

PETITION COVER SHEET

<i>Contact details of petitioner</i>	<i>Contact details of agent</i>
Name: Chesham Town Council	Name: Jennifer Louise Caprio
Address: Town Hall, Chesham, Buckinghamshire. FAO Town Clerk.	Address: Buckinghamshire County Council, Legal Services. County Hall , Aylesbury Buckinghamshire
Post code: HP5 1DS	Post code: HP20 1UA
Daytime tel: 01494 774842	Daytime tel: 01296 383638
Mobile:	Mobile: 07787 136652
Email: Townclerk@chesham.gov.uk	Email: jcaprio@buckscc.gov.uk

I prefer to be contacted (a) directly [] (b) via my agent [] (please tick)

I understand:

1. that a copy of this petition, including any contact details which I have included but without my signature, will be placed on the parliamentary website and a hard copy will be made available to anyone who asks for it.
2. that a copy of this petition together with this sheet will be:
 - a. kept in the Private Bill Office and subsequently kept as a record of Parliament in the House of Lords Record Office (where it can be accessed by the public under the Freedom of Information Act 2000);
 - b. will be made available to the Parliamentary Agent responsible for the bill once my petition has been deposited in the Private Bill Office.
3. that the personal information supplied above and on the petition may be kept in a database by either or both Private Bill Offices. These databases may be used to store summaries of e-mails and/or conversations for the purpose of keeping track of procedural advice/information given to the parties or received from them. This information will only be shared between the Private Bill Offices unless prior permission has been obtained from the petitioner/agent concerned.

I agree to obey and observe the orders and practice of the House of Commons and any rules prescribed by the Speaker in relation to the proceedings on this petition.

Signature of Petitioner/ Agent:.....

IN PARLIAMENT

HOUSE OF COMMONS

SESSION 2013-14

HIGH SPEED RAIL (LONDON - WEST MIDLANDS) BILL

Against - on Merits - Praying to be heard by Counsel, &c.

To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in

Parliament assembled.

THE HUMBLE PETITION of Chesham Town Council

SHEWETH as follows:-

1. A Bill (hereinafter referred to as "the Bill") has been introduced and is now pending in your honourable House intituled "A bill to make provision for a railway between Euston in London and a junction with the West Coast Main Line at Handsacre in Staffordshire, with a spur from Old Oak Common in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham to a junction with the Channel Tunnel Rail Link at York Way in the London Borough of Islington and a spur from Water Orton in Warwickshire to Curzon Street in Birmingham; and for connected purposes."
2. The Bill is presented by Mr Secretary McLoughlin (supported by The Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, Secretary Theresa May, Secretary Vince Cable, Secretary Iain Duncan Smith, Secretary Eric Pickles, Secretary Owen Paterson, Secretary Edward Davey, Mr Robert Goodwill).
3. Clauses 1 to 36 set out the Bill's objectives in relation to the construction and operation of the railway mentioned in paragraph 1 above (also "HS2").
4. Clauses 1 to 3 of the Bill, along with Schedules 1 to 4, authorise and detail the works to be done in relation to the construction and the operation of the railway, including the associated stopping up and construction of highways. The works themselves are detailed in Schedule 1 and referred to as the "Scheduled Works". Clause 2 authorises other works in connection with the Scheduled Works or otherwise for the purposes of the railway, and Schedule 2 makes further provision for works, including interference with rivers.
5. Clauses 4 to 18 of the Bill, along with Schedules 5 to 15, deal with compulsory acquisition of land, the extinction and exclusion of rights over land and the temporary possession and use of land. Clauses 19 to 36, along with Schedules 16 to 26, provide for deemed planning permission and deregulation, including deregulation in relation to [listed buildings, water and noise and the use of lorries].

6. Clauses 37 to 42 of the Bill deal with the regulatory regime for the railway. Clauses 43 to 65 of the Bill set out a number of miscellaneous and general provisions, including provision for the appointment of a nominated undertaker (“the Nominated Undertaker”) to exercise the powers under the Bill, transfer schemes, provisions relating to statutory undertakers and the Crown, provision about the compulsory acquisition of land for regeneration, and provision for reinstatement works. Provision is also made regarding the application of Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations.

Your Petitioner

7. Your Petitioner is Chesham Town Council, representing the people of Chesham. Chesham is the largest town in the Chilterns District with a population of 21,000.
8. The town is surrounded on all sides by the Chilterns Hills. Its economy is sustained by shoppers from the surrounding villages, and by visitors to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (“the AONB”). Chesham is the terminus for Metropolitan line services from London, and its station is within easy walking distance of the AONB. It is an accredited “Walkers are Welcome” town, to maximise the benefits of its fortunate situation. The historic buildings of Chesham’s ‘Old Town’ are only 2.5 miles from the Chilterns Tunnel portal at Mantles Wood presently proposed by the Bill.
9. Chesham was represented at all Community Forum meetings in Community Form Areas 9 and 10. Chesham Town Council, along with The Chesham Society, has met the Bill Promoter, HS2 Ltd, to discuss your Petitioner’s concerns regarding the impact of the railway. The information provided by the Promoter, including in the Environmental Statement (“the ES”) has not provided reassurance, and your Petitioner explains certain of its concerns regarding the ES below.
10. The rights and interests of your Petitioner’s community are injuriously affected by the Bill, to which your Petitioner objects for reasons, amongst others, set out below.

Your Petitioner’s concerns and objections to the Bill and your Petitioner’s requests for mitigation

11. Your Petitioner’s community will suffer a range of adverse impacts, beginning in earnest with the many years spent constructing the railway and continuing with its operation.
12. Particular objection is taken to the works to be undertaken within the AONB to the west of Chesham, and in particular to **works 2.1 and 2.12 to 2.27** (listed in Schedule 1 of the Bill) in the parishes of Amersham, Little Missenden, Great Missenden, Chartridge and The Lee and to the clauses of the Bill which would authorise these works. The works complained of are between 2 and 10 miles from the town, in open countryside between Chesham and the A413 – the principal road connecting the Chilterns with Aylesbury Vale and the M25/M40 junction near Gerrards Cross.

13. While the impact of construction will eventually cease, the construction effects cannot be dismissed as temporary due to the extended duration of the works. Taken together, those works will have a devastating effect on the communities of the AONB. Traffic congestion, noise pollution, dust and property blight will affect residents trapped in unsalable homes. The economy of the AONB and of Chesham in particular will suffer from the absence of visitors, its enforced separation from a number of local communities and the general paralysis of the AONB by the works. Traffic congestion will also affect the response times of the emergency services, so threatening the wellbeing of your Petitioner's community, and of visitors to the area.
14. Once operational, your Petitioner considers that the proposed railway will cause great harm to the AONB to the northwest of Chesham, due to noise pollution, visual impact and irreversible degradation of the natural environment. As a consequence, the area's attraction to visitors and value as a recreational resource will be lost. Tourism-related activities and the tourist economy will suffer and your Petitioner's community will be deprived of the natural beauty that presently surrounds it.
15. Your Petitioner understands that the value of the land take required to build HS2 in the Chilterns can be quantified as in the order of £350million to £500million¹. The loss sustained by the AONB as a result of the construction of HS2 through it will be enormous, but does not figure in the BCR assessments made by HS2 Ltd
16. The adverse impacts affecting your Petitioner's community that will flow from the Bill as presently drafted are explained in greater detail below, in chronological order (beginning with the construction phase). First, this Petition explains the mitigation sought.

Mitigation sought

17. Your Petitioner humbly requests that your honourable House alters the Bill and/or requires the Promoter to give undertakings to mitigate the worst impacts of the railway and associated works as follows (listed in descending order of effectiveness):
 1. An extension of the currently proposed fully bored Chilterns Tunnel throughout the AONB to a point outside it, such as that proposed by Chiltern District Council and referred to as "the Green Route".
 2. Should your honourable House decline to alter the Bill to require the Green Route or a similar tunnel throughout the AONB, then an extension of the currently proposed fully bored Chilterns Tunnel by 4km to Leather Lane, such as that proposed by the Residents Environmental Protection Association ("REPA") and referred to as "the REPA Option".

¹ "High Speed Rail in the Chilterns - Little Missenden to Wendover", sections 13.2, 14
Report by Chiltern Conservation Board and Peter Brett Associates, Nov 2013

3. Should your honourable House decline to alter the Bill to require either the Green Route or the REPA option, then we respectfully request a range of measures to reduce the adverse effects of the construction and operation of the railway as it passes through the AONB. Your Petitioner doubts that these measures would provide anything approaching an effective solution, even given an unlimited budget. They are referred to as “the Fallback Option”.

18. **The Green Route.** Nearly all the adverse effects described below would be avoided by an extension of the Chilterns fully bored tunnel to traverse the entire AONB and emerge to the north of Wendover. Such a tunnel was initially proposed by the Chiltern Ridges Action Group (“the CRAG scheme”), and the ES concedes that the CRAG scheme is practical and environmentally superior (see ES Vol.2 CFA9, pp.39-41). The ES rejects the CRAG scheme on grounds of costs, but in the absence of any quantification of the relative costs, no meaningful discussions of the costs and benefits of that scheme have been conducted.
19. The concept of an extension of the fully bored tunnel throughout the AONB was later developed by Peter Brett Associates for Chiltern District Council, using a different horizontal alignment to further improve the route. Your Petitioner notes that the ES does not rule out the possibility of contamination to their water supply as a result of tunnelling in the Chilterns, and this is a source of great concern. Your Petitioner draws the attention of your honourable House to the slight realignment to the route proposed by the Green Route, which would avoid the aquifer under the Lower Misbourne Valley and so reduce the risk to the water supply which serves this area and much of northwest London.
20. **The REPA Option.** Even the most cursory inspection of the Promoter’s current proposals shows that the decision to end the Chilterns Tunnel at Mantles Wood is indefensible. Your Petitioner has been unable to find a single published document to justify the decision. It is clear that the magnitude of the construction works planned between Mantles Wood and Leather Lane (two cuttings, bridges and the South Heath cut and cover ‘green’ tunnel) will not cost less than the incremental cost of extending the bored tunnel by 4km. The benefits of extending the fully bored tunnel from Mantles Wood to Leather Lane include:
 - Greatly reduced impact on the road network in the AONB, since the Chesham-Missenden road (the B485) will not be severed, reducing the dislocation of your Petitioner’s community.
 - Vastly improved mitigation for South Heath, a community which is acknowledged to suffer severe adverse impacts under the HS2 proposals.
 - Significant environmental benefits; 3 of the 4 threatened Ancient Woodlands (in the AONB) are preserved, and the reduction in spoil generated removes the need for the proposed Hunts Green Waste Dump (termed a “sustainable placement” area by the ES) just west of Leather Lane (see ES, Vol.2, CFA10 2.3.79).

21. A variant of the REPA Option (that ended a little earlier, at Liberty Lane) was proposed by the Chesham Society in response to the first maps released by HS2 Ltd in late 2012. While acknowledged to be a superior solution in the ES (see ES Vol.2 CFA9, pp.41-42), it too was rejected on cost grounds, without any supporting evidence. However, local residents (REPA) have commissioned a report which confirmed a slight saving on basic engineering costs. This would translate to a substantial saving if the cost of mitigation and compensation was taken into consideration. However, the REPA Option does nothing to mitigate the major adverse impact of the viaducts at the northwest end of the Misbourne Valley.
22. **The Fallback Option.** This groups together various proposals to improve mitigation in the face of the current HS2 proposals. Attempts to retrofit mitigation measures to a flawed design cannot result in an acceptable solution; for example, the construction of bunds and noise barriers may reduce noise pollution but increase visual impact. Reduction in the line height may reduce visual impact (from the line itself) but would increase the impact of the spoil dump/landfill proposed at Hunts Green. Some features, such as the Wendover Dean viaduct, defy any attempt to mitigate the adverse effects. Despite these difficulties, the utter inadequacy of the current proposals leaves considerable scope for improvement, while still falling far short of what might be achieved by additional tunnelling. One option in particular (removal of spoil by rail) may lead to significant improvements.

Inadequacy of environmental assessments

23. No strategic environmental assessment of the HS2 route has been conducted, as your Petitioner believes is required by the EU Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment ("the SEA Directive"). As a result, the railway has not been compared with less damaging options which follow existing transport corridors. The results of this omission are now emerging – for example, the apparent inability of the Proposer to remove spoil from the AONB.
24. The ES published in November 2013 has proved to be quite inadequate, despite its extraordinary length and labyrinthine structure. There is an obvious lack of on-site investigation, and a disregard for local information which was offered via the Community Forum meetings. As a result, the ES is characterised by:
 - Major omissions
 - Inconsistent numerical data, particularly in relation to the Traffic assessments
 - Systematic underestimation of adverse effects, and a refusal make any quantification of these, where this might be possible.
25. The consequence is that the effects noted below has been underestimated, and the mitigation proposed is largely ineffectual. A further consequence is that your Petitioner is greatly concerned that it, in turn, may have missed impacts due to the inadequacies of the ES. Your Petitioner respectfully adopts the critique of the ES contained in the Chiltern District Council Petition against the Bill, which your Petitioner has lately seen.

Impacts from the construction phase

26. As noted earlier, the duration of the construction phase is such that the disruption and inconvenience caused to your Petitioner's community cannot be regarded as temporary. Most of the problems are related to the construction traffic which will be generated by HS2. Your Petitioner is gravely concerned that the measures proposed to mitigate the effects of construction traffic are inadequate throughout the AONB, and in the Misbourne Valley in particular. Only one major road out of Chesham (towards Berkhamstead) leads to an area which is unlikely to be affected by increased traffic congestion. Your Petitioner has identified three aspects to the problems caused by construction traffic:
1. The direct impact of construction traffic, causing congestion on construction routes, and physical damage to unsuitable or inadequate roads.
 2. Indirect effects caused by non-construction traffic seeking to avoid congestion on the construction traffic routes by using other less suitable roads. The routes chosen by displaced traffic cannot be directly controlled by the Promoter or the Nominated Undertaker.
 3. Cumulative effects of the previous items on the communities near the route, which include reduced access to the emergency services, increased journey times, reduced access to local recreational facilities, reductions in community activities and decline in local businesses.
27. Your Petitioner notes that only item 1 above was addressed in the ES, and even then in an inadequate fashion. The table below summarises the more objectionable effects which will arise from the construction process, and the mitigation your Petitioner humbly asks your honourable House to require, either by amendment to the Bill or by insisting that the Promoter give suitable undertakings, before both are then addressed further below:

Adverse effect	Proposed mitigation
Movement of HGVs along the trace (to Hunts Green), disrupting traffic on the B485 and minor roads at crossing points; associated noise, dust and pollution.	Constructing such facilities as may be necessary to remove spoil from the AONB by rail, so avoiding the creation of the spoil dump at Hunts Green.
Use of minor roads by construction traffic causing dangers and delays to the existing users, and damage to the roads, and adjoining properties	Constructing new roads to access the trace directly from the A413, and prohibiting the use of all existing minor roads in the AONB by construction traffic. ²

² This might be achieved by constructing new access roads between Deep Mill and Mantles Wood, between Great Missenden (roundabout) and the South Heath cut-and-cover ('green') tunnel North Portal, and by accessing the Smalldean viaduct compound directly from the A413 instead of via Rocky Lane

Adverse effect	Proposed mitigation
<p>Increased congestion on the A413 during peak hours; Disruption to School bus services and public transport; Restricted access to Chiltern Railways Stations (Wendover, Great Missenden, Amersham)</p>	<p>Restricting HGV movements to the period 09:30 – 15:30 throughout the AONB, and prohibiting HGV Movements along school routes for 30 minutes before and after the start and end of the school day (during term time).</p>
	<p>Operating a ‘Park and Ride’ scheme to transport construction workers along the trace, from car parks outside the AONB, and enforcing this by not providing parking for contractors on or near the construction compounds.</p>

Construction Traffic

28. Your Petitioner notes that the projected traffic on the narrower sections of the A413 will exceed 100% of road capacity during peak hours.³ 100% road capacity is defined as the situation when the hourly traffic demand exceeds the maximum sustainable hourly throughput of the road. Traffic will back up on either side of these congested sections, causing congestion on the A413 throughout the AONB, and traffic displacement onto the small number of local alternative routes. Figures to reliably calculate loading outside peak hours are not available, but very approximate averages would suggest that this may exceed 75% on the narrow sections.
29. The Promoter asserts that “there are no locations where there are existing clusters of accidents”⁴, but this is inconsistent with the regular occurrence of serious and fatal accidents on the A413, and the known dangers associated with the Chiltern Line (rail) bridge at Deep Mill. The safety risk will be increased considerably by the construction traffic generated by this project.
30. Your Petitioner’s community regularly travels through the AONB to access places of employment, shops and recreational facilities, and so will be directly impacted by traffic congestion throughout the area (and on the A413 in particular) for the duration of the construction works.
31. Some of your Petitioner’s community use the network of lanes in the AONB for recreation, and they also attract the tourists that are important for the local economy. Chesham Town Council regards these lanes as a characteristic feature of the area which should be protected in accordance with the CROW Act (2000). Many of these cross the proposed route and will be diverted or interrupted during construction.

³ As calculated according to the DfT “Design Manual for Roads and Bridges TA46/97 ; see the Chesham Society ES response - http://www.hs2amersham.org.uk/Resources/ES/Chesham/CheshamSoc_ES_2.3.pdf

⁴ ES Vol 2 CFA9 sec 12.4.19

32. Many footpaths and bridleways in the Misbourne valley will be stopped up or diverted, some permanently so. The destruction of the existing pattern of PROWs in the AONB will severely reduce its attractiveness to walkers, runners, cyclists and horse riders (four groups who received little or no consideration in the ES)
33. As the representative of an area immediately adjacent to the construction zone, your Petitioner is also concerned that traffic seeking to avoid congestion will place a further burden on the roads in this community, which are already operating at or close to capacity, and so further aggravate the impact on road users and the local economy. (The A416 between Chesham and Amersham is already designated a "Congestion Management Corridor")
34. Your Petitioner disputes the Promoter's assertion (made in the ES⁵) that air quality on Berkhamstead Road (Chesham), currently monitored for NO₂, is 'too far from the route' to be affected. Any additional traffic through the town will exacerbate the serious congestion already experienced during peak hours.

Emergency Services

35. Your Petitioner is gravely concerned that the emergency services will be unable to provide timely support to the area's families and property due to road congestion during the construction period. Ambulance response times in rural Buckinghamshire are already a concern, and your Petitioner would respectfully advise your honourable House that the A413 and A404 which carry ambulances to the local A&E department at Stoke Mandeville, would also have to carry all HS2 traffic to and from the AONB. The journey time from Chesham to Stoke Mandeville A&E is currently 25 minutes, and to (the alternative) Wexham Park A&E is 30 minutes. Further lengthening of these times will adversely affect the outcome for some patients. It is not idle to suggest that the difference could potentially be that between life and death.
36. Chesham has its own Fire Station with a "Rescue Pump" crewed by an establishment of seven (Retained Duty System) staff who respond to incidents by hurrying from their "normal" jobs in the local community. However in the case of serious conflagrations, they require assistance from Amersham (also with one engine) or High Wycombe, 25 minutes away - a response time which will inevitably be increased by traffic congestion. Again, with enormous risks to the community's health and its property.

Social, Business and Educational Impacts

37. Construction works and traffic congestion will also lead to a decline in trade, leisure and social activities in the town, firstly by creating a physical barrier between the town and communities on the other side of the proposed works, and secondly by increasing local congestion, so leading to a further reduction in visitors. Local facilities such as the Elgiva Theatre (only 27% of whose attendees in 2012 came from Chesham), the Moor Open Air Pool (25% out of town patrons) , and the Leisure Centre (on White Hill) will face an uncertain future as a result.

⁵ ES Vol 2, CFA9 sec 4.3.5

38. Your Petitioner is aware of 15 school bus services which either use or cross the A413. Disruption to these services is a particular concern, due to the harm it will cause to education in our area. 800 of 1,200 Chesham Grammar School pupils live outside the town, and teaching staff (who often reside some distance from their schools, due to the high price of properties in the towns) will also be affected. For some pupils, this disruption will continue throughout the entirety of their time in secondary education.
39. Many local bus services stop at the local hospital (Amersham) and hence the location of a Tunnel Vent Shaft on land adjacent to that hospital, and the insensitive layout of the associated construction compound, seems almost designed to maximise interruption to these services.

Additional Mitigation measures

40. Your Petitioner considers the Car Share Scheme proposed by the Promoter to be totally inadequate. Your honourable House is humbly requested to require that the Promoter/the Nominated Undertaker be required to mitigate the many remaining nuisances, and that the Code of Construction Practice be amended to strictly enforce the measures noted in paragraph 27 above.
41. Your Petitioner endorses the concerns expressed by Bucks County Council regarding the drafting of the Code of Construction Practice (BCC petition par 84-88), and in particular their observations concerning the over reliance on the qualification “where (reasonably) practical” throughout the CoCP,
42. Your Petitioner requests that HS2 Ltd provides an air ambulance with crew on standby during working hours, to ensure that medical emergencies receive a prompt response. Your honourable House is also asked to require the Promoter/Nominated Undertaker to fully prepare for industrial accidents at any of the 11 construction sites operating in the area, and to do so in a way that avoids unacceptable impact on the existing local medical and other emergency services.
43. Your Petitioner is of the opinion that the construction of HS2 will constitute a “material change of circumstance” for the purpose of establishing the rateable value of local businesses⁶. Your Petitioner humbly requests that HS2 Ltd be required to fund the employment of an official to help local businesses obtain a property revaluation and to assess the damage to the local economy (by monitoring the use of local car parks, for example).
44. Your Petitioner further humbly requests that HS2 Ltd/the Nominated Undertaker should reimburse local businesses for their lost turnover. Your Petitioner also asks that your honourable House require the Promoter/the Nominated Undertaking to provide your Petitioner with increased funding, in order to support the local amenities noted above that will suffer particularly by reason of the railway (not least the Elgiva Theatre, given the proportion of its audience that come from outside Chesham).

⁶ <http://www.voa.gov.uk/corporate/publications/changesInYourLocality.html>

Operational impacts

45. Your Petitioner has identified the following impacts which relate to the operation of the proposed railway –
1. Noise impacts, at different classes of receptor.
 2. Visual impacts, of the different proposed structures.
 3. Landscaping impacts caused by the destruction (and addition) of landscape features.
 4. Ecological impacts.
46. The cumulative effect of these impacts will be to degrade the local environment to the extent that it will no longer offer recreational opportunities to local residents, or attract visitors. Your Petitioners will suffer both from loss of amenity, and loss of economic opportunities associated with tourism.

Noise

47. The impact of **noise** will deter potential visitors and discourage regular recreational users of the AONB. Sites affected, and appropriate mitigations, are identified in the table below:

Receptor	Requested Mitigation
Hyde Heath, Hyde Lane – Tunnel Boom from Mantles Wood portal; Hyde Lane, South Heath, Potter Row – Tunnel Boom from South Heath ‘Green’ tunnel portals	Green route, REPA or (for Fallback) - ‘porous’ tunnel portals constructed to highest possible specification
South Heath – noise exposure	Green route, REPA or (Fallback) – extend the South Heath ‘Green’ tunnel to reduce noise in South Heath
Hyde Heath, Hyde Lane, Potter Row – noise exposure	Green route, REPA or (Fallback) –provide adequate noise barriers for remainder of the track
Recreational users of the AONB - Walkers, Runners, Cyclists and Equestrian	Green route,REPA (Mantles Wood-Leather Lane) or (Fallback) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ provide adequate noise barriers; ○ do not route PROWs alongside the railway ○ provide noise insulation and ‘Green’ bridges where bridleways cross the line

1. While the noise impact on South Heath and Hyde Heath is of greatest concern to their residents, these settlements naturally form hubs of the network of paths and bridleways traversing the AONB, and the destruction of their tranquillity will also impact many recreational users.
2. Your Petitioner suggests that 5m should be the minimum height for an adequate noise barrier, in order to mitigate noise from overhead equipment.
3. There is a delicate compromise to be reached between the mitigation of noise (for recreational user) and the minimisation of visual impact. We request that this be addressed by returning powers to the relevant planning authorities, i.e. by the deletion of Schedule 16 3 (7) & (10), so that the planning authority (in consultation with representative of the users) may impose conditions, on earthworks and noise screens in particular, without the agreement of the nominated undertaker, and where the works relate to the disposal of waste or spoil. The interests of the nominated undertaker are completely at variance with those of the users.
4. It is unclear whether adequate noise barriers could be installed on the Wendover & Smalldean viaducts. Given that the track bed is several 10s of metres below receptors on the ridges and sides of the valley, there appears to be little scope for effective noise mitigation, due to the inherent inadequacy of the proposed route
5. Diversions of public rights of way (“PROW”), and reinstatement of some PROW to run alongside the line will expose recreational users to unacceptable noise levels.

Visual and landscape impacts

48. The **visual and landscape impacts** associated with HS2 are identified in the table below. The cumulative effect is to completely change the character of the Misbourne valley, so removing its attractiveness to visitors and residents. The Green Route would remove the offending structures entirely. Other mitigations are listed in the table.

Feature	Impacts	Mitigation
Cut and Cover ('Green') Tunnel (at South Heath)	While providing noise mitigation for some locations, the cut and cover method effectively destroys the landscape features in its path.	Green Route; REPA Option
Cuttings - Mantles Wood to Bowood Lane	Would hide the line from view, if of sufficient depth. However, the cutting depth has been reduced on two occasions so this is no longer the case; power gantries will now be visible in several locations. Retained cuttings should be used throughout the	Green Route; REPA Fallback Option: Increase cutting depth to pre 2012 level Extend the South Heath 'green' tunnel

Feature	Impacts	Mitigation
	AONB, to minimise land take.	
Embankments – Bowood Lane to Small Dean	These features are visually extremely obtrusive.	Green Route Fallback Option: Lower horizontal alignment
Viaducts – Wendover Dean, Small Dean		
Over Bridges – Bowood Lane, Leather Lane	Are now higher, following the reduction of the cutting depth. Will totally alter the character of the Lanes	Green Route Fallback Option: Lower horizontal alignment; Retained cuttings ⁷ to reduce span of bridges
Bunds	It is doubtful that these will provide sufficient mitigation to compensate for the detrimental changes to the natural landform which they produce. They are more likely to provide a cheap method of spoil disposal	Green Route Fallback Option: Restore planning authority control over these features; see note to table 47
Noise barriers	Increased effectiveness is at the expense of increased visual impact	
Spoil Dump, Landfill or 'Sustainable Placement area' at Hunts Green	This intrusion has no place in the AONB – an area of natural beauty.	Green Route <i>and</i> excess spoil should be removed by rail – an option which was not considered in the ES.
Offset planting	It is not clear that the destruction of woodland in one location is in any way mitigated by planting rows of trees on arable land in another – particularly where this will alter the present pattern of fields and woods.	Green Route Fallback Option: Offset planting should be restricted to providing screening in the immediate vicinity of the line.
'Balancing' ponds	Ponds of this size are totally out of character in the Chiltern	Contaminated water should be collected in

⁷ In a retained cutting, the lower section has vertical concrete walls; this allows the cutting width to be reduced.

Feature	Impacts	Mitigation
	Hills.	sumps under the track, and piped away for treatment. After purification, it should be used to replenish the aquifer, as it would do in the absence of the railway.
Ancient Woodlands and Hedgerows	The total or partial destruction of four ancient woodlands, and the uprooting of hundreds of metres of hedgerows – ‘an irreplaceable resource’ (see the ES, at numerous points), is an inevitable consequence of the HS2 proposal. ‘Transplantation’ of Ancient Woodland (as suggested by the promoter) has not been successful, where attempted.	<p>Green Route</p> <p>The REPA Option also preserves Mantles Wood, Farthings Wood and Sibley's coppice.</p> <p>Fallback Option: A retained cutting would reduce landtake at Jones Wood.</p>

Ecological impacts

49. Your Petitioner’s community and visitors make extensive use of the recreational facilities afforded by the AONB, and strongly object to the adverse effects on the ecology of the AONB, in particular on the bat and owl populations, which are particularly at risk from collisions with trains. The line will form a barrier to the movement of wildlife, dividing populations and reducing their viability. This will deter visitors with an interest in our natural environment, The best mitigation for these impacts is the Green Route as requested above, although as a fallback the provision of wider ‘green bridges’ for footpaths may slightly reduce the impact on larger mammals.

Adequacy of the information available to your Petitioner

50. Your Petitioner is concerned that the Bill, the Deposited Plans and Sections and the ES are all vast documents, with inadequate cross referencing and no central index, making it almost impossible to locate every relevant item in the minimal time allowed for preparing a response. In addition to the failure of the ES to adequately assess the impacts of the proposed railway and associated works neither it nor the Bill allow the reader to understand what is proposed in sufficient detail. Your Petitioner is also concerned that HS2 Ltd has announced changes to the proposed works since the Bill was lodged with Parliament, and is still struggling to complete the environmental assessment and design (for example in Camden).

51. In light of the above, your Petitioner respectfully asks that it be entitled to raise any further matters of concern relating to the substance of the Bill and this Petition that may arise from continuing discussion, the preparation and publication of reports, any possible revisions that may be made to current proposals or any other matters relevant to our expressed concerns that may occur in due course and prior to its representation before the Select Committee appointed by your honourable House.

Conclusion

52. Your Petitioner fully supports the petitions for a fully bored tunnel that extends throughout the AONB, such as the Green Route being proposed by Chiltern District Council. Only that that will address most, if not all, of the numerous adverse impacts that your Petitioner’s community and the AONB will otherwise suffer and your Petitioner humbly requests your honourable House alter the Bill, and cause the Proposer to give undertakings, accordingly. As a partial fallback your Petitioner supports the REPA Option, and as an entirely inferior final fallback, your Petitioner requests the numerous subsidiary mitigation measures outlined above.

53. For the foregoing and connected reasons your Petitioner respectfully submits that unless the Bill is amended as proposed above or suitable undertakings given by the Promoter, in particular requiring a fully bored Chiltern Tunnel throughout the AONB such as the Green Route, the Bill, should not be allowed to pass into Law. Your Petitioner humbly requests your Honourable House to amend the Bill accordingly, at clause 1 and Schedule 1 and elsewhere, and that your Honourable House require the Promoter to give undertakings accordingly.

54. There are other clauses and provisions in the Bill which, if passed into law as they now stand will prejudicially affect your Petitioner and their community’s rights, including their rights, interests and property and for which no adequate provision is made to protect your Petitioner and their community.

YOUR PETITIONER therefore humbly prays your Honourable House that the Bill may not be allowed to pass into law as it now stands and that they may be heard by their Counsel, Agents and witnesses in support of the allegations of this Petition against so much of the Bill as affects the property, rights and interests of your Petitioner’s community and area and in support of such other clauses and provisions as may be necessary or expedient for their protection, or that such other relief may be given to your Petitioner in the premises as your Honourable House shall deem meet.

AND your Petitioner will ever pray, &c.

.....

JENNIFER LOUISE CAPRIO

Agent for Chesham Town Council.

IN PARLIAMENT
HOUSE OF COMMONS
SESSION 2013-14

HIGH SPEED RAIL
(LONDON-WEST MIDLANDS)
BILL

PETITION OF Chesham Town Council

Against the Bill – On Merits – By Counsel, &c.

Jennifer Caprio
Buckinghamshire County Council
Legal Services
Aylesbury
County Hall
Buckinghamshire HP20 1UA
01296 383638
07787 136652