could tell, those are the standard disclaimers one expects to see from consultants put on their reports. I'm not quite sure what point is being made about that. So far as you're concerned, and indeed the petitioners are concerned, the important thing are the environmental minimum requirements, under which there's an undertaking not to effectively breach the environmental minimum requirements that are reported, regardless of what consultants may or may not put on their reports.

77. Flood risk was raised on slide 21. Again, reference was made to the National Planning Policy Framework. The Committee's heard a considerable amount of evidence about flood risk, and you'll have seen how the design includes and incorporates measures to eliminate flood risk, ranging from balancing ponds to flood drainage areas, and an assessment of the flood plains and the course agreement, in due course, with the Environment Agency about how the detailed design would be finalised.

78. Traffic and transport, you're aware of the transport management plans.

79. Wildlife, Mr Cordiner referred to some petitioners who don't agree with our wildlife assessments of barn owls or bats. We're aware that not everyone agrees with

our assessments. We have done further survey work, as I already indicated, but the intention of the scheme and the material we put forward is to mitigate or eliminate impacts where we can, and create, for example, green bridges where they're required, but not where they're not required.

80. The same goes for ancient woodland. We have assessed the impacts on ancient woodland and, of course, the latest C6 proposal reduces the impact on ancient woodland yet further.

81. Design is the subject of an information paper on D1, and I'm not going to repeat that because I've been through it several times. There was a suggestion that schedule 16 to the Bill requires or forces the EA to approve drainage schemes or to approve drainage into the aquifer or the River Misbourne. That's simply not the case. The EA requirements are set out in schedule 31, where you can see there are protective provisions. We have to ensure that, whatever measures we take interfering with groundwater, are satisfactory to the Environment Agency.

82. There were then a number of points. I'm trying to take this as quickly as possible, but there were a number of points about the Hybrid Bill Preparation Act, the Act of 2013. It's said we're in breach of the statutory duties under the 2013 Act. Section 1 of the Preparation Act is an act that enables the Secretary of State to spend money on preparatory work for the Bill, which is of course what's happened. I'm not quite sure where the further points are said to derive.

83. CHAIR: Opponents of HS2 voted for that Bill, because it was that Bill that allowed some compensation to be paid to constituents.

84. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): It also dealt with the ability to spend money on compensation as part of that preparation, but certainly we're not aware of any breach of that Act in continuing to produce the material that we have. I wasn't sure I've understood that point.

85. I think feasibility was another issue raised, the definition of 'feasibility' as used in Justine Greening's foreword to a document. Like all these things, you can look up a word and no doubt find endless different definitions. The definition that I've seen, as a relatively authoritative definition, is 'possible and practical to do easily or

conveniently'. I'm not suggesting that's the definitive definition, because there are any number of definitions of the word 'feasible'. Certainly one of the definitions is something you can do without too much difficulty. Whether or not that assists the Committee I don't know.

86. What I would suggest one focuses on is the material we have produced, which shows the effects of the scheme, the full range of environmental information and the proper appreciation of the stage we are at of this Bill, which is to look at the Bill, the environmental statement that accompanies it and of course the recognition that detailed design, as is inevitable for a project of this kind, will follow in due course, subject to the full protective provisions in the Bill to ensure the detailed design meets the minimum requirements that the Committee is looking at, at this stage. Unless there's anything else you want me to respond to.

87. CHAIR: Brief response from Mr Cordiner.

88. MR CORDINER: It's very difficult to be brief, I'm afraid.

89. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Sorry, there was one other. Mr Cordiner referred to some legal action for breach of the environmental minimum requirements for HS1. We're not aware of any such actions. There may be some, but we haven't been able to locate what they are.

90. MR CORDINER: On the first point, he says – sorry, Mr Strachan says – that they've complied with the environmental legislation. What happens if the impact is different, as a consequence of the fact they haven't done a ground investigation survey and hydrology survey? What happens if they have to relocate the vent shafts? What happens if they have to relocate the porous portal? What happens if it has to be bigger, smaller? What happens if the alignment needs to change? These are all issues that Arup's warned them they had to do early investigation work on, in 2012, and they ignored them.

91. Then they applied Atkins and then they employed Mott MacDonald to do a specific tunnelling work to say it was all going to be nice and safe, and 'Don't worry about the flood risk,' etc., and then they strapped their caveats on the bottom of it saying, 'But please don't sue us if we're wrong.' Arup didn't have any caveats on their

reports.

92. Number two, they say that they've already looked at other routes, alternative routes north. Have you looked at any routes outside the AONB?

93. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Yes.

94. MR CORDINER: What was the conclusion?

95. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): They are set out. I can't go through all of the material, but they're summarised in the decision and next steps document. Some of them are summarised in the non-technical statement. No doubt if Mr Cordiner wants, we can speak to him afterwards and point him to it.

96. CHAIR: As a Committee, we've been told to focus on the route that's been chosen.

97. MR CORDINER: I appreciate that, Mr Syms. The problem is we asked for copies of the route via the M1, and they vetoed it under the Freedom of Information Act. They have studied another route, but they vetoed it and wouldn't let us see it.

98. CHAIR: It's irrelevant because the Secretary of State has decided on the route, which went in the Bill, and we've been actually told to study that route and deal with the petitioners on that route.

99. MR CORDINER: From the perspective of planning, back to the point about what your responsibilities are on planning, planning legislation NPPF 2012 is actually all about the legislation designed to protect the AONB, which was given as a consequence of the Localism Act, which also gave powers for local people to decide what happens in their environment.

100. The other thing that I found interesting on the Localism Act, which is something that I wasn't going to bring up, but I think it's quite important, is the fact that HS2 this morning and yesterday has spent quite a significant amount of time saying, 'We couldn't get access to land and that's why we couldn't do the work.'

101. Clause 130 sets rights of entry in the Localism Act. Power to enter the land and take, and process, samples of water, air, soil, rock, flora, even dead bodies. They have

those rights to do it. There are no excuse for not doing the appropriate survey work and they're saying, 'We didn't do it. We haven't done it. We'll do it later.' Of course, by doing it later, there could be significant impacts that occur as a consequence. As I've already said, a whole bunch of issues with the line might move, leading to incredible long costs, incredible delays, issues for Parliament and issues for the taxpayer but, more importantly, issues for people in the AONB who are going to have to suffer these impacts as a consequence of work that they have not produced.

102. They talked about the definition of 'exceptional circumstances in the national interest' or 'and in the national interest'. The point I was making is, in the environmental statement, they said 'exceptional interest in the national interest'. In the petition response document, they changed it to 'exceptional circumstances and in the national interest'. The key point about this is there is a distinction between the two tests. The distinction is test the national need, but also what are the exceptions? From what I've heard so far, apparently, the only exception that Mr Strachan has been able to produce is cost, and that is not a relevant consideration, because cost is a function of the national interest, not a function of what is exceptional.

103. He said, regarding the no overhead line equipment in the area, the area was too large to be able to model. The overhead line equipment causing the visual intrusion is too large an area to be able to model.

104. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): No, I didn't say that.

105. MR CORDINER: Yes, you did. You said too large, too large an area. You also said that it blends into the background. Could I see slide 1397(9) again, please? That's not blending into the background. As far as the verifiable montage, I don't think we want to go over that anymore. I will continue to argue it. I had another argument lined up, but I'll let it go.

106. As regards visual impacts, he said that the new tower for the electricity power lines is not a new tower; it's a replacement tower. A replacement would be the same size; you would agree?

107. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Not necessarily, no.

108. MR CORDINER: I would say a replacement is a like for like. You are replacing what you're taking away but, in actual fact, you're not doing that, because what you're actually doing is you're taking away something that exists and you're putting back something that's much higher, with more visual impact.

109. I'll report one other statement that you made, but I might need to check the transcript to find out if you actually said this. I believe you said that you're satisfied that you've mitigated the water issue completely. As I say, I might have to check the transcript on that.

110. You said that you've satisfied the Environment Agency. That was your statement and then, when I made a little gasp, you then said, 'But more work is needed.' What you're actually saying is you've done a whole bunch of work and the Environment Agency has looked at it, and they've said, 'Right, the work that you've done to date is sufficient, but you need to go off and do a whole bunch of other work to find out whether this all stacks up. That whole bunch of other work is ground investigation study and hydrology study, and you haven't done it.

111. You also mentioned that you've got a duty of cost and cost awareness, in the context of the Act. You said that you weren't entirely sure where I was coming from on that. Well, you actually said in your document, and you actually repeated there, it's cost awareness for a funder. Obviously if the funder ends up being wholly the taxpayer, then I would say you're probably right. However, if that funder happens to be another organisation to come in and fund this line, then quite clearly you've failed in your duties towards the taxpayer and indeed ourselves.

112. Then you talked about Mr Smart again and some of his testimony. I'm sorry to labour the point, but he did say last night the cost of remediating any problems associated with Shardeloes Lake and any of the water issues would not be more than the cost of a full tunnel. He said it's a low order of risk of any alterations.

113. We then went on – I think you repeated Mr Smart's testimony – saying you're going to take account of slope instability, and you said the slope instability issues, and in particular a relationship to the geology, is a worst-case scenario. That's what you said. You've presented currently the worst-case scenario.

114. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Worst-case credible scenario is what I said.
115. MR CORDINER: No, you said worst-case scenario. Check the transcript.
116. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Credible worst-case scenario is what I said and, if I didn't say it, that's what I should have said. I think I did say it.
117. MR CORDINER: You've presented the worst-case scenario.
118. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): No, credible worst-case scenario.
119. MR CORDINER: You've presented the worst-case scenario.
120. CHAIR: Can we just make progress through your list?
121. MR CORDINER: You've mentioned you've got all the information that you need from the boreholes, which will produce the 1922. I won't even go into that point; Stephen Bailey did it in some detail.
122. You mentioned that, as regards the ground treatment, there will be significant ground treatment required and, as a consequence of that, ground stabilisation. You will then adopt either a slab or track system, because you still can't tell us whether it's going to be slab or track, can you?
123. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Slab in tunnels and there may be something different outside the tunnels.
124. MR CORDINER: So slab in tunnels and maybe something outside. Okay, in that case then, going back to my earlier comments, can we have positive obligations on them? If they know it's going to be slab in the tunnel head, then they know the precise location of the tunnel, and they also know the size and shape of the tunnel head, and therefore they can actually limit the noise. As they've always told us, they can design that noise out. Can we have a cap on the noise at 40 decibels, which are WHO guidelines? You said you can design it out. You said the only thing that you need to do that is a slab system and, therefore, can we have an undertaking that the tunnel head will be 40 decibels?
125. We talked about disclaimers. You said that they're just standard boilerplates and

people put them on their documents all the time. That's fine. Can we have reliance on them? Can we have an undertaking that all the petitioners can have reliance on every single report that Atkins and Mott MacDonald produce?

126. The next point is you said that flood risk isn't an issue. You've done a comprehensive flood risk analysis. You said that in the ES; you repeated it in your petition response document. Dan Rogerson, the floods minister, said that you haven't surveyed it because you don't know the alignment of the route yet.

127. You say other petitioners, as regards wildlife, etc., you know, you think you're doing full mitigation. Well, the Barn Owl Trust, another petitioner, the Bat Conservation Society, another petitioner, the Woodland Trust, another petitioner; all three of them, which I suspect are fairly good in their field, given its their specialist subject, have all said you aren't mitigating and that's why they're petitioning. They've also made even more inflammatory statements, such as they're not particularly happy with the work that's been done to date. I understand the Barn Owl Trust even said it's someone who doesn't know what they're doing, as regards the level of mitigation you propose. Incidentally, I'm a member of the Barn Owl Trust and, when I saw what you were proposing to do, I was quite taken aback as well.

128. We talked about the EA having to approve everything. My issue with that comment is that, as we've seen at Pajares Tunnel, if we get to a situation where they build from Birmingham to the edge of the AONB and they build from London to the edge of the AONB, and then suddenly they say, 'Sorry, guys, we've got a real problem here,' what do you think Parliament's going to do? They're not going to throw £20 billion down the drain and then say, 'Ah right, we're going to have to give up for the sake of another £5 billion,' so the impacts will occur regardless.

129. The point that I'm trying to make is that, if you give us a full tunnel now, it saves £200-350 million. Ultimately, you can design it in such a way that all these people behind me go away and the impacts are mitigated. The consequence is that, when it comes to that stage, if for instance you have to go a bit lower, you're not going to have people objecting to it. You're not going to be on a £5 billion bill or, sorry, an additional bill, as they did have with the Pajares Tunnel.

130. Just on the Pajares Tunnel, I know I haven't been able to introduce it as evidence,

but those are the pictures there of it flooding 400 gallons an hour. It's the completed tunnel and it's going through karst structure, which is exactly the same, I believe, as what we're experiencing here. It's doing 400 gallons an hour, and they can't plug it, so they've had to adapt it from... Sorry, I'll turn it off. They've had to adapt it now; it can't be a high-speed train. It's got to be freight; not freight, it's got to be broad gauge.

131. CHAIR: Are you getting near the end of your remarks?

132. MR CORDINER: Very close. He said the HS2 Preparation Act, I don't know where I've got disproportionate impact nor specific bias, so you're saying that you didn't have any statutory duty to ensure no disproportionate impact nor specific bias.

133. CHAIR: Carry on with your remarks.

134. MR CORDINER: As regards the definitions, you say as regards design, your definitions are that you're following, that you've determined – i.e. HS2 has decided this is your responsibility. You said it's possible, practicable or feasible. That's not what the Secretary of State instructed you. They said, especially in the AONB, you must go as far as possible. I think I'm done.

135. CHAIR: Okay, thank you very much. Thank you for your contribution this afternoon, and we now move on to the next petitioner. That is 1858, Elizabeth Piper. 1858, Elizabeth Piper? No, not present. We therefore move on to the Hyde End Residents Group, petition 1878, and 41 other petitioners grouped together, who have been waiting patiently all day.

**The Hyde End Residents Group et al.**

136. CHAIR: If all of you are speaking, you need to be bunched up a bit that way. I know you've got a fair few witnesses. I presume we're going to whizz through the witnesses fairly quickly.

137. MRS BROWN: At high speed.

138. CHAIR: High speed?

139. MRS BROWN: Could I have the first slide, please? Hello, I'm Sue Brown. I'm Chairperson of the Hyde End Residents Group. I'm here today with my co-presenter

Karen Kay and several witnesses, as you know, to outline our petition points in support of the long tunnel throughout the whole of the Chilterns or, at the very least, a tunnel that would preserve as much as the AONB as possible, some improved mitigation and help with the specific case of Need to Sell or, as we would like to term it, wish to sell.

140. Hyde End Residents Group represents 75 people in 28 households, but we're also here today representing 42 other individual petitioners, some of whom are in the Residents Group and others who live locally, so all in all about 80 people. We've tried to collate all our views to be as concise as possible into our one presentation today.

141. Hyde End, I know Mr Syms will know from the visit in June, is a small rural community that extends from the line itself to about a kilometre away. The hub of the community is around 500 to 600 metres from the existing line. We are now about 1.6 kilometres from the South Heath tunnel portal, as outlined in C6, and the map you can see here shows the B485 going along the top, with many of the properties of Hyde End straddling the road. In the lower left corner, you have Hyde Hand with Chapel Farm. The straight road coming down to the lower right corner is Hyde Heath Road, which I believe the new Members of the Committee also drove along on their visit in August to the edge of Hyde Heath.

142. If we could move to the next slide, please, on 21 July, the Select Committee made a decision, a very welcome decision, which will preserve a vital section of the Chilterns AONB, ancient woodland and, yes, minimise impact for several communities, including Hyde End. You recognised the importance of saving this unique and special landscape.

143. We wanted to show you this slide as, on 10 August, many residents gathered in Hyde Lane waiting for the bus with the new Members of the Committee. Unfortunately, time restrictions didn't allow for them to get to all the locations and this stop was actually missed out. We wanted to show you that the community was there in force. We'd altered all our banners to say thank you for what that decision meant to us.

144. However, the plans for C6 mean that our immediate houses are protected, but our lives aren't. We don't just exist inside our homes. We live and work and play in the whole wide area that is the Chilterns AONB. The rural nature of our area means that we have to get to places. There's virtually no public transport here and we need to get in our cars and travel to all the amenities that make for normal life, to Missenden,

Wendover, Aylesbury, High Wycombe and beyond, all routes that are severely impacted by the current plans, as they stand.

145. We'd also like to point out that we have no legal representative, no railway specialists or engineers amongst us. In fact, we're just a group of ordinary people who've been forced to learn about these things over the past five years. This is a scheme that we've reluctantly had to take on board, if we're to have any chance of mitigating its devastating effect on our lives.

146. We wanted to show you this slide just to illustrate what a diverse community Hyde End is, although it's small. We're not just a small clique living in a bubble in the South, with no regard for the North or the country as a whole. This map just gives a brief overview of where we're all from, as you can see – Northern Ireland, Scotland, Lancashire, Merseyside, Leeds, Norfolk and Suffolk. Many are locals whose families have got long ties with the area, and others have moved here specifically to live in the peaceful countryside. Some of our residents will describe that when you hear them later.

147. Many of our residents have been here for well over 10 years, some as long as 45 years. Jeff, who's here behind me, has been in the area for 66 years, so you can see it's a place where people want to stay. We're here today to show you how our lives are still affected by the proposed route.

148. If we could go to the next slide, please, we're not really going to go through any statistics, tunnel boring rates, costs or technical data with you. We rather wanted to show you how it affects individual lives and how important it is, we feel, for our voices to be heard.

149. The horror and incredulity we all felt when we first heard about the HS2 line coming through the Chilterns will stay with us forever. It seemed incredible that, for the sake of a straight line and fast trains, this area was going to be destroyed, although apparently we hear it's not about that now. It's all about capacity and connectivity, but originally it was because a straight line was needed and that's all.

150. In our petitions, we described how we, on a regular basis, walk from our immediate homes to Mantle's Wood around Hyde End. Yes, we know C6 will provide

some relief from this, but we also go out and about across the region to enjoy all the Chilterns has to offer. As this slide shows, there are hundreds of publications and websites that point people in our direction, and these activities are just a small sample of what's possible.

151. It's not just ourselves; thousands of visitors, as you've heard, come to the area to visit at weekends or holiday times throughout the seasons. The Metropolitan Line and the Chiltern Line provide easy access from London, and tourists come from far and wide. We've recently met Americans and Spaniards, and we're always speaking to visitors from the Greater London area.

152. Many of us go walking and cycling in the area, and we were really excited that big national events like the Tour of Britain came through our area last year. We doubt very much that those sorts of things would happen, in the near future, with HS2 in the area.

153. We know you've finally acknowledged that there is a problem on the A413, and I'm not going to go into a lot about that now. It suffices to say that all those issues affect us at Hyde End too.

154. Before I move on, we'd just like to briefly mention the issue of vent shafts, as it's come up recently. We will have a vent shaft quite close to us, on Chesham Road, near Annie Bailey's, which we do hope will be restored, in due course, to our local pub again. In fact, we aren't adverse to vent shafts, because it means there's a tunnel underneath, which we're quite happy about. However, we do need assurances that this will be built in line with the surroundings of the AONB. I know Mr Strachan did give some detail on that this morning, so we trust that that will happen.

155. Also, Mr Smart made a point yesterday that a longer tunnel would mean more of these vent shafts and actually potentially more construction associated with them. He also said that they would be built in sequence and that, for each one, there would be a peak three-month period of activity. I think at Hyde End, we've all agreed that this would be an acceptable price to pay in the short term for the greater long-term good of protecting the area.

156. The next sequence of slides is designed to illustrate concerns of some of the people we're representing today. Their issues will be similar to things that you've heard

before. It's inevitable, as we're all living in the same area. If we could move to the next slide, please, I'll pass you over to Dave.

157. CHAIR: Are you Mr Brown?

158. MR BROWN. I am. Good afternoon. As has been said by Sue, we very much welcome C6. It does deal with the immediate impact on our homes. That's fantastic. However, we're still left with property blight and we'll talk a bit more about that later. As Sue said, it doesn't mitigate the impact on our lives. We don't live in the bubble of our homes.

159. We're a friendly neighbourhood community at Hyde End. The one good thing or great thing HS2 has brought to us is to make our community even stronger. We've actually really got together as a community and that's really helped through this process. Although in the process we have lost some dear friends and neighbours, for whom C6 actually came too late. They've either been forced to sell to HS2 or the anxiety and uncertainty have been too great for them to stay the course, so we're already a changed community.

160. Sue and I were both originally from the northwest of England. Sue was actually born in Preston and grew up near Manchester, before moving to Suffolk for work. I was actually born in Birkenhead, before also moving to Suffolk for work, so you can work out where we met. The outdoors has always played a huge part of our lives, growing up through our teenage years and actually as adults. I loved growing up exploring the hills of North Wales, the Peak District, the Lakes and west coast of Scotland. When we've had to move for work, we've always chosen to live in the countryside and not just because of the enjoyment of our outdoor activities, but also because rural living does bring many benefits, from the quality of the air, the peace and tranquillity, and the real de-stressing quality that open spaces bring.

161. When work moved us to the South East, we didn't want to live in London and looked for the nearest rural area where we could continue outdoor pursuits, somewhere quiet and peaceful, somewhere where we could walk, run and cycle, and somewhere, like an AONB, that would be protected, safe and beautiful. We found our home in Hyde End in 2001. We've embraced all this area has to offer ever since. We walk with our dogs; we run trials, cycle the paths and lanes across to Wendover regularly. HS2 has

created a bit of a heartache and anxiety, because so much of this beautiful flowing landscape could be lost forever.

162. As an example, my long runs I do at weekends are mostly towards Wendover. You can easily run for an hour and a half, doing eight or nine miles, and in that time only have to two or four roads in the process, all small lanes. When out and about, from Easter to October, you'll frequently meet lots of Duke of Edinburgh award teenagers learning their orienteering skills. It is this enjoyment of these activities that needs protection too, and it's hard to put a price or a cost on that.

163. On the logistical side of things, we've particularly strong links with Wendover. Sue actually works in Wendover. She was the manager of Little Acorns kindergarten for nine years, but now works there part-time as administrator, and has to make that journey two or three times a week. We've got good friends and colleagues there, and even our vet for our dogs you can see in the picture. All in all, we're frequently up and down the A413 to Wendover. We also have family in Aylesbury, and so we naturally gravitate in that direction for visits or meet halfway to explore the paths around the AONB.

164. You've heard much about the A413 and I won't labour the point, but it would be great to eventually have the promoter of the scheme acknowledge that this road and the Chiltern Line do not form a major transport corridor for the country. However, they are a vital and in fact the only connection for the communities that live within the AONB and are at either end of the AONB. The A413 is massively important for all of us – we use it daily – but it is not a major transport corridor.

165. The myriad of logical issues you've been hearing about affect us hugely during construction, but not just us, so too all the many visitors and the future generations of visitors, whose families maybe, in this intervening period, might choose a different place to visit and therefore don't learn about the beauty this region has to offer.

166. HS2 is slicing along the ridge line, with the rural, although apparently major transport corridor, Misbourne Valley on one side and the glorious rural villages and hamlets on the eastern side of the ridge. Many you're familiar with, as used as locations for TV dramas, because of their unspoiled and natural setting. This countryside, this wildlife, the communities and visitors which form the everyday life of the AONB, is

being severed in two with a 100 metre wide exclusion zone, denuded of vegetation, with high-security animal-proof fencing. It is literally like a Berlin Wall separating wildlife, farmland, hills, the woods and communities.

167. I've heard about the promoter's counsel, who, in response to these types of questions in previous weeks, has talked about how the paths and roads are being maintained, albeit a number of them are being diverted around the route. Yes, this is most likely technical correct, but just ticking the boxes is completely missing the point. When enjoying the countryside, it's not about being blinkered and just making sure the path you're walking along or riding along gets you from A to B, but it's about the full sensory enjoyment of a natural, living and flowing landscape that's been shaped by the local ecology over many generations.

168. We're asking this Committee – Sue and I – to recommend a long tunnel, to look at the big picture, to recognise that the preservation of our landscape and the quality of life is hard to measure in purely fiscal terms. And when it does come down to it, as has been mentioned this morning, the cost of a long tunnel is actually just a fraction of the contingency budget within the scheme. Without a long tunnel, with or without intervention gaps, this natural harmonious setting will forever be divided, broken and permanently scarred for current and future generations.

169. Thank you for your attention. I'll pass back to Sue and have the next slide, please, so we can hear from some of our other residents.

170. MRS BROWN: Yes. Because we're here today representing so many people, obviously not everyone could come and speak to you, so the next two slides just are a sample of quotes from some of our neighbours that wanted to contribute today. I'm not going to read them out, but you can see we've got the Gourd family, Martin Hilder, the Van Vredenburch family and the Wallis family all giving some idea of how they use the surrounding area of the Chilterns. You can see walking and cycling feature strongly. If we could go to the next slide, to continue, we've got Liz Hilder, who's Martin's wife, Mike and the Tillier family, again with some of their activities that they do. That's Mike cycling up at Coombe Hill and Wendover.

171. CHAIR: How many dogs live in your community?

172. MRS BROWN: Oh, gosh. I don't know. Lots. Dogs and horses feature quite strongly where we live. Thank you.

173. Yes, with HS2 continuing across the surface from South Heath onwards, all the land and scenery that we are enjoying will be destroyed, or at least irrevocably changed. Our access during the construction period for these activities will be difficult, and the reality is people probably won't participate. Our enjoyment, when we do try and go out and about, will be spoilt. We've got noise, air pollution, visual intrusion of the worst kind. This is even still a factor when the line is operational, because you've got the high-security fencing, gantries, tunnel portal, the noise of the trains zooming past us, and so on. It is essentially, as Dave described, a huge industrial zone cutting across the Chilterns. We are sure that possibly ourselves will need to go elsewhere; visitors will definitely go elsewhere. Why come out from London on the train to Wendover on market day when you could perhaps go somewhere else without any disruption? Why get on the train at Marylebone with your bike, as hundreds of people do, to cycle round the Chilterns, only to find you can't ride the lanes you want to because they're blocked or diverted?

174. Also a brief point on the noise mitigation that's outlined by the promoter. It misses the point a lot for this outdoor lifestyle, because it focuses on what it's like indoors with the windows shut; it's more for properties. While noise insulation may be offered as mitigation, there's nothing for the people who are outside trying to enjoy the countryside, and we don't believe any noise barriers are effective for this kind of problem. A tunnel continuing through the whole of the Chilterns to beyond Wendover would, of course, solve these problems.

175. We're now going to hear from our next witness. Could you go to the next slide, please?

176. MR WOLFE: Hello. My name's Vincent Wolfe. I'm here representing myself and my wife, who's in the row behind. As Sue said, we have some issues that are brought up elsewhere in the presentation, but we feel passionately about some aspects and wanted to petition face to face.

177. A bit of background for ourselves. We moved to 12 Chesham Road, Hyde End, along the Chesham Road, in 2010, from Milton Keynes, primarily to be closer to work

and a much shorter and more affordable commute, but our decision to buy a house was largely driven by the area and the community. In fact, we first rented our home and we were fortunate enough to be able to buy it in 2011. We were initially attracted by the peaceful rural area and the fact that it was part of the AONB. However, experiencing and appreciating the area over the next months, together with the growing relationship with our neighbours and the community, really cemented our decision to move there permanently. We grew to appreciate even more the tranquil nature of the local villages, the countryside, footpaths and walks, some of which, as you've heard, will be heavily impacted if the current HS2 proposal is allowed to go ahead.

178. We were aware at the time that we bought our home that there was talk of HS2 coming in this direction, but not to the extent of how it would be channelled through the countryside. Perhaps naively, we thought and hoped that an AONB would be protected from being devastated with a major infrastructure project unsympathetically marching through the middle. In fact, we believed the Government had a commitment to protect to the best of its ability any AONB, and certainly not put short-term budget targets ahead of obligations to protect a landscape that can never be recovered for future generations.

179. We're personally very thankful that some changes have now been adopted, such as the short tunnel extension past South Heath to prevent it emerging, as initially proposed, in one of the local ancient woodlands, but we really feel strongly that similar consideration should be taken throughout the rest of the Chilterns and beyond. The sheer volume of HGVs and additional traffic during the years of construction will undoubtedly change the AONB for years to come, but the elevated rail line after it emerges from the tunnel north of South Heath will change the Chilterns for the worst forever. It needs to be a true mitigation, and we are asking for the Chiltern long tunnel to avoid this.

180. Our concern is not only during construction and after HS2's operation. There's already been years of stress and anxiety felt by the community, for many reasons, as you have heard previously. We've personally lived through with the thought that 200 to 300 trucks a day would be passing the end of our garden, together with a very real possibility of not being able to sell our property if circumstances dictated. Thankfully, for us, some of this has changed due to the petitioning of communities, but a great number of people

don't yet have any relief from the anxiety and the health effects that high levels of stress cause. In addition, just along Chesham Road, we've seen Annie Baileys change from a peaceful country restaurant to an abandoned, derelict, vandalised building – not owned by HS2, but as a result of what was likely to come. HS2 is already adversely affecting the area.

181. Finally, I will sum up briefly. Our concern is not just about the local area and not only about the Chilterns. Neither are we against large national infrastructure projects if there is a good, sustainable economic reason to do them, which we do, however, personally question in this case. People everywhere have the right to believe that AONBs throughout the country are protected under the Government's obligations, and my fear is that this sets another precedent, specifically for each and every conservation area to be put at risk if it is in the path of a large infrastructure project – and there will be plenty on the way up to the Lake District or beyond, or wherever it ends up. Now is the time that we can make a real difference, and we are asking that the Committee listen to communities and to please consider avoiding AONBs, either by tunnelling or circumventing any such areas, as we believe that this should be the Government's true obligation to the countryside and to future generations.

182. CHAIR: Thank you.

183. MRS BROWN: Thank you, Vince. Could we move to the next slide, please? I'll pass you over to Karen.

184. MRS KAY: Thank you, Sue. It's a well-known phrase that every property agent will cite when it comes to buying and selling property: 'Location, location, location'. The black cloud hanging over our area since this project was announced has placed an enormous amount of anxiety and uncertainty for homeowners. We've all made investments in the area, believing in good faith it to be protected from development. As you well know, we're a property-based economy; an Englishman's home is his castle – and may I say an Englishwoman's home is her castle too? A property's value is assessed on its assets: number of bedrooms, garden size, conservatory, garage, hot tub – whatever you have. A desirable combination of assets means buyers are willing to pay a premium for the home of their dreams. Each of us has paid a premium to purchase our property, however large or small, because location is an asset to a property. If we were

to purchase identical homes in unprotected regions, prices would be substantially lower than we've had to pay, because we really believed that this was something that had a value to our home and that we would be protected from development.

185. The surrounding AONB is a tangible asset and adds specific value to our homes. If you took away a bedroom or a part of our garden, a bathroom or a garage, it would be perfectly reasonable to expect us to be compensated. The promoter is removing this tangible property asset – the AONB – yet no reasonable compensation has been offered to homeowners living beyond the immediate boundaries of the proposed track. This, we suggest, is tantamount to theft. For those who don't want to be forced out of an area we love – and that's most of us – that's a high price to pay.

186. We in Hyde End are not now immediately impacted by the proposed line in our homes, as a result of the C6 extension proposal. There is some sense of relief in our community, as you've already heard, but that's tempered with a wider concern that it's not enough. As you've heard today and from previous petitioners in the recent weeks, there's still an unknown relating to HS2 and how it will impact on the wider community and our everyday lives beyond the boundaries of our small hamlet. There is a general perception that HS2 will cause major disruption during the construction period – we do accept that regardless of the tunnel or not, construction will be inevitable – environmental pollution, sound, visual, air pollutants, and so on and so forth, and when the line is operational a very real broad sense that the surrounding countryside will be blighted in perpetuity.

187. Under the current Need to Sell scheme, a homeowner needs to be able to demonstrate that their property is directly affected by HS2 – there's no distance specified by the promoter – and they have a compelling reason to sell. We're aware that all cases would be considered on an individual basis, but we'd like endorsement for the previously proposed Want to Sell scheme that takes into consideration less tangible and urgent needs to sell but nevertheless encompasses the equally valid and changing needs that residents face over the coming years, for whatever reason. None of us know what our lives may bring, and the constantly evolving existence we all enjoy means we make decisions to move based on a combination of circumstances.

188. Prior to the announcement of this project, I had strangers knocking on my door or

putting notes through my letterbox asking for first refusal if I should ever consider selling. This hasn't happened since 2010. Just last week I was talking to a respected and experienced local agent who's worked in the area for many years and in fact I bought my home from in 1992. He told me that anyone in the vicinity of the line who believes they may have to sell in the coming decade should aim to sell before construction begins or once it's completed. This potentially creates a timeframe of a number of years where properties may not be marketable.

189. I'd like to speak for a moment on behalf of Anthony Opwood, one of my neighbours in Browns Road. He can't be with us today. Can we go to the next slide, please? Tony lives with his wife Mary at 1 Rowan Cottages. He's 79 and believes he's likely to have to move in the next couple of years as he'll no longer be able to drive and will need access to amenities. A few years ago he suffered an aneurism and had one leg amputated, resulting in him wearing a prosthetic limb. Recently, he's suffered further limitations to his mobility and currently uses a mobility scooter. This year he's been diagnosed with and treated for lung cancer and has had major surgery. Tony realistically predicts that in the coming years he'll not be able to drive and will therefore need to live closer to amenities. He has very serious worries about the potential to sell their property and realise its true value. However, the stress of going through the processes of the Need to Sell scheme is not to be underestimated for this couple.

190. We have a number of other older residents and young families in Hyde End, whose changing needs may mean there's a want to sell during the coming years, and provision should be in place to ensure that those homeowners are properly provided for in the eventuality that they should feel the need to move. Five years ago, some of our neighbours were disillusioned with this whole process. They felt the strain and the stress and the anxiety of the unknown that HS2 was. They couldn't face it any longer. They sold their house at a reduction of about £100,000 on the value. That was a reduction of about 12.5% of what should have been the value of that house should HS2 not have hung over them as the black cloud that it is. And it is a real worry for homeowners that this will continue. You shouldn't have to prove a need to sell. Real people live real lives and you don't necessarily need to get divorced to sell a property and prove that you have to move.

191. I think we need to hand over now to Eve.

192. MRS BROWN: Could we go to the next slide, please?

193. MRS GODOY: Good afternoon. I'm Eve Godoy and I live at 14 Chesham Road on the B485. I moved to the Chiltern area in 1997 with my husband from Milton Keynes, primarily to be nearer to Heathrow and in easy travelling distance of London for work. As Karen has said, you never know what life may throw at you, and my husband died in 2007 and I decided, after a bit of time, to alter my lifestyle and move further into the countryside to easily access walks and for a more tranquil life in a closely-knit community, which is what I found in Hyde End. I was aware of HS2, but I had naturally assumed, as it was in an AONB, that the countryside would be protected.

194. I run a human-resources consultancy business from my home, providing HR support to local businesses in South Bucks, London and beyond. I regularly visit clients, as it is important in the services that I offer to have face-to-face contact. I'm also a community support worker for Victim Support and we support victims of crime in the South Bucks area. We provide emotional and practical support and visit our clients in their homes or in a safe location. I know there's been a lot of discussion about the construction phase, but this is how it affects me personally. The construction phase of HS2 will affect my mobility, and I feel I may lose some of my business clients as they seek more easily available services. If they think they're going to have to wait for me to turn up all the time, they're just going to look elsewhere. From a Victim Support point of view, it means that I will be less able to respond quickly. This is particularly important in serious crimes such as homicides, where our clients need immediate practical help after a traumatic bereavement. They're often in a very numb state and they can't even think about getting food or any practicalities, and that is where Victim Support steps in. I'd like to ask the Committee what consideration has been made as to the effect on small businesses. What mitigation during the construction period and beyond? And from the point of view of volunteers, what consideration has been made to the mobility volunteer workers need as they help to create the so-called 'big society'?

195. If we can move on to the next slide. Thank you. The next slide has got the same type of residents that Sue showed, but this is in relation to their logistical problems. The construction and eventual running of the HS2 railway will have a long-term impact on the life of Hyde End residents. Continued day-to-day logistical challenges will impact on family and professional life during the lengthy construction period, meaning many

members of our community have serious concerns about accessing important amenities such as schools, healthcare, business clients, farm suppliers, movement of livestock and so forth. The slide gives their quotes. I won't read it all through to you. You will have been able to see that before. What I would like to say is all these families feel strongly that there are inadequate mitigation measures in place to preserve the character and beauty of the AONB for future generations. They urge the Select Committee to bore a full tunnel through the Chilterns.

196. CHAIR: Thank you.

197. MRS BROWN: Could we go to the next slide, please?

198. MRS SEMPLE: I'm speaking on behalf of one of the witnesses that was here this morning but has had to leave to pick up her son. The reason will become evident as I read her piece. I'm speaking on behalf of the Sheffield family. In 2000, they moved from Wendover to Chapel Farm in Hyde Lane with their three very small children. Alex grew up locally and Tim, her husband, grew up in Suffolk. They both had rural upbringings and wanted to stay in the countryside. For them, it was a move for life. At that time, their eldest son, Freddie, had been recently diagnosed with a permanent, life-limiting neuromuscular condition, so they chose to move to Hyde End for the support of Alex's parents, who live nearby, and because of the easy access to London hospitals: the Hammersmith, Great Ormond Street and the Brompton. They attend these hospitals regularly today. Tim also needed to have an easy commute to London for his work. They knew then that the area was unique because of its unspoiled countryside yet easy access to London. They know the threat the area is under now.

199. Can I have the next slide, please? In her spare time, Alex enjoys horse riding. She's been riding the Chiltern hills since 1978, over 35 years. Her 14-year-old daughter enjoys the same lanes, bridleways and countryside as she did at her age. They often ride along Potter Row and take the bridleway from Hunts Green to the old Pheasant pub in Ballinger or take Kings Lane from Hunts Green through to Kings Ash. Without a long tunnel to Wendover, such rides will not be possible. For Alex and for many others, riding is a traditional sport and leisure activity and part of a rural way of life. It is also a social activity, enabling people from different hilltop communities to meet up and to go for a ride together. Many other neighbours and friends use the local lanes and

bridleways as she does and has a wide community of equestrian friends throughout the area living in Swan Bottom, The Lee, South Heath, Potter Row and Wendover. There are riding stables nearby at Middle Grove Farm, where many young children learn to ride by going on countryside hacks. The proposed route would severely limit all people's ability to enjoy riding in the area.

200. Alex is concerned about the provision for horse riders in the current proposed scheme. Horses are easily scared by large heavy and noisy vehicles such as construction traffic, which would make riding dangerous. The noise of high-speed trains would be beyond their comprehension. Her point is that the countryside is already being eaten up by building and construction work. They think that this beautiful ridgeway should be saved by extending the tunnel. That was the Sheffields.

201. My name is Penny Semple and I've lived in Hyde End since 1992. Both my husband and I moved out of London, but originally my husband's from Scotland and I am from the north of England. We chose our house because, when we came to see it, there was a footpath sign exactly opposite it. As far as we were concerned, it sealed the deal. It literally was a sign to us to get the house. Both my husband and I run our freelance consultancy businesses from home. In fact, there are at least eight businesses in Hyde End that are run from homes. At the moment we're struggling to get broadband beyond 5 Mbps, if we're lucky.

202. My two daughters were born and brought up in our house, and they've attended all the local schools and are now at the local grammar school. Why is this relevant to you? My daughters were 10 and 13 when the announcements of HS2 were made. They witnessed the devastation that the announcement had on their communities. It wasn't just for a day or a week; it has been for five years. They have been part of rattling buckets to raise money in this David and Goliath process. We do not have vast amounts of money to have QCs defend our opinions. We have become reluctant experts in all things high speed – or at least tried to be. We are aware of your patience, listening to sometimes repetition – or maybe more repetition than you'd like – but in the absence of a QC, it is only repetition that can underline the importance of our argument, which is that we hope you would show due diligence to the importance of keeping this area, an area of outstanding natural beauty, protected – not just for my children; for all the children and the generations to come that would like to access this countryside in its

unspoiled condition. I would urge you, along with my fellow neighbours, that you do consider building this tunnel all the way through the AONB. Thank you.

203. MRS BROWN: Could we go to the next slide, please?

204. MRS TELFORD: Hello there.

205. CHAIR: Hello.

206. MRS TELFORD: It's been a long day.

207. CHAIR: Actually, it's been quite a short day so far.

208. MRS TELFORD: I won't rush, then.

209. CHAIR: It's still daylight. Is it Sandra?

210. MRS TELFORD: It's Sandra, yes. Hello. I'm here, obviously representing myself and Alan, my husband, but obviously very much part of the HERG community, as we call it fondly. Alan and I have lived at 4 Hyde End – that's Chesham Road – for 26 years. That's actually 26 years this September. It was always supposed to be a temporary move – no more than five years. Both of our roots are further up north. Alan's are in Lancashire and Shropshire, and mine are in the Midlands and Yorkshire. We decided that once we'd actually done some work to the house – maybe made a few bucks on it – we'd actually, to coin a phrase, move further north to get more for our money. What we hadn't banked on was absolutely falling in love with the area very quickly, and also becoming part of the local community, which we're still very much so, and basically the actually quality of life that we have there. We've also made some lifelong friends, who will stay with us forever, who, clearly, we don't want to move away from, and we have a fantastic neighbourhood in Hyde End.

211. You'll have to forgive me; my varifocals are down somewhere on the Dorset coast. I don't want to do the glasses-on-the-end-of-the-nose bit, so I may just have to take them on and off – or I'll leave them on. We're very grateful to you that our bit of the AONB has been saved with the tunnel, so thank you very much. However, we still have some very deep concerns about the impact on the wider AONB, which will affect all of us and our surroundings.

212. On a health note, when we first moved here, Alan suffered very badly from asthma, which he'd had since his childhood. For a long time it really restricted the activities we could do, although I think he was secretly pleased at the time to get out of mowing the lawn. However, within months of moving here it stopped, and to date hasn't come back, which we put down to the lovely clean air we have here and in the surrounding area. I was interested earlier on to hear Bernice Fuggle talking about her asthmatic cough and how, strangely, that once they moved to Little Kingshill that cleared very quickly too. That kind of condones the wonderful clear air thing. Our concern is that this will change with all the construction work, although only temporary, if a longer tunnel isn't agreed.

213. Still on a health note but also something very close to my heart, my mum has been in a residential care home for three years after a long battle with dementia, which is actually quite severe now. Over the past year, she's suffered a number of illnesses, two of which have been pretty critical and which have resulted in her being rushed to Stoke Mandeville A and E. Each time I've been able to get to Stoke Mandeville from home more or less at the same time as the ambulance, which has actually been a godsend, as I've been able to explain to the staff how best to deal with her and also to calm mum down and console her. Hospitals are at the best of people a scary place, but for someone with dementia it can be an absolutely terrifying ordeal. My being there with her, particularly the last time, meant that she had urgent treatment needed without any delays. Obviously, a major concern now is that during the construction period, if there were to be another emergency – her condition could actually reappear; it's quite likely, actually – it would result in it taking me far longer to get there, trauma for her and also the staff not being able to treat her quickly enough to make that difference.

214. On more of a local business note, I've worked in corporate sales and marketing for over 25 years now. I'm now in a good position that I'm able to actually have started up my own business, something I have always wanted to do. That said, it's a serious business; it's not a hobby. I still need to earn a living. So far, since trading, over 70% of my clients have come from the areas around Aylesbury and Wendover. I'd like to think it has a lot to do with me, but at the same time I do understand that for them it's an easy journey – probably no more than 10 or 15 minutes for them to get to me – but also because of the lovely tranquil setting that they can come and receive a consultation with

me. They very often, actually, comment on the countryside – how quiet it is, apart from, obviously, the ambient noise of birds singing. So, basically, my business, as with many of the other local businesses you’ll have heard about from Hyde End but also from other areas around the region, really does rely completely on word of mouth and referrals. My biggest concern is that I will lose new and also repeat business as people will have no choice but to take into account their journey time and the environment and may well choose another consultant.

215. You mentioned dogs earlier. In fact, those are two of our rescue dogs. Demos is all the way from Athens – he’s the one at the bottom. Jesse, sadly, we lost a while ago. Since moving to Hyde End, we’ve always had rescue dogs and, as such, walk every day, literally come rain or shine – unless we’re away, of course – both across our own part of the AONB, but also regularly use the footpaths across the wider AONB between here and Wendover. I honestly don’t think that even after the construction period is over and the beautiful countryside that we once knew has been patched up it will ever be the same walking there again, or that people will ever want to, which is so sad for us and everyone else who has enjoyed it over the years – unless, of course, a longer tunnel is agreed, which is where we need your help.

216. Finally, to sum up, when we first moved to our house it was actually called The Haven, and honestly, in our late 20s, we thought it rather twee, so we reverted back to 4 Hyde End. However, that said, it really has been a safe haven for us for all these years, and I honestly believe that living where we do, in such beautiful surroundings, clean air, no noise or light pollution – the light pollution is very important to us – has helped us to keep our sanity during some very stressful times with both work and personal issues over the many years we’ve lived here now. I really hope that we can keep this and other parts of the AONB as a safe haven for all of us who live here now, but also for those people who live here in the future and those who visit here too. We just really need your help to do the right thing and agree to the longer tunnel. Thank you for listening.

217. CHAIR: Thank you.

218. MRS BROWN: I shall now pass over to Pat.

219. MS ENDACOTT: Good afternoon. My name is Pat Endacott. I live at 3 Rowan

Cottages, Browns Road, Hyde End, with my partner, Ivan Rutter, who's sitting behind us, if he would wave. We are both keen walkers and active members over many years of the Ramblers' Association and long-distance walkers. We both lead many – several – group walks each and every year. I'll come back to this on the next slide, but I would like to add my personal thanks to the Committee for agreeing to C6, because it does preserve one of the nicest walks from our area and, of course – I'm rather sorry that Sir Peter isn't here, but it's obviated the need for dismantling Mantles Wood.

220. CHAIR: Sir Peter actually had to go to – one of the victims of the Shoreham air crash was a constituent. There's a funeral this afternoon, which is why he isn't here. Otherwise, he'd be here to hear you.

221. MS ENDACOTT: Oh dear. Perhaps you can pass on my... I'm onto my third career, as a horticulturalist now. I retrained seven years ago and have built up a specialist business: the more skilled areas of pruning, market gardens, fruit production, pests and diseases, revamping beds, and consultancy and training. This needs a particular type of client, and so I have to be prepared to travel over a fair amount of distance. I have clients in London, Great Missenden, of course, Amersham and Thame, for example. I need good road transport all year round, particularly in January, which is a very busy month for me. To find the customers, I need to target large areas. I don't particularly have a problem with transport from the things that I have heard, because, of course, I can choose the time of day that I use. My only real concern about this I think is the potential downgrading of the area, which I think has and will continue to happen, and that could impact the clients and perhaps make me have to drive further. I think that whatever HS2's counsel says about 'it's three months for this and it's two years for that', I don't believe that our area will settle down again properly for at least 10 years, until the train is running. That will be the first time that people start moving back into the area again.

222. I'm here really to talk about footpaths primarily, so can we have our next slide, please? Now, I've used the Ordnance Survey map, because, of course, being a long-distance walker and a Rambler, that's what I use, to illustrate my and our concerns. It's interesting, actually; earlier on in my career I happened to work in Milton Keynes and we were taken up at an early stage of the development there in a helicopter and we looked down and we saw all of these circles, like this. I asked, 'Why are there going to

be so many roundabouts here?’ to which the reply was, ‘Well, you know what? The architect actually drank a lot of tea and coffee.’ I can be flippant and tongue-in-cheek. I don’t mean it that way, but at first glance, if you look at this slide, with tongue in cheek you would say that somebody’s looked at the Ordnance Survey map and said, ‘You know what? There’s a nice bit of wide space here. Let’s go through there.’ We all know, because everybody in the room knows – they’ve been told many times; they’ve seen it – that this is beautiful open countryside, with some fantastic views.

223. Both Great Missenden and Wendover are important points of access. They are at either end of this valley. They have good car parking and stations for walkers, or for anybody who wants to use the AONB. People come to Wendover, for instance, from Milton Keynes, from Oxfordshire, from Northants, from Beds; and to Great Missenden from north London, east London. There are just so many people who can home in onto these two locations.

224. The first path that I want to talk about, which is of great importance to all of us here, as well as the wider audience that I’ve gone through, is the one in the bottom right hand corner, and that’s the one which I believe – and believed until I saw one diagram today – will be replaced at least temporarily by the haul road up to the new portal hood. This path is one of the most useful ones around, as it happens, because it gives all of us really good circular walks – short, long; we can use it for all sorts of different reasons.

225. CHAIR: Can I ask what its number is, so that people can reference to see it? Do you have a number at all?

226. MS ENDACOTT: I believe it is GM13. Is that correct? I think it’s GM13. It’s either 12 or 13.

227. CHAIR: Okay.

228. MS ENDACOTT: I’m a bit confused about that because of the pictures that we’ve seen today, but it is the one that currently goes along the haul road, or alongside it. Obviously, this path is going to be closed off for some considerable period of time, or for the period of time that the portal hood is developed. I would really like to know how long it is going to be closed off and what kind of protection there’s going to be for people who will then walk back there eventually – assuming that we will be able to walk

back there eventually. This is an important path. It's a very useful one; it's a very beautiful one.

229. The second path that I'm concerned about – perhaps even more so – is the one that I've highlighted in green, which is halfway down the valley. This one, according to the Chiltern Society numbers, is W36. The importance of this path to people who spend their spare time as we do is that it's actually the only crossing point in that valley. Ramblers, for instance – we specifically – do 12-mile walks most Sundays. To do a 12-mile walk from Wendover along that valley, which is a lovely thing to do, you need a crossing point. It's that path. The same from Great Missenden. It's that path. Also, this path is a very important one because it is part of the Chiltern Way. I would imagine that the Chiltern Society covered this with you, but if they have not –

230. CHAIR: I have a feeling it has come up before.

231. MS ENDACOTT: Then let me just re-emphasise that this is a very important path to all of us. You will see down in the bottom left hand corner that there is a group of Duke of Edinburgh young people –

232. CHAIR: Is this the one that goes under the viaduct?

233. MS ENDACOTT: This is the one that goes under the – well, does it go under the viaduct?

234. CHAIR: We did have some evidence earlier when there was some discussion about a particular path where a petitioner was worried about people walking underneath the viaduct and whether there'd be noise, and a variety of other things.

235. MS ENDACOTT: So, when it goes underneath the viaduct, will it go underneath or will it be sunk, will it be in a tunnel, and how long will it be out of action – are the kinds of things that I would really like to know.

236. CHAIR: Okay.

237. MS ENDACOTT: Because, as I said, it is an important path and I just wanted to make sure that this was brought to your attention and that you do know that it's very important to a lot of us. As I said, the Chiltern Way is a long-distance path. It was

developed by the Chiltern Society. I think it's 124 miles – something like that – as a circular path. But it does link part of the Chilterns to that part of the Chilterns, for want of a better expression.

238. CHAIR: Is this what those Duke of Edinburgh people will use? I think they came up before.

239. MS ENDACOTT: Yes, probably. As long as you agree it's important, that's fine. Obviously, a full tunnel will mitigate both of these, but, if that's not possible, then I'd like to ask for these two paths to be recognised as important and reinstated as quickly as possible. I have no idea at the moment how long those are going to be out of action and no idea what the final impact is going to be on them. The joy of walking, really, is all about sight, sound, smell and touch. If we must have a viaduct, then I'd like to see a tunnel under it to reinstate that path.

240. Finally, I ask you to consider this very carefully. Mr Strachan, the HS2 Counsel, would have us believe that all is under control. We don't necessarily believe that, as you can tell. We'd like to be convinced, but at the moment it's open. However, you have the opportunity to prevent a vital resource from being spoiled forever – and we'd appreciate it if you would continue to take that as seriously as you have already demonstrated. Thank you very much.

241. CHAIR: Thank you.

242. MR ALDRIDGE: Well, hello and thanks for the opportunity to present to you. I know I've already been introduced. I'm the one who's been living in the Chilterns for 66-plus years. It's been really good. My family have also, obviously, been there all of their lives as well. I guess the only one thing is this: why have we never wanted to move out of the area? Well, simply, all the reasons you've heard why people want to move in to the area are, fundamentally, why we've stayed. I think that's probably enough on that.

243. I'd like to get down to what I really want to talk about. There's been lots of discussion on noise levels, noise cones, the effect of noise over water, the impact of climatic conditions, noise being launched from viaduct, and so on – as well as work on noise mitigation in various forms. Now, all this is very good and very necessary

technical work. Both sides of the debate seem to agree that this train will be noisy, but the point is, what will it actually sound like? When Pavarotti starts an operatic aria, he can be quite loud. For that matter, Jonny Rotten, with his punk rock, can be pretty loud as well. They both sound very, very different. Now, I know the Chilterns ambient sound well. My concern is the nature of this noise, its characteristics, the tonal content and impact on the areas of the Chilterns community that, at the moment, do not have a tunnel.

244. As I was doing some of the work to find out some of the answers to this, I came across the figures on this slide here. If those figures are anything like correct, then High Sped Ltd are, in fact, proposing to deliver Super High Speed 1. Again, from reading what the experts say, the higher the speed, the higher the noise level, emphasising the tonal content. Can we move to the next slide, please?

245. The Chilterns has its own ambient sounds and tone characteristics, comprised of the elements I've tried to list here. Obviously, this noise is random and it depends on where you are. I can take you to very quiet and tranquil areas in the Chilterns; I can take you to those where there's more hustle and bustle from villages and towns and so on. The point is that these sounds do not encumber activities nor, in the main, is it unpleasant.

246. But that's not to state that we don't get, from time to time, intrusive sounds; we do. The most obvious one is commercial aircraft. Fortunately, these are flying quite high, limiting the noise level itself – think of it perhaps as noise mitigation by happenstance – but this does not prevent the intrusive sounds that do not blend in with the Chilterns. And the point about this is it does not have to be very loud. It's not something you get used to. You're going to hear it. At 10 to six this morning, one flight went over. I was inside. It stood out not because it was loud, but because it was different – different from the normal ambient sound. The point about that is you don't get used to these things: you just have to put up with it. Okay, can we have the next slide, please?

247. Okay, well, Super High Speed 1 also has its own ambient sound and tone characteristics. Again, I've put them on this slide. As I said earlier, a sound doesn't have to be loud to be intrusive. You can think of that rattle in the car. It's not loud, but

it's intrusive and can be very annoying. It stands out because it's not part of the ambient car sound. The point is you only just have to be in audible range. Exactly as I'm talking to you now, you're in audible range. There's not a lot of noise. Now, we know we're going to be subjected to regular 25-second noise pulses comprised sharp and rasping tone pitches. And it's not something we're going to get used to. We're going to have to put up with and the degradation that it brings.

248. The nature of the sound or tone generated by Super High Speed 1 is completely alien to the Chilterns ambient sound. And there's also one thing that also came across, which I even heard an expert in one of these Committee meetings talking about. There's reference on this slide to amortising the noise pulse: in other words, taking the peak noise and then amortising that over the inter-service period, the quiet period, to get some sort of reduced average. Well, I'm sorry, but this particular view is just not fit for human consumption. No human is going to react to this noise in this way. It may be a very good mathematical exercise, but the problem is, if you follow it through, if you reduce the service levels, the inter-service periods are going to increase – and they will increase to a point where, eventually, the ambient sounds of the Chilterns actually become louder than the train, which is ridiculous.

249. Just imagine, for example, that you're on a footpath. It's a lovely day; the sun is shining. All of a sudden, the 5.25 flyer comes through. No way are you going to sit or stand there, going, 'That's okay. It really isn't this loud. In the quiet periods I'll amortise this and it will actually really be far less.' I'm sorry: it's an absolute non-starter and it's a ludicrous proposition to make.

250. In conclusion, if the natural ambient sound of this wonderful Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is the symphony of the Chilterns, then Super High Speed 1 is the punk-rock intrusion. Noise levels are important, but alone they provide an incomplete picture and, therefore, are inadequate on the impact on the AONB. For humans, the nature of the sound is a vital element that also needs to be considered. All we have to do is be in audible range to hear this and be disturbed by it. I'm not an expert, but I wouldn't mind betting that, if you included the intrusion levels from these sounds in these sorts of noise cones that are being produced now, they would in fact cover a much wider area.

251. Now, the Chilterns is the only Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on the route and worthy of full consideration. Following completion of Super High Speed 1, the legacy sound will remain in perpetuity – certainly as long as the train is actually in operation. We'd obviously like to propose that there is a tunnel fully under the Chilterns, protecting all of them, not leaving this to our children and their children to have to put up with this legacy noise. Thank you very much.

252. MRS KAY: My name is Karen Kay, a local in the Chilterns. I grew up in Pednor, which is three miles from Hyde End, and my parents still live there now. It's an area that's very similar to where we live now: gentle landscapes, narrow lanes. I had a bucolic existence as a child, something which is fairly rare these days, I guess, in a fairly high-pressure society.

253. I bought my present family home in Browns Road in 1992 and I now live there with my husband Ian, who's behind us, and our daughter, Molly, who's seven. As a family, we enjoy walking, cycling and running in the wider Chilterns AONB. We love our home, but we love the area around it equally as much. We're part of HERG. We're also part of the Hyde Heath Village Society you heard about from Andrew earlier and we're part of the Great Missenden Village Society, too.

254. As many people have told you, all these villages are interconnected. We don't live in a hamlet solely; we live in a wider community that interacts on a daily basis. Our daughter went to the village school in Hyde Heath; she's just moved to the school in Great Missenden. We use the village shop in Hyde Heath; we use the shops and banks and station in Great Missenden regularly. We use other local amenities and regularly commute from the local station. Like many others that you've endured or listened to over the recent weeks, we have serious concerns about the impact of HS2 on the wider area both during the construction period, which we accept is inevitable, and the operation of the line.

255. I suffer from asthma and have been admitted to hospital as an emergency case on numerous occasions. Given predicted traffic congestion on minor roads and the much discussed A413 over the coming years, I'm very worried about accessing Stoke Mandeville, given an emergency situation, particularly if I'm in a situation where my husband or a friend or member of my family has to take me in and we don't have the

benefit of the blue lights that ambulances and paramedics have. Unfortunately, mobile phones have very poor reception in our area. If we're out for a walk and I'm wheezing, we need to get to hospital quickly and we can't necessarily call the emergency services.

256. As I'm sure you're aware and you heard from the Fuggles earlier and from Sandra, talking about her husband Alan, clean air and a tranquil environment are a great benefit to those of us who suffer respiratory problems. Any pollutants can trigger attacks, as can anxiety and stress, which we've all suffered over the last five years – and, I'm sad to say, will inevitably continue to endure over the coming years, perhaps permanently, if we have to endure something which we feel has blighted our lives.

257. In addition to my health concerns, my husband and I both run media businesses independently of each other from home and we're dependent on regular time-sensitive career services. We have to head to London and elsewhere from work. As a one-woman and one-man band, time is money; it's our livelihood. We're concerned that the predicted traffic congestion could have a negative impact on business efficiency and our revenue streams.

258. I made a conscious decision in 1994 to improve my quality of life and stop commuting into London, wasting three or four hours a day on a train, and work from home so I could work around what I hoped would be a good family life and have daytime walks. I could work during the day and take a break, have a walk in the surroundings throughout the seasons and then continue working in the evening – so I could raise a family and have a quality of life I really believed would lead to good wellbeing.

259. Our daughter Molly, now seven, has the most critical years of her education ahead of her, coinciding with the construction period in our area. Like many families who rely on local schools and local lanes to get to school, we're very worried that congestion may have a serious impact on her schooling and wellbeing, the time she spends at home relaxing, which is crucial for someone who's healthy and happy – or even on her having time to do her homework, which we're concerned will have longer implications. Children today grow up in a high-pressure environment. They need downtime; they need peace and the benefits of the natural world around them.

260. Molly's regular commitment includes Brownies, Beavers and many other

activities in the Chilterns AONB with her school, for example. She's just done a cross-country race this weekend outside Wendover. We do walks in Wendover Woods and with Beavers she does night walks. She's been a passionate member of her school eco-club for three years and has an innate interest in wildlife, the environment and wider countryside issues, which we support and encourage. We'd like to encourage this active, outdoor lifestyle as she grows up and have concerns about the impact of HS2 on this.

261. She won't have the same sense of unspoiled countryside that I grew up with and will spend most of her formative years witnessing the destruction of the area around her home. It's an area that she loves. We haven't told her to love this area: it comes from her heart. Please listen to the voters of tomorrow, the young voices to whom we hand our legacy. She and her contemporaries – including the Tillier children on Chesham road, the Wallis children, the Semple children and many others who will come and enjoy this area in the future – have very valid, heartfelt concerns that we have a responsibility as a society to take on board.

262. I'd also like to share the concerns of my parents, Patricia and George Mellor, who are still resident in the Pednor Valley in our family home. Their petitions are attached to the HERG one today as they feel very, very strongly that the impact of HS2 will destroy the Chilterns AONB forever, blighting it in perpetuity. They're 78 and 76 respectively and they share the worries many of us have about the congestion around the A413 corridor during the construction period. Like many older residents, they have older healthcare needs at Stoke Mandeville Hospital and they use Aylesbury as one of their main shopping centres. It's really important that we take into consideration people beyond the immediate vicinity of the line. This is an area that is actually affected very broadly, as you heard from Little Kingshill residents this morning.

263. If we can move to the next slide, please, I'd just like to summarise, a little bit, the presentation of the residents' group today. As my neighbours today and many other petitioners before us have so passionately stated, we are extremely concerned that the entire Chilterns AONB area will be adversely affected by construction and operation of HS2. In fact, as someone – I think it was Mr Syms – pointed out earlier, it isn't the entire Chilterns AONB, but there is this wide perception that the Chilterns has got a rail line running through the heart of it. In fact, the Chilterns that is affected – the

Great Missenden and Wendover stretch – is one of the most accessible parts from London, and that’s a crucial, crucial part of the AONB.

264. Our petitions have discussed the long-term impact of the proposed rail line looking ahead, but it is important for you to recognise that we have all suffered inordinate amounts of anxiety since this infrastructure project was announced in March 2010. Over recent years many of us have given up precious time with our families and lost business revenue as a result of the enormous amount of time and emotional, physical and mental energy required to keep on top of the bulldozer that has been HS2. We are not QCs being paid to listen to, read and digest all these arguments; we have had to do this on top of our everyday lives. We have cried, literally, on each other’s shoulders when worry and strain gets too much. We have lost neighbours. This is not something that is happening in the future. We have already endured five years of enormous stress, dedicated campaigning and bewildering amounts of specialist reading.

265. As a residents group all the petitioners we represent today bar two live within a mile of the proposed line on a stretch that has already been recommended for tunnelling under the C6 recommendation. While this offers mitigation immediately in and around our homes, the wider impact of this line on our community is not to be underestimated. This devastating fact is unarguable. Our professional lives, leisure time and overall quality of life are dependent upon the tranquillity and beauty of the region in which we have elected to live. Our lives are lived outdoors beyond the environs of our homes, and so that will be the case for our descendants who should not find themselves on a small island so packed with the sights and sounds and related pollutants of urban living that they cannot find solace in pockets of green and pleasant land.

266. The alleged national interest for this project has been established by Act of Parliament and, despite our grave reservations and Mr Cordiner’s earlier protestations, we are to our regret not in a position to challenge this. However, we do believe that the promoters have not given due consideration to the option of tunnelling through the AONB, offering sufficient mitigation of damage to the unique landscape.

267. Can I go to the next slide, please? As a group, we are disappointed that none of the long tunnel options was supported by the Select Committee in its 21 July announcement. We cautiously welcomed its interim decision to instruct HS2 Ltd to

look at extending the government-proposed scheme towards Potter Row.

268. Over a year ago in an opening address to the Select Committee, Mr Mould said: ‘You will hear petitioners coming from Buckinghamshire and they will ask for a long tunnel.’ A very prescient man! He was keen to point out to the Committee that you must not allow them to have a long tunnel if the benefits they were proposing would not exceed the additional cost; otherwise, he said, there would be no case for spending more to achieve less.

269. We wholeheartedly believe that the additional expense will achieve more in the long term, with the bigger picture element of economic benefits from visitors and residents and overall national wellbeing. The cost of the Chilterns long route is estimated to represent 1.5% to 2% of the overall construction cost of HS2 phase 1. However, this should be viewed with the considerable mitigation of the effects of the route on the Chilterns AONB, and would avoid expensive compensation costs which have not been factored in. Permanent and irretrievable loss of environment is avoidable. The promoters put the cost at an extra £250 million to £300 million. We understand that this figure has been disputed, but we are going with that for the time being. In the words of Mastercard, we say it is in fact priceless. If the promoters cannot afford to undertake this project properly with integrity it is not affordable.

270. On behalf of all our communities, we urge the Select Committee in its further deliberations to conclude that the additional financial cost of an edge-to-edge tunnel through the AONB at this construction stage would be wise, particularly when the investment is set against the wider savings across the project’s whole life. This would more adequately mitigate the impact on local communities and conserve a beautiful and unique part of the UK’s countryside.

271. Please, we urge you to make a wise and considered decision, with due diligence, that bears in mind the legacy of our society as a whole as custodians of this AONB for future generations. Our collective actions will be praised or criticised forever more. I would like to hand back to Sue, our chair, to read a quote to leave with you today.

272. MRS BROWN: We would like to finish by reading the words on our final slide written by my 83 year-old father in a letter to government when HS2 was announced. It encompasses all that we feel: ‘We all hold a responsibility to safeguard the Chilterns for

future generations who will inherit this place of interest and beauty, a place uncluttered by the machinations proffered in the name of progress. Responsible governments should seek with pride to preserve havens of solace and beauty for all to benefit [from] and enjoy, leaving future generations to applaud their wisdom and foresight.’

273. CHAIR: Thank you very much. Ms Lean?

274. MS LEAN (DfT): To start, please bring up P8122. This point was acknowledged by Ms Endacott, but, in response to the comment made, while C6 may protect the houses, lives are not protected. Bear in mind that C6 does make quite a difference to the east of the South Heath portal. In particular, a number of the public rights of way which would have been diverted or stopped up are now not affected during the course of construction.

275. A specific query was raised in respect of the public rights of way on the C6 scheme. Could we have put up P7575(1)? This slide is the AP2 proposal, but I want to check that this deals with the issue of the public right of way. The one in question is GMI13(3) to the left of the screen just here. This was the public right of way in question. That was what happened under the AP2 proposal. As to what is proposed in C6, we can see it on P8120(16). It is the footpath just here, as I understand it, and this is the new road that has been built to service the construction works. That is stopped up during construction because of the haul route, but there is a route to the left, which is GM12. That will provide access across the trace, although there is a temporary diversion. It is a bit difficult to see, but when you get into the trace there is a pink hatch just there. Therefore, there is a temporary diversion of GM12, but that is the route which would take you from south to north during construction.

276. Just looking at what happens at the operational stage, look at P8120(19). The right way of is reopened, but there is a permanent diversion going around the back of the portal, as it were, just towards the centre of the screen. I am aware a question was asked about how long that would be disrupted and for how many years it would not be available. I do not have the exact information to hand at the moment, but I will ask someone to write to Ms Endacott with that information.

277. CHAIR: I think we have discussed this before, have we not? It is around the top of the portal.

278. MS LEAN (DfT): Yes. Dealing with some other issues briefly, the Committee has heard a lot about noise, and will be hearing more about that. I do not propose to go into that. The Committee has seen slide 8120(32) which shows the effect of the proposed change of C6 pulling the noise contours further away from these residents. The map does not extend far enough into this area, but it just shows the effect of the proposals there.

279. MS KAY: With respect, that is with noise contours and the noise in our homes, not so much when we are out in the countryside. All of these are footpaths and fields we walk in regularly, so the noise will impact on that wider area.

280. MS LEAN (DfT): I do appreciate that there is a wider noise. I was not proposing to get into that because the Committee has heard about that, and will be hearing more about it. It was more a reminder that in this area that is what the effect is. The proposal in C6 is to pull in the noise contours, and further away from this area.

281. MR ALDRIDGE: You do not seem to remember what I was saying. It is the nature of the noise and sound and so on which creates the intrusion. I do not know whether or not these things represent that. I suspect they do not, but that is one of the key aspects.

282. MS LEAN (DfT): I completely appreciate that. Mr Thornely-Taylor has gone into some detail about the nature of noise and how that appears in the noise environment. It is more in the interests of time. I do not propose to go back through all of that, but there is quite a detailed record of it in the transcripts.

283. CHAIR: We have marched through here before. Essentially, if you extend the tunnel it also drops the line down, and that is why the contours have come in.

284. MR ALDRIDGE: That is fine, but the reason we are here is the areas where there is not a tunnel and the impact that will have on those residents. You are right as to what the tunnel does for us, and thank you very much, but I am concerned about the rest of the Chilterns community.

285. MS LEAN (DfT): Mr Thornely-Taylor has previously addressed the effects of noise on horses earlier this year. There is a record in the transcript of Mr Thornely-

Taylor's evidence on that.

286. Picking up design, a question was asked about the vent shafts. I understand that the petitioners were grateful to hear what Mr Strachan said this morning but they needed assurances that vent shafts would be built in line with the assurance given about the AONB. Could we have put up P7628(1)? I hope this gives some reassurance to the petitioners. This is the letter sent from the project to Chiltern District Council earlier this year. You will see 'Assurance on design and landscaping in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)'. In the second paragraph we see that, 'the Promoters recognises the importance and special character of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and in this respect is in broad agreement with the Petitioner. The Promoter considers that there is merit in establishing a set of design principles that could reasonably be applied to the design and appearance of HS2 works in the Chilterns AONB that will fall to it to approve under Schedule 16 of the HS2 Bill when enacted.' It goes on to provide the further assurance that, 'The Promoter will require the nominated undertaker to work with Chiltern District Council in developing design principles that could reasonably be applied to the design and appearance of HS2 works in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty ... to ensure that they provide appropriate guidance for HS2 works in the AONB.' It continues over the page with a second assurance that, 'When developing its detailed design for building and construction works (including landscaping) in the Chilterns ... AONB, the Promoter will require the nominated undertaker to take into consideration the design principles developed for the HS2 works in the AONB insofar as these relate to the grounds specified in the relevant paragraphs of Schedule 16', and so on. I hope that makes clear that we have given assurances to the local authorities in this area, recognising the importance of design in the Chilterns AONB.

287. On a similar note, I know that a query was raised earlier about roads. I do take on board that it is about the wider aspects. I am not purporting to say it is just about design. Of course, the Committee has previously seen that we have a set of design principles that relate particularly to rural roads where works are happening on or to those roads. Those are at P7636. I know the Committee has been to these before, but in the light of some concerns expressed it might be useful to go through it again. We have the HS2 rural roads design criteria in the fourth bullet point; they are broadly consistent with the

aspirations of documents prepared by various Chilterns bodies; the environmental guidelines for the management of highways in the Chilterns AONB. On slides 3 and 4 there are various bullet points about how it should be done. If we go back to 3, in particular the guiding principle in the first bullet point is that temporary and permanent works affecting a rural road should aim to retain the existing character and distinctiveness of the route wherever feasible. That is part of the general design principles to which the project will have regard going forward.

288. A query was raised about work sites. The Committee has gone into this, but I am not sure whether the petitioners will have been before the committee at that time. There is a provision in the draft code of construction practice which deals expressly with hoardings and fencing. The Committee will recall there is a requirement that the nominated undertaker will have regard to the character of the area when considering appropriate hoardings, and further details will be included in the LEMPs, which the Committee will be aware are the local environmental management plans, which will be put together in conjunction and engagement with the local communities and stakeholders.

289. The Committee has heard a lot about property from the project. I do not propose to say anything more, but no disrespect is meant to any of the concerns expressed by the petitioners by not responding to those points.

290. MRS BROWN: Can I just point out that with one of the reassurances people need is that they might not need to sell at the moment, but they will need to sell in two, three, four, five or seven years' time? Could they get the assurance now that they will have a case in the future?

291. CHAIR: The situation is that you can apply and it remains open for three years. You do not have to take it up. If it goes beyond three years, you would have to reapply, but there is an element of that within the existing scheme. These are things we will crawl over in due course.

292. MRS BROWN: On behalf of Pat, it is reassuring that if there are diversions footpaths are to be reinstated. I am not sure that the example given was the actual W36 footpath Pat was so concerned about half-way up the valley, which is the one near the farm.

293. CHAIR: Is that the one running underneath one of the viaducts?

294. MS KAY: Yes.

295. MRS BROWN: But when it comes down across the actual road.

296. CHAIR: I do not think it would be in a tunnel. If it went under a viaduct it would not need to be in a tunnel.

297. MS LEAN (DfT): In the interests of time, there are people behind me from the environmental team. It may be that Ms Endacott wants to speak to somebody about a particular concern. I apologise if I misunderstood. I thought the one question was there.

298. CHAIR: No. If you will remember, we saw a picture of a house. At the bottom of the garden people walk all the way round and underneath the viaduct and round the other side. Earlier petitioners were concerned about the noise of the traffic on the viaduct with walkers and Duke of Edinburgh award people going underneath. There was a question about whether that would remain open when the construction was going on, and, if so, when it would be put back into operation so people could use it. Perhaps you could deal with it later or put it in writing so the petitioners know about it.

299. MRS BROWN: I would remind the Committee that it is fine that we have got diversions in place to keep access open, but one point, which I think Dave made, is that for all of us it is not just about getting from a to b; we still have this Berlin wall going through the countryside. When the line is operational, all these diversions have been finished off and the i's are dotted and the t's are crossed, we still will not have a very enjoyable experience across these footpaths with the train on the surface.

300. On the first point made about C6 helping us at Hyde End, we tried to acknowledge that, but we do not live just in Hyde End; we do not exist just in our homes.

301. MR HENDRICK: As an observation, the promoters have made it clear that noise has been dealt with in the past. It has. Obviously, we have heard a great deal of testimony from Mr Thornely-Taylor, but I remember that when he gave a quick description of the nature of noise he talked about decibels. When we talked about volume he referred to amplitude. The point he made about noise is that you can be

listening either to Pavarotti or Johnnie Rotten. It is a valid one, because there is a qualitative assessment to be made of noise, not just a quantitative one. Mr Thornely-Taylor was talking about quantifying noise by averaging a certain amount of noise. That is not necessarily how it affects the ear. I do take that point and wish that the Promoters would address that point and not just say it has been dealt with.

302. Specific points were made by the petitioners that could have been given some consideration, not just a reference back to a presentation at which I am sure these petitioners were not present

303. CHAIR: I am sure we will be coming back to this at some point. We also have to look at the tunnel portal issue.

304. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): I think the Committee, or at least those who have not been, will go to sound lab where you can hear different types of train noise at different speeds in different situations.

305. MR HENDRICK: We are fixing up a day for that.

306. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): To be clear, it is not suggested that train noise is the same as any other noise; it has its own distinct characteristics. That was addressed by Mr Thornely-Taylor. I think there is some research into train noise versus other types of noise showing that people habituate more quickly to train noise than certain other types of noise. There is a range of different views about noise, and also different sensitivities to different types of noise.

307. MR HENDRICK: HS2 is a train that people have not experienced to that degree yet. I think that any views about it at this stage are purely theoretical.

308. MS KAY: If you choose to live in a rural area, you should not be forced to be habituated to something you have not elected to live alongside. If you live in an urban area, you accept there may be development that might be noisy and cause other environmental pollution. When you elect to live somewhere that is tranquil, green and allegedly protected and then you are forced to habituate to something that is completely unwelcome in that area, you should not have to endure it.

309. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): I am just responding to the qualitative nature of it.

The qualitative nature of noise is something that the promoters have addressed and recognised. The sound lab is available for people to listen to.

310. MR HENDRICK: The Committee will shortly be visiting the sound lab, and we will address that point there as well.

311. CHAIR: I almost took that as your final comment. Would you like to make a few brief final comments?

312. MR ALDRIDGE: Thank you. This is something I am very concerned about because it is easily missed. People think of noise as how loud it is. It is the quality of it. I gave the example of commercial aircraft, so the noise level, if you like the amplitude, is quite low. Nevertheless, it stands out because an alien noise.

313. MR HENDRICK: It is the frequencies within the noise, is it not; it is the amplitude over a longer period.

314. MR ALDRIDGE: Exactly. You only have to be in an audible range, like we are talking now.

315. MRS BROWN: Can I just ask why the promoters have produced a sample of HS1 noise?

316. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): I am not sure I understand the question. The noise lab does take samples of high-speed trains. I forget the precise train. The French high-speed train is used in the sound lab recording.

317. CHAIR: I think that issue has come up.

318. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Anyway, we have samples, if that is what the question is, and put them into the noise lab. We have also set it alongside west coast main line trains. There are different qualitative elements in terms of the noise they make, all of which will come out.

319. CHAIR: Who is going to make a final comment?

320. MRS BROWN: I would like to sum up by saying that you said in your statement on 21 July that the case had not been made. It is to do with the non-quantifiable effects.

People like us are trying to show you that the non-quantifiable effects are really important, and we hope that case will be made.

321. CHAIR: Thank you very much for your organised petition. We now go to petition 1226: Joanne Garrett and Ben Scotchbrook. Are they about? If not, we come petition 653.

**Paul Fullagar**

322. CHAIR: Welcome. I know you have been sitting quietly at the back throughout most of the day.

323. MR FULLAGAR: Thank you, Chair and the Committee. I believe I am the last one today. I will make it brief, as it has been a long day. Thank you for the opportunity to put my petition to you today. My petition is in two parts: one is a petition for general mitigation; the second is for specific damage mitigation related to my own property. I think you will see, as I explain my petition, why I am particularly affected by the current plans.

324. For the first part, I would reiterate the request that has come up repeatedly today for a continuous tunnel. I watched most of the presentations yesterday. In some instances, it has been referred to as T3i, with a number of minor variations, as the only logical mitigation. I believe this is accepted by the promoters of HS2 as technically feasible. I also believe that it would avoid destroying, as everybody keeps saying, the areas of outstanding natural beauty on the route without setting any precedents as no other parts of the line pass through an AONB. I believe it would comply with all UK law and also the intent of UK law to apply the principle and meaning behind an AONB. It is particularly important to make every possible effort to comply with the intent of an AONB when drafting new legislation.

325. I also believe that it would cost no more than the current proposals when indirect costs and non-market effects on the landscape are added to the calculation. I believe this calculation is in full accordance with the Government's own accounting principles.

326. On this point, I note that while the interim announcement of the extension just past South Heath is certainly a step in the right direction—like the previous petitioners,

I welcome that as a step in the right direction—it does not solve all the issues in the area of outstanding natural beauty. I do not mean to criticise, but I wonder whether the Select Committee was well advised that it should discard the option of the continuous tunnel quite so soon perhaps without hearing the rest of the petitioners who have petitioned in favour of a continuous tunnel. I would also challenge the promoters on their comparative costings, which I believe are on spreadsheet P7560. It might be worth looking at that, because a lot of people have been talking about the additional cost of the tunnel. There we have it. The cost of the CRAG option—T3i—is nearly £350 million more. My contention is that there has been no opportunity to challenge the promoters' figures. I do not believe that includes indirect or non-market effects of mitigation.

327. CHAIR: We did spend some weeks discussing that. There was a variety of challenges.

328. MR FULLAGAR: You did discuss it, but the question is: do they include those indirect costs? I will follow up that question.

329. CHAIR: Petitioners have.

330. MR FULLAGAR: But have the numbers been adjusted to take account of the indirect costs?

331. CHAIR: The petitioners adjusted their numbers.

332. MR FULLAGAR: They have, as I am.

333. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: When you have finished the Committee will have to answer that question.

334. MR FULLAGAR: Indeed. My suggestion is that with the mitigation, including those savings, the cost would be nearer £100 million, or even breakeven. Let's suppose the additional cost was £350 million. I think the current estimates range from £50 million to £60 million. It will be between .5% and 1% of the total cost of the build. That, surely, must be a tiny price to pay to uphold and preserve an area of outstanding natural beauty, and also fully to conform with the intent of what that means in new legislation. I really think that is important.

335. The second part of my presentation talks about specific damage. I would like to refer you to A3194 which is just a description of where I live. The next slide will show you a map of where I live.

336. CHAIR: How far from the line are you?

337. MR FULLAGAR: The house itself is 800 yards to 900 yards from it. However, as I will come on to, under the revised proposal it actually comes on to my land. My land goes down to the roundabout on the A413 that the haul road joins, and therefore it will come in and take off some of my land.

338. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: Would it be possible to interrupt your presentation for a moment and ask the promoters to put up their map of where your home is in relation to the line?

339. MR FULLAGAR: If we could have the next slide, please, there it is.

340. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: If you do not mind, perhaps we could still have that. If it is not easily available, so be it.

341. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): We do not have the land boundary.

342. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: What about the house itself?

343. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): I will see if I can do that.

344. MR BOTTOMLEY: Carry on, Mr Fullagar. I hope it does not interrupt you.

345. MR FULLAGAR: Not at all. What I am trying to explain here is that the house itself is The Knoll on that exhibit, which is the little square, and it is joined to the dark bit which is Stocking's Wood; the green bit is Stocking's Wood, which I think you discussed before. That mass of land is used by myself as a point-to-point horse race training stables with barns and associated things. I have lived there for 30 years. The reason I live there is to enjoy not only the countryside but my hobby of having point-to-point horses. The point of my mitigation is that, with the revised plan in C6 or whatever, the new haulage road comes down to the roundabout.

346. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: If you point to the screen ahead of you, you see a

red dot. Is that your home?

347. MR FULLAGAR: Yes. The land mass comes along in a straight line to the woods here, and down the line to the roundabout and round there. That yard is used for training point-to-point horses. The impact of the new haulage road will mean that I am unable to train horses. You cannot train horses next to lorries coming up and down because of the dust, pollution, noise and so on. It makes the whole site pointless, which is a great sadness for me personally because, having just turned 65, my plan was to retire and enjoy my horses. This will not be possible any more.

348. However, my house is too far from the construction automatically to get compensation. I am told that the value of the site will be at least halved, even less than that, because you cannot use it for training or for horses; it is impossible. It is a very rare site, because it is the largest one with a dwelling house running down to the centre of Great Missenden. It is a very special site.

349. MR BELLINGHAM: Do you have a photograph of it?

350. MR FULLAGAR: I do not have a photograph of it.

351. MR BELLINGHAM: We have to picture it. Where do the horses go over their gallops?

352. MR FULLAGAR: They go in that big field; there are jumps in that big field all the way down to the roundabout. They can be seen now; they are there. It is currently being used to train horses. It has enormous impact, but there is no actual compensation.

353. CHAIR: Have you applied for any?

354. MR FULLAGAR: I have not applied for anything yet because I cannot get detailed plans for the haulage road. I cannot get detailed valuations and the detailed impact of it. It is not possible. But it is of great concern.

355. It comes back to saying that the way to mitigate is to do a continuous tunnel. It is not just about me. For myself, the impact is absolutely enormous. You can imagine the stress and difficulty. The estimated value of the site is about £7 million at the moment. If you had 15 of those sites in the whole length of Potter Row and that valley, you

would be talking of £100 million, let alone the other 20,000 houses round there which would be devalued by the blight of both the construction and being near it. As many of your petitioners have told you, people have a choice when they buy a house. If it is near a construction site, or a threatened construction site, and it is not expected to be completed until 2023—and that's if it is on time—it means that for eight to 10 years people will not want to buy their houses. I would not buy a house near a construction site like this, and I do not think I would want to live near an open high-speed railway line like this. There is permanent destruction of value for literally thousands of people. The further away you go the less it is. For some people, it may be 10 grand; for others 50 grand; and for some 100 grand, but the cost of extending the railway line with a tunnel is tiny compared with the sum of the capital cost lost by people in Great Missenden and the adjoining hills going down each side of that track.

356. It cannot be underestimated. I have to recommend to the Committee that it looks seriously at extending the tunnel through to the other side of Wendover, because it will do irreparable damage. I genuinely believe that it will cost the Government more without taking into account the intangible costs of the loss of tourism, trade and stress and disruption. You heard yesterday from a doctor about stress levels experienced in Great Missenden. It has enormous impact. I really cannot stress it enough. I do petition that you give serious consideration to a continuous tunnel.

357. CHAIR: Thank you very much.

358. MR BELLINGHAM: Before you proceed, Mr Strachan, it would be quite helpful if we could have an up-to-date map showing C2, because there is a deeper cutting coming out of what was to be the green tunnel portal and is now the extended bored tunnel portal. Can we get an up-to-date map, please? I did not find one in this bundle, but no doubt you have access to it.

359. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): It is P8120(16).

360. CHAIR: Do you agree that you will affect the petitioner's land?

361. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): The instructions I have are that we do not take any of the petitioner's land, but if that is not the case no doubt it will become clear. This is a proposal that has come forward recently for AP4, so it is being worked up with the

environmental information, and it will be available to the petitioner when the final details are ready. What we have here, according to current understanding, is P8120(16) which is the construction plan for the link road. You can see where it joins the roundabout at the bottom and curves off to the left round Stocking's Wood.

362. MR FULLAGAR: On a technicality, to come out straight on to that roundabout you have to go on to my land. I am just helping you to visualise it.

363. MR BELLINGHAM: To clarify it so we orient ourselves, if we look at Frith Hill you are just to the left of that.

364. MR FULLAGAR: I am just to the left of that little square on the left, near the bottom box.

365. MR BELLINGHAM: You said the gallops go down to the roundabout, so they are in the field further to the right of the additional land required for the access road.

366. MR FULLAGAR: They are to the right of the haul road.

367. MR BELLINGHAM: The gallops you are talking about are in this field.

368. MR FULLAGAR: In the big field.

369. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): That is alongside the A413 currently.

370. MR FULLAGAR: It is behind a high hedge on the A413.

371. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): We will find out. I did not understand that the land required for this went into your land holding. If it does, the AP4 proposal would involve your land.

372. CHAIR: If it goes across his land, does that mean compensation for blight?

373. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Certainly, compensation would be payable for any land taken.

374. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: It would not be enough to trigger a blight notice.

375. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): It does not look like it is going to, from the amount

involved.

376. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: Remind me how much land you have got.

377. MR FULLAGAR: It is 27 acres.

378. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: And this particular field is how big?

379. MR FULLAGAR: It is 12 acres, and that is the principal that is used. The rest of the fields and woods on the other hills are too small, and the hill at the back is a seed field.

380. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): We obviously need to find out a bit more about how much land, if any, is taken. I appreciate we have been told there is some land taken. It looks like a very small section of the edge of the field, if any. I understood there was not, but I may be wrong about that.

381. MR FULLAGAR: The reason for that is that you would have to come straight down on to the roundabout in that width.

382. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: The point about schooling the horses might apply, even if you do not take his land.

383. MR FULLAGAR: I cannot keep horses any more; the value of the whole property has gone.

384. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): I was going to address that. On the question of land take, if there is land take of course that is subject to the normal principles of compensation and the consequential detrimental effect of that. Regardless of whether land is taken, as to the effect on the schooling of horses that land is currently alongside the A413 and this access road is taking traffic off the A413 for the periods of time we talked about. No doubt we can provide the petitioner with more information about that.

385. MR FULLAGAR: But it is six years and nine months, is it not?

386. CHAIR: Can I make a suggestion? You petition against the additional provision if it affects your land, so why don't you have a conversation with HS2 so one can find out how it impacts on you?

387. MR FULLAGAR: I did try to get the information. I asked for the detailed information, but I have not received it.

388. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: You have got nothing because you do not have it.

389. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): This is a proposal that came forward in the last month in consequence of a number of requests, not least to take traffic off the—

390. CHAIR: You can come back without paying your 20 quid again for the AP, but the sensible thing to do, since this is a new proposal and HS2 is still struggling with it, and clearly it impacts on you and your business, is to have a conversation with HS2. If you petition against the additional provision, you can come back to the Committee and say, ‘I could not get any sense out of these people; they are treating me unfairly. What does the Committee think?’ but solutions will, hopefully, be found before you have to come back.

391. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: I do not think that field actually touches the A413; it goes on to the approach road. Does your field run down to the A413?

392. MR FULLAGAR: The field is along the A413, but there is quite a wide margin between the road and the hedge.

393. MR BELLINGHAM: If in the worst case scenario this goes ahead and you want to carry on schooling horses in this field, would it be possible, at HS2’s expense, to provide a reasonable shelter belt, even a bund, along that bottom bit? Presumably, what you are saying is that you do not really want to be schooling horses near a haul road with heavy lorries going along it.

394. MR FULLAGAR: The heavy lorries with chalk dust will be a different thing from the light traffic that goes down the A413.

395. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): There should not be chalk dust. As the Committee has heard, there is control of dust and material from the top of the site with wheel washing. If I may pick up what Mr Bellingham has identified, in principle there are solutions of that kind, which can be discussed with the petitioner. If this goes ahead and affects his land in the way suggested, that is the sort of thing that can be done to enable that field to continue to be used.

396. CHAIR: Can the project go away and have a discussion with the petitioner and report back to the Committee in due course?

397. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Yes.

398. CHAIR: If the petitioner is not happy, he can simply put in a petition against the additional provision and he will come back with his maps and problems and we can consider the issue afresh.

399. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Certainly; we can do that.

400. CHAIR: There may be solutions which we have not thought of. We cannot design railways or businesses.

401. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): We will certainly do that. There is another map which shows the operational position. I think is 17. I can take that forward with the petitioner. The haul road obviously goes after construction; it is there just to serve the portal.

402. MR BELLINGHAM: Mr Strachan, how many vehicle movements are we talking about per day during the construction phase?

403. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): I think that at its peak there are 270 HGVs.

404. CHAIR: The peak period is about 18 months to two years, is it?

405. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): I think it is about two years.

406. MR BELLINGHAM: That is per working day, is it?

407. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Yes.

408. MR BELLINGHAM: There may be restrictions on times.

409. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): There may be restrictions imposed simply as part of the traffic management plans close to the A413.

410. MR BELLINGHAM: It occurred to me that most of Mr Fullagar's training will be taking place first thing in the morning, will it not?

411. MR FULLAGAR: It can be any time during the day. There is also the risk of putting horses in the field with the noise.

412. CHAIR: How many horses do you have?

413. MR FULLAGAR: There are six horses in the yard at the moment, but it can take up to 10.

414. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): Just to give you the information, in P8142 at the peak period it is 135 HGVs each way—I am just pointing to the arrow—so it is 270 movements in total. It is 135 up and 135 down during the peak period of activity, which is what we have shown in this. That is approximately two years, or it may be between 18 months to two years.

415. CHAIR: Do you want to make a few brief final comments? You have made your point clearly.

416. MR FULLAGAR: In addition to the use of the field, clearly there is an enormous impact on the value of the property in the general proximity of the works. Although proximity to the haul road may be near enough to get compensation it applies, so I understand, only to the railway line itself, so it will probably leave me with a loss of between £2.5 million and £4 million.

417. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): No loss is incurred unless there is a sale and where blight is being caused to a property.

418. MR FULLAGAR: Lack of value is a blight, but you said to me earlier that if you do not take enough land it is not blighted. You are saying it is not blighted, but the value goes down.

419. SIR PETER BOTTOMLEY: It is not precisely the same.

420. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): A blight notice is a specific statutory procedure, which is a different thing from blight. What I was talking about was the effect on the value of the property from construction for a temporary period. That is not a loss that is felt unless you sell the property. As we know, for that there are compensation schemes, including the need to sell scheme, which seek to deal with the principle of generalised

blight rather than the statutory blight I was talking about.

421. MR HENDRICK: What amount of land must be taken in order to qualify for statutory blight?

422. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): I am just trying to recall.

423. MS LEAN (DfT): If I may jump in, in any case under the statutory regime you look at the amount of take and whether there is material detriment to the rest of the holding. Under the discretionary scheme, which is the express purchase scheme, 25% is used as a touchstone for automatic application if the dwelling is part of the affected area.

424. MR HENDRICK: What percentage of the petitioner's land is being taken?

425. MR STRACHAN QC (DfT): As I said, we thought there was not any, but if there is some it will certainly be significantly below—

426. MR FULLAGAR: Percentage-wise, it would be less than 25%; it is more the impact of it that affects the rest of it.

427. CHAIR: Are there any final points?

428. MR FULLAGAR: If you will excuse me, Chair, I am the last petitioner. I close with perhaps an ironic thought. It has been in the media for the past couple of days that Birmingham New Street has just been reopened with a £750 million refurbishment, but HS2 does not stop there; it stops 15 to 20 minutes away outside central Birmingham. It has also been in the media that HS2 in the near term may go only to Old Oak Common rather than Euston, let alone St Pancras where HS1 is. This means the nation will build a high-speed train that no one wants and we cannot afford going from nowhere in particular to nowhere at all.

429. CHAIR: I think that story was wrong. It does go into central Birmingham next to the new station at New Street. Anyway, thank you very much for your contribution. If you have a serious discussion with HS2 about the impact on your business, we will have a report back. Thank you very much indeed. Order, order. We would be grateful if you could clear the room.