

Hybrid Bill Petition

House of Commons

Session []

High Speed Rail (Crewe - Manchester) Bill

Do not include any images or graphics in your petition. There will be an opportunity to present these later if you give evidence to the committee.

Your bill petition does not need to be signed.

Expand the size of the text boxes as you need.

1. Petitioner information

In the box below, give the name and address of each individual, business or organisation(s) submitting the petition.

Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

Tameside One
PO BOX 317
Ashton under Lyne
OL6 0GS

In the box below, give a description of the petitioners. For example, “we are the owners/tenants of the addresses above”; “my company has offices at the address above”; “our organisation represents the interests of...”; “we are the parish council of...”.

1 Introduction Section Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

- 1.1.0 The Petitioner is Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council (“TMBC”), the local authority of the Metropolitan Borough of Tameside and one of ten metropolitan district councils in Greater Manchester.
- 1.1.1 TMBC is responsible for providing the majority of local government services for the 227,000 residents of Tameside and the c6,200 businesses within the Borough.
- 1.1.2 TMBC has a duty to promote the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area.
- 1.1.3 The Petitioner and its interests are injuriously affected by the Bill, to which the Petitioner objects for the reasons amongst others, hereinafter appearing.

2. Objections to the Bill

2 Introduction

- 2.1.0 TMBC does not object to the principle of the Bill and is supportive of the proposals to construct a new high speed railway between Crewe and Manchester (the “Proposed Scheme”). It believes that the Proposed Scheme, if properly designed and efficiently implemented, will help to address the challenges facing the UK and provide improved rail capacity and connectivity with Greater Manchester which will offer a catalyst for economic growth and regeneration in both Tameside and the wider city region.
- 2.1.1 However, TMBC has major concerns relating to the specific Bill proposals for the full closure of the Ashton Metrolink Line for a period of approximately two years, with a replacement bus service to be provided. TMBC considers that the inadequacy of this proposal and mitigation with replacement bus services will present an unacceptable level of disruption and will have a significant negative impact on the ability to deliver growth, investment and levelling up in Tameside. On this basis, TMBC is petitioning in our capacity as the local authority for Tameside as well as in relation to the impacts on the Borough.
- 2.1.2 TMBC is therefore unable to fully support the Bill in its current form and objects to the Bill for the reasons, stated in this petition.
- 2.1.3 TMBC supports the petitions of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), Manchester City Council, Trafford Council, and Manchester Airport Group.
- 2.1.4 TMBC remains hopeful that its concerns will be met by agreement with the Promoter but is concerned that no binding commitments have yet been agreed with the Promoter to address TMBC’s concerns. Despite regular requests from TMBC’s partners GMCA and TfGM, many of the details that are needed to inform such an agreement have not yet been supplied by the Promoter.
- 2.1.5 TMBC has detailed the specific issues with the proposals as set out in the Bill as deposited in the petition below. These issues can be summarised as follows:

2.2 Lack of alignment with National and Local Policy

- 2.2.0 It is TMBC’s view that there is a misalignment between national and local strategies which Government and Greater Manchester (incorporating TMBC), as the first devolved city-region outside of London, have developed together over the last decade.
- 2.2.1 HS2 is the most significant piece of infrastructure to be built in Greater Manchester in over a century and is vital for the continued economic and social development of the city-region, including Tameside, for the next. While the Bill contains several points of agreement, the specific proposals to mitigate against the severance of the Ashton Metrolink Line during HS2 construction is misaligned with not only developed local policy aims, but also key, long-term national strategic ambitions. These policies include the National Industrial Strategy, the Greater Manchester Strategy, the emerging GM ‘Places for Everyone’, GM Local Industrial

Strategy, GM Transport Strategy 2040 and supporting sub-strategies, Tameside Inclusive Growth Strategy (2021-26), and Tameside Corporate Plan 2019.

- 2.2.2 Levelling-up the country is the long-term mission for the UK, ensuring regional growth and increased prosperity for all, within a clean Net Zero carbon economy. These national strategies will, if given the opportunity to reach full potential, produce significant and lasting outcomes for Tameside, Greater Manchester and the North. This is reflected in the government's statement that "Meeting these missions will require a country-wide effort, with the UK Government working with all tiers of government, including the devolved administrations, civil society and the private sector". Tameside and Greater Manchester are willing and able to take on this challenge, as evidenced in our work developing the HS2 Growth Strategy, 2040 Transport Strategy, and Zero Carbon targets, to ensure that the full benefits of HS2 and NPR are fully realised for everyone.
- 2.2.3 TMBC does not agree that HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) can be delivered, with optimal outcomes for Tameside and Greater Manchester, unless the considerations of this petition are met. The proposals fail to meet HS2's core objective, as set out in the update of the Strategic Outline Business Case, to "Support development and regeneration across the North-West through the alignment to and support of local authority growth strategies, enabling the development and transformation of key sites at Manchester Piccadilly and Manchester Airport". In consequence, the full closure of the Ashton Metrolink Line for a period of approximately two years, with a replacement bus service proposals actively frustrate the ability to deliver the local growth strategies and maximise the economic growth, and cannot fulfil the agreed aims set out within the HS2 Growth Strategy or Strategic Outline Business Case.

2.3 Failure to carry out meaningful engagement

- 2.3.0 The Promoter has failed to carry out meaningful engagement with key strategic partners, including TMBC, GMCA and TfGM. A number of issues raised that impact on TMBC have been outstanding for a considerable period. Your petitioner believes these issues are clearly understood by the Promoter and have been well documented through the years, for example, in responses to the recent response to the Environmental Statement Consultation.
- 2.3.1 TMBC has supported its partners, GMCA and TfGM, in continuing to raise issues and seek resolution over multiple years as part of the ongoing technical engagement and formal engagement via Steering Groups and Joint Boards. Despite frequent requests for a more collaborative approach and meaningful engagement to resolve issues, the Promoter has still failed to address TMBC's key issues, despite having ample opportunity to do so. This has left organisations such as TMBC, TfGM, and GMCA with having to petition and potentially appear in Select Committee with associated cost and resource implications and potential waste of public spending.

- 2.3.2 This concern is further strengthened by the feedback on HS2 Phase 1 and 2a, in particular the statements made by numerous MPs regarding the lack of meaningful engagement and collaboration during the second reading of the Bill.

Request:

- 2.3.3 TMBC requests the Promoter be required to enter into an undertaking to establish a more robust and co-ordinated approach to collaboration with TMBC and its partners, GMCA and TfGM, this should include agreeing the Stakeholder Engagement and Communications plan for the implementation of the Bill powers, in particular, where there are impacts on the highway and public transport network. This should be consistent with the structures requested by our partners, namely GMCA and TfGM.

3 Construction Impacts on Metrolink at Piccadilly

- 3.1.0 TMBC has significant concerns that the Promoter has failed to adequately consider and address the implications of construction of the railway on the existing Metrolink operations. This includes adequately assessing and mitigating both planned and unplanned impacts. Therefore the current mitigation measures are inadequate and will lead to significant and unnecessary increased disruption to Metrolink operations and customers.

Enabling Works – Construction of a new depot

- 3.1.1 The Proposed Scheme includes the full closure of the Metrolink Ashton Line for a period of circa 2 years, potentially longer, with a replacement bus service provided along the entirety of the line. TMBC strongly objects to this proposal. A replacement bus service for the entirety of the line for this extended time period is totally inadequate mitigation and will bring extensive additional disruption to Metrolink customers and Metrolink operations. This will also bring extensive disruption in terms of economic impacts to Tameside, as well as encourage modal shift back to private vehicles bringing increased congestion. The Promoters proposal is therefore in direct contradiction to the levelling up agenda and Zero Carbon targets.
- 3.1.2 TMBC believes that the Promoter has failed to properly assess the impacts of their proposals and take forward appropriate mitigation measures. The Promoter has also failed to provide adequate information to demonstrate that a bus replacement service for the full line for this extended duration is a practical and realistic proposition, or how the commitments in the Environmental Statement in terms of capacity and journey times will be achieved and has not set out the infrastructure that will be necessary – including highway modifications and customer facilities.
- 3.1.3 A very significant number of buses would be needed to deliver a Metrolink ‘like’ capacity and service frequency. This will significantly increase traffic levels in an already congested road network and will result in increased emissions contrary to the Government’s own Transport Decarbonisation Plan. The inclusion of any bus priority measures to maintain Metrolink ‘like’ journey times will further significantly increase congestion and transport emissions. The

Promoter's proposals are likely to cause a modal shift from public transport to private car, further exacerbating congestion and transport emissions.

- 3.1.4 The Promoter's proposed bus replacement service from Ashton-under-Lyne to Piccadilly Gardens would miss out Piccadilly railway station and deliver a significantly lower quality service for passengers in terms of ride quality, reliability, journey and interchange time.
- 3.1.5 The Promoter has also failed to assess the impacts of mothballing and then re-commissioning the Metrolink Ashton Line. This would be a significant and costly undertaking to decommission the line: powering down electrically charged assets, securing infrastructure from damage, theft and vandalism. This would also have significant impacts on operations and staff. The recommissioning of the line would also be a significant undertaking. Patronage would take some time to recover and there would be longer term reputational impact on the public perception of the Metrolink service.
- 3.1.6 TMBC is also significantly concerned that the overall duration of the closure may be significantly longer than the anticipated 2 years due to the dependency on complex works at Piccadilly, HS2 station construction itself and subsequent testing and commissioning will inevitably extend the duration of disruption over many year
- 3.1.7 The loss of a high quality tram system will have widespread effects in terms of access to employment opportunities, education and leisure and TMBC is concerned that this will impact investment decisions in, and the economic resilience of Tameside; which includes areas that suffer high social deprivation. This would be in direct conflict with the Government's Levelling Up agenda.
- 3.1.8 TMBC strongly argues that the costs associated with the operation of a bus replacement service and the mothballing of the Metrolink Ashton line is a misuse of public funds for temporary measures. A better use of public funds would be on an investment delivering long term benefits. It has not been possible to undertake any robust assessment of the cost of these measures compared to the cost of the Ashton Moss Depot due to a lack of information provided by the Promotor.
- 3.1.9 TMBC has set out its clear requirements to mitigate the impacts on the Ashton Line that would also deliver a longer-term legacy and therefore represent an investment instead of sunk costs. This includes the provision of a depot facility at Ashton Moss combined with a cross over and bus turning facilities at New Islington. This will enable a tram shuttle service to operate along the majority of the line between Ashton and New Islington, with a much shorter replacement bus service (1.9 km as opposed to the 11.2 km proposed by the Promoter) for those customers who chose or are unable to walk the short distance into the city centre.
- 3.1.10 TMBC's proposal offers a genuine proposition to mitigate the impacts of construction. The proposals for a depot facility also support the ongoing expansion of the Metrolink network by providing facilities to stable and maintain vehicles as well as a connection to the heavy rail network to allow for future Tram-Train operation consistent with TfGM's Transport 2040 Strategy.

Request:

- 3.1.11 TMBC requests that the Promoter seek any necessary amendments to the Bill and supporting documents for the construction of a new depot and supporting infrastructure at Ashton Moss and the provision of ancillary works including a crossover and bus facilities to enable the Ashton line to remain open throughout the construction of the Proposed Scheme.

Socio-Economics

- 3.1.12 TMBC has significant concerns regarding the socio-economic impact of the scheme in relation to the impact of the two year closure of Ashton Metrolink Line, the harm to customers, and impact on economic growth and investment.
- 3.1.13 In the Index of Multiple Deprivations 2019, Tameside is ranked as the 28th most deprived of 317 Local Authority districts in England and the 5th most deprived in Greater Manchester.
- 3.1.14 TMBC and GMCA have identified the Ashton Mayoral Development Zone, comprising St Petersfield, Ashton Moss and Ashton Town Centre, as a priority areas to deliver high innovation growth and implement the objectives of the Tameside Inclusive Growth Strategy 2021-26.
- 3.1.15 This unique cluster of opportunity has been the focus of activity over a number of years and has secured £19.8m from the Levelling Up Fund that will contribute to the regeneration of Ashton Town Centre. The town centre has undergone improvements in recent years, with TMBC's ambition evident through the significant investment of c£60m under the Vision Tameside programme that has delivered the new Ashton Interchange, enhanced digital connectivity, learning facilities, TMBC's Head Office and public realm. Other activity includes the development of the St Petersfield site and refurbishment of Ashton Old Baths to enhance Ashton's digital sector and commercial office offer as well as improvements to Ashton Market Hall.
- 3.1.16 There are further opportunities for a mixed use business led growth, particularly in the digital and creative sectors, being brought forward at St Petersfield and the draft GM Places for Everyone joint development strategy proposes to allocate a major employment site at Ashton Moss. This significant scale of employment and residential growth will accelerate the economic growth and competitiveness of the area.
- 3.1.17 TMBC considers that an effective transport infrastructure and connectivity is of critical importance to ensuring that these opportunities regenerate the town centre, realise business growth and deliver new homes and attract investment.

Request:

- 3.1.18 TMBC requests that the Promoter should be required to give an undertaking to:
- 3.1.19 provide financial compensation for the loss of any part of business rate income within TMBC where the development of the Proposed Scheme has been demonstrated to cause businesses to fail or had a significant impact on their income.
- 3.1.20
- 3.1.21 work with TMBC, GMCA, and TfGM to ensure the full impacts of the severance of the Ashton Metrolink Line are properly assessed and mitigated appropriately.
- 3.1.22

If the Promoter refuses to bring forward these amendments, they should be required to enter into an undertaking to agree the specification for the replacement bus service and its implementation with TfGM, including associated operational management plan, to ensure that it provides an equivalent service to the tram, in terms of capacity, frequency, journey times, connectivity, customer experience and facilities, is carbon neutral at the point of service and supports economic growth, as opposed to detracting from it. This will need to include bringing forward any amendments to the Bill to deliver highways works necessary to achieve the equivalent capacity and journey times, infrastructure requirements such as customer facilities, and operational facilities including any expansion required to bus stations and stabling facilities required to deliver the equivalent of the tram service. The Promoter will also need to agree measures to mitigate the wider impacts on tram operations as a result of the closure.

Tameside Digital Infrastructure Project

- 3.1.23 TMBC currently has agreements in place with TfGM for the retention of fibre optic cables within its trackside ducting from Ashton-under-Lyne to Pollard Street in Manchester allowing the sharing of assets between TMBC and its public and private sector partners in the Tameside Digital Infrastructure Co-operative (“TDIC”).

Request:

- 3.1.24 TMBC request that the Promoter be required to give an undertaking to TMBC that it will protect and retain the ducting being the subject of the rights in favour of the TDIC during the construction, operation and maintenance of the Manchester Tram works and any proposed amendments to the ducting will only be carried out with the express agreement of TMBC and TfGM.

What do you want to be done in response?

In the box below, tell us what you think should be done in response to your objections. You do not have to complete this box if you do not want to.

The committee cannot reject the Bill outright or propose amendments which conflict with the principle of the Bill. But it can require changes to the Government's plans in response to petitioners' concerns, which can take the form of amendments to the Bill or commitments by HS2 Ltd.

You can include this information in your response to section two 'Objections to the Bill' if you prefer. Please number each paragraph.

The Petitioner seeks binding commitments from the Promoter and/or amendments to the Bill and supporting documents as necessary for the construction of a new depot at Ashton Moss and the provision of ancillary works including a crossover and bus facilities to enable the Ashton line to remain open throughout the construction of the Proposed Scheme.

The Petitioner also requests that the Select Committee require the Promoter to give the undertakings referred to above, in particular those relating to mitigation measures, and that it will protect and retain the ducting being the subject of the rights in favour of the TDIC during the construction, operation and maintenance of the Manchester Tram works and any proposed amendments to the ducting will only be carried out with the express agreement of your Petitioner and TfGM.

Next steps

Once you have completed your petition template please save it and go to our website to submit it during the petitioning period.