

MINUTES OF ORAL EVIDENCE

taken before the

HIGH SPEED RAIL BILL COMMITTEE

on the

HIGH SPEED RAIL (WEST MIDLANDS – CREWE) BILL

Monday 21 May 2018 (Evening)

In Committee Room 5

PRESENT:

James Duddridge (Chair)

Sandy Martin

Mrs Sheryll Murray

Martin Whitfield

Bill Wiggin

IN ATTENDANCE:

Timothy Mould QC, Lead Counsel, Department for Transport

WITNESSES:

Mark Cooper (Woore Parish Council/Woore Primary and Nursery School)

Andrew Morris (Woore Parish Council)

Janet Roberts (Woore Primary and Nursery School)

IN PUBLIC SESSION

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(At 7.00 p.m.)

Woore Parish Council/Woore Primary and Nursery School

1. THE CHAIR: I am going to be prescriptive on timing. Mr Mould, I will call you at 7.33 in half an hour's time. Mr Cooper, you can use the time as you choose but if we're not moving things on, I'll ask to call witnesses earlier.
2. MR COOPER: I think we're unlikely to take more than that, you'll be pleased to know.
3. THE CHAIR: Fantastic. Thank you very much. And thank you to all those that are advising you well. Over to you, sir.
4. MR COOPER: Before we go to what we want in terms of options for the traffic to go elsewhere and possible mitigation measures within the village, if it was going down our route – by mitigation I mean road improvements etc. – can we just hear from our other two witnesses? First would be Mr Morris, of the village shop. It's called the Woore Country Store, and it's the village shop.
5. THE CHAIR: Yes, okay, bring him on.
6. MR COOPER: Right. And then Mrs Roberts will deal with some mitigation measures which could possibly – she will say what the problems are – but there are some mitigation measures around the school that might help.
7. THE CHAIR: Yes. That would be lovely. Thank you.
8. MR COOPER: Alright. So, could Mr Morris, are you there? Right, fire away.

Submissions by Mr Morris

9. MR MORRIS: Good evening, Chair. Evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name's Andy Morris. And as said, I'm the owner of Woore Country Store Ltd, a vibrant village shop and post office in the square, village of Woore.
10. Very briefly, I've attended here today as a witness for the parish council on three grounds. Firstly, I'm currently an outpatient at Royal Stoke Severe Asthma Clinic, where I've been under their care for some six years. When work commences and the

construction traffic begins and travelling through the village, I'm genuinely concerned that my health, especially my breathing will deteriorate following exposure to diesel fumes and fine particle pollution.

11. The reason for my concern is that, as you can see from the photograph in front of you, the shop is situated on a staggered junction, as you know, where the A51 and 525 intersects. And you'll appreciate that the proximity of the premises – where the side of the shop runs along the A525 – the proximity of the premises to the proposed route of the HGV construction traffic. I'll basically be breathing in diesel exhaust from a large number of heavy goods vehicles over a sustained period of time. A state of affairs exacerbated by the continuous stop/starting of HGV engines at the junction that will make the emissions even worse.

12. Now, I haven't received any official statistics regarding air quality to no avail. I've tried – but to no avail. Suffice to say that air quality will be poor here. And as I said, I fear that over a period of time my breathing will struggle to cope with such emissions. And the consequence of that – simply because I am a severe asthmatic – could be quite serious.

13. My second grounds, my second reasons why I'm here today is I do have serious concerns as regards the business financial viability. The shop and the post office is a well-supported business with a mix of trade from local community and passing trade. My overriding concerns is problems are caused by how levels of traffic and ensuing severe congestion, particularly around this junction. As you can even see from this photograph, there are cars parked alongside here – one mail van, because we're a post office. That could cause problems here.

14. The volume of traffic – both HS2 and local – the nearby A51 pinch points – you might have seen this on the video – one north of us near Bridgemere bank, one just down the road from us, just to the south of the Falcon Inn. Incidentally, I don't know if you are aware but I got hit – and my daughter goes to the Woore Primary School – and after dropping her off, I walked up the road, the Falcon side, and there's a pinch point along those hedgerows where the road is narrow – two vehicles – two large vehicles struggle to pass each other. And I got hit and thrown to the floor by a passing wing-mirror of a van. Unfortunately, I didn't get his registration plate. I was too busy

picking myself off the floor. But I hurt my shoulder. It was injured and suffered a frozen shoulder as a consequence.

15. But the level of traffic – the pinch points in the village – together with the potential gridlock at this junction will result for my business in customer accessibility being severely restricted.

16. There is a possibility – just up the road – there's one car park which was referred to earlier. Perhaps they may be able to use that. But at the moment it's looking like gridlock there. There are proposed temporary modifications at the staggered junction to street furniture. Now, I've tried to ascertain the nature of the meaning of 'street furniture' but to no avail. I get the impression it may well refer to this street calming pavement. But if it bites into the car park itself, then once again customer accessibility would be very severely hampered again.

17. MR WHITFIELD: Sorry, Mr Morris?

18. MR MORRIS: Yes.

19. MR WHITFIELD: The photograph of the car park that we see in front of your shop, that's your car park?

20. MR MORRIS: No. That's Shropshire Council's. That belongs to the council.

21. MR WHITFIELD: Yes. And is the majority of your clientele – do they walk to your shop; do they drive to your shop?

22. MR MORRIS: No. In the recent weeks I've tried to do some surveys of the type of business and the customer base. It's worked out 65% are from either Woore or the surrounding villages. 35% passing trade. Of that 65% local custom, around about 40% were in a car. Obviously, the local residents use the roads. And I've spoken to some of them. They're concerned about their safety.

23. MR WHITFIELD: Yes. And is that the only entrance to this car park, which is right on the junction effectively?

24. MR MORRIS: There's this one and there's one on the A51. Have we got a photograph of –

25. THE CHAIR: While you're looking at that, Sheryll has another question.
26. MRS MURRAY: It's not related to this actually, Chairman. It's related to the first one but I didn't want to interrupt at the time. You mentioned air quality? Have your local council carried out any or identified your area to carry out any tests or readings?
27. MR MORRIS: I've tried to find out from HS2, from the council and to no avail. I don't know. I don't know of any results there.
28. MRS MURRAY: Thank you.
29. MR COOPER: I think it might help if we look at photo A103(4), which shows in the foreground the other exit – the entrance and exit.
30. MR WHITFIELD: Ah, right, yes.
31. MR MORRIS: That's it. That's the one. Yes.
32. MR COOPER: You can see some car parking spaces in a sort of layby. They're all set back. All the works around the staggered junction were carried out by Shropshire Council for safety reasons back in the late 1990s because people were shooting through and there wasn't an adequate pavement. And our concern basically is that – we're not clear what their proposals are – HS2's – but it seems to remove the safety measures – the pavements. We think it likely – but we can't say – the parking spaces that you saw on the photograph that's currently on display would have to go. The parking area – it's not spaces – because – I can't see how lorries can go both ways past parked vehicles. So, I think it likely that they would disappear. It's possible, again I don't know, that the spaces that you see on A103(4) might disappear.
33. MR WHITFIELD: Thank you.
34. MR MORRIS: They're local residents as well along the side of the shop. There are terraced houses and the local residents use there for parking as well. So, anyway, I feel as if I'm faced with a very real prospect after talking to customers in the post office and in the shop that when the construction works commence they will quite simply choose to stay away, especially in the early times when there is such heavy construction

traffic coming through the village.

35. MR COOPER: Could I ask Mr Morris to explain about the old folk and your banking facilities?

36. MR MORRIS: I was just going to refer to that.

37. MR COOPER: Sorry about that. Absolutely.

38. MR MORRIS: The one concern is – apart from the financial viability – is that the post office is very heavily relied on. We've just recently, well a couple of years ago, transformed into what they call a 'local post office'. And so, the post office is available to customers at the same time as the shop – and that being 6.30 in the morning through to 7.30 at night Monday to Friday, 7.30 to 7.30 Saturday and 8.00 to 6.00 on a Sunday. And it is relied upon especially in view of the fact that in the nearby towns banks are closing and the branches are closing. And it's been very well used, especially from the banking facility point of view. The nearest bank I suppose is a return journey of about 12 miles. And there's very little local transport as regards buses. So, the elderly do rely on us and the last thing they need is the loss of their local shop and post office.

39. THE CHAIR: Thank you, sir. Are we going to hear from the school now? Would that be convenient?

40. MR COOPER: Absolutely.

41. MR MORRIS: No, I've finished. There's only one thing –

42. THE CHAIR: Thank you very much.

43. MR MORRIS: – and that's damage to my business and damage, physical, from vehicular vibration.

44. MRS MURRAY: Thank you.

45. THE CHAIR: Whilst the segues are getting ready, I'm looking forward to hearing about whether there's – I'm confused as to why there aren't more barriers to protect the children going along. In my local area, there's barriers outside all schools notwithstanding the additional traffic that may be provided by HS2. I'm personally

already quite sympathetic.

Submissions by Mrs Roberts

46. MRS ROBERTS: Just as a basic background, just to show where I'm coming from, I was an ADHD specialist nurse for 15 years, which included a lot of work with special needs children in schools. I retired nearly three years ago and have been volunteering at the school since. So, I've had some input with the school.

47. The school's concern is a lot of what the council petition is about. Everyone involved with the school is very concerned about the safety of the children travelling to and from the school should the current proposals for HS2 construction traffic travelling through the parish go ahead.

48. The school has a small car park, which is only adequate for staff and visitors and parents are not allowed to park on the school car park because of this. And as you have seen – can we go to document A94(3)? Right. On your right hand side of this picture is the car park where most of the parents park. There has been parking along the road. There's a little bit of pavement where they can park on opposite the school and there's a side road opposite the school. But the residents have complained about this and so parents are not to park on there.

49. I wouldn't want to walk down that bit of pavement with a young child, a child who has poor concentration, a toddler. I wouldn't want to be walking with them in front of me or behind me. There is not room on that pavement to walk two abreast. I would want to have the child on my right hand side – or whichever way you're going obviously – to protect them from the traffic. You can't do it there.

50. THE CHAIR: Sheryll?

51. MRS MURRAY: Presumably mothers who've got one school age child and one in a pushchair will find it difficult, as well?

52. MRS ROBERTS: Well, yes, absolutely. And – I can't remember exactly what you've got there – but it is Woore Primary and Nursery School. There is a nursery on the site. And that's also relevant to one of the other points.

53. THE CHAIR: So, how many pupils overall roughly?
54. MRS ROBERTS: There are 77 pupils – 56 in the school and I haven't done the maths work on – 21 in the nursery isn't it?
55. THE CHAIR: So, it's about 100?
56. MRS ROBERTS: No, no, there's 77 overall.
57. THE CHAIR: Oh right.
58. MRS ROBERTS: There are 56 in the school and the total numbers are 77 so it must be 21 in the nursery – when I do my figures.
59. MR WHITFIELD: Sorry. Excuse my ignorance; I'm a lay Scottish MP. Our nurseries, you can pick up and drop throughout the day. Is that the same with you or is the nursery time set times?
60. MRS ROBERTS: I don't actually work in the nursery. I volunteer in the school. But, yes, I think there are people coming and going. I don't think they all do full day sessions. I think some of them do.
61. MR WHITFIELD: So, it's not a case that you have a rush hour before school starts and a rush hour at the end of school?
62. MRS ROBERTS: No. And that was the point I was –
63. MR WHITFIELD: So, far as the youngest children are concerned, they come and go all day?
64. MRS ROBERTS: Yes, that was the point I was coming to later on. Yes, you're quite right.
65. MR WHITFIELD: Thank you.
66. MRS ROBERTS: And if you want to pick up on that point – added to that, there's pre-school provision – I'm not sure what time it starts from but it's a lot earlier than half past eight standard time. The pick-up is at 3 o'clock, obviously going in about a quarter to three to pick them up. There are after school clubs which go on until four. And

there's after school provision, which goes on until five. There's a toddler group that they run in a morning session. So, there are people coming after nine or so until about 11.00, or 11.30 or something. So, really throughout the school day actually there's coming and going from the school.

67. We've got a school survey. If we can have the school's A108(128)? You can scroll through those if you want to, but I can summarise it in that 60% of the respondents to that had reported near misses on that stretch of road to school. And we know of at least one more – Mr Murray has just told you – who actually was hit. Yes?

68. THE CHAIR: Sheryll?

69. MRS MURRAY: What's the speed restriction on that road at the moment?

70. MRS ROBERTS: 30 miles an hour. And it's regularly exceeded. And you can also find on one of these forms that somebody has actually commented that people don't stop at the crossing either, which is outside school where they have to cross?

71. MR WIGGIN: If you could go back to that last slide? It appears that this person has been hit six times?

72. MRS ROBERTS: Not hit, they're near misses.

73. MR WIGGIN: Yes. And yet they drive?

74. MRS ROBERTS: Yes, but they park on that car park which we showed you and then walk from the car park to school. Everybody who walks to school – well, not necessarily – they've come from the other end of the village – but the ones who drive will all be doing that little bit, with that little pinch point where you can't actually go safely down to school.

75. MR COOPER: There's a tendency to drive take the children to school by car because there aren't pavements in large chunks of it, on the A51 – A521?

76. MRS ROBERTS: Well, I've actually got some statistics about that. Nearly half of these pupils live outside Woore village and have to travel to school by car. But I would also submit in the next bit about health – if I can come on to that in a minute? There are over 60% who've been hit. To me this equates to a minimum of 11% of the

families in school and those are the ones that we've got reported – they've had an incident or near miss. And 11% seems an unacceptable statistic to me.

77. Moving on to the traffic light bit. If we could have – you've seen the two ones and the traffic lights will hit in opposite directions which supports the theory that it was a moving traffic because they've been dislodged in the direction of the traffic. But in one of them, in – hang on, I'll make sure I've got the right one – Yes. The parish council, A94(2) – there's a lorry down the road there and you can see that it's wheels are on the centre line. And it's not far enough away from the pavement to move any closer over. That just indicates how difficult it is for the traffic to cross there. And that's very close to the thing again which is just showing the state of the road there.

78. THE CHAIR: Separate to HS2, would it be sensible to have a physical barrier along the side of the pavement or would that cause other problems because people use it to park up on and so forth?

79. MRS ROBERTS: It possibly would. And maybe that's something the council should be looking at with the school's provision but –

80. THE CHAIR: Is it something you would support for the parish to support?

81. MRS ROBERTS: Well, it possibly would. But if you just do it near the crossing, what happens down the rest of the road. They've still got to walk down the rest of the road. And they're not respecting –

82. MR COOPER: But there is still the problem that large chunks of the parish don't have any pavements at all even there are reasonable numbers of houses. Some people walking to school would have to cross the A-road two or three times –

83. MRS ROBERTS: Well, yes they do.

84. MR COOPER: – because the pavements aren't continuous on each side of the road.

85. THE CHAIR: Okay. Sheryll?

86. MRS ROBERTS: I think if you put a barrier on that side then there already isn't room for the two HGVs to pass, so you're going to narrow the pavement to put the

barrier in. So, it's sort of one of a half dozen and another –

87. MRS MURRAY: It might be a silly question but is the school crossing manned by a lollipop lady?

88. MRS ROBERTS: No, it isn't. I don't think there are many school crossings manned. They've all had cuts and things, haven't they?

89. MRS MURRAY: Yes.

90. MRS ROBERTS: No, it isn't. As we already know, some of them are actually going to have to cross three times from the other end of the village to get there if they do walk that length. And some do. I was going then to start and finish times, which we've already discussed. And we've said that there's almost no time in the school day when there isn't traffic from there.

91. The other question is if HS2 did agree to abide by some sort of timings, we're not sure what would happen. If a lorry sets off with appropriate time to get through the village before that happens and then gets delayed. Are they going to park up? Are they going to turn around and go back and start again? I suspect not.

92. Now, one of the points that hasn't been brought up in the village petition because it's not as relevant in regards as health, the first point is partly relevant to the shop as well, actually. HS2's non-technical summary, 9.6, acknowledges that, 'Anxiety over increase in HGV traffic can lead to less physical activity including walking and cycling to school'. Now, I'm here for the school petition but it does include the elderly and the disabled and all the other things. 'And more car use due to fear of accidents'. So, we're going to get more traffic, cars coming – because the parents – they've already said on there they don't want to walk their children to school.

93. Moving more specifically on to the health issue there, the EQIA appendices, section 6.2. 1 states that, 'Exposure to noise can be a particular problem around schools, leading to cognitive impairments and negative effects on educational attainment'. The response document to all primary schools says that – point 13 – 'Sound and noise vibrations will be of a transitory nature and no significant effects are expected'. I point out that the school has an outdoor classroom space for the – the nursery use it – but the

class one with the younger children – which is accessed throughout the school day and the door to the classroom is frequently open. I don't know if you want to look at but you can see if you look on the pictures on the map that faces towards the road, that door and that space. It is behind the houses but it faces towards the road. The school is also a forest school and regular lessons are held outside. So, there's that.

94. HS2's response document, point 4, 'The noise effects. There is no likely significant effect on Woore Primary School'. I have to say we don't have a lot of confidence in this assessment because we're not confident from our experience of congestion when other routes are diverted – we've already discussed this – that their traffic projections will meet with reality. That there will be queueing traffic and therefore excess noise.

95. The school currently has 11 pupils with special needs at the school involving outside agencies. This equates to 20%, a level above the national average, or well above the national average. These children already find concentration difficult and noise disruption will only exacerbate this. As a volunteer I can see how difficult these children already find concentration from working in the class with them.

96. HS2 response document, point 3, 'The adequacy of the environmental statement' – there are terms about 'reasonably practicable' – and everybody wonders where that goes – but, 'A need to balance the likelihood of risk against cost' etc. I submit that 20% of children with special needs constitutes a likely risk, which is unacceptable.

97. With the construction phase lasting over four years for many children this would encompass much of their primary school career. And if you have cognitive impairment in that early learning years and difficulties there, it's going to have a knock on effect for the whole of their school life. And as was mentioned for the shop, there is the potential that parents will take their children elsewhere rather than send them to a school that's going to be affected by all this. Do you want me to go through the requests from the school here and before you do the –

98. MR COOPER: Well, yes, yes. You asked what we want.

99. THE CHAIR: Yes.

100. MR COOPER: One alternative is – obviously there are some –

101. MRS ROBERTS: Well, I can cover that.

102. MR COOPER: – school specific things –

103. THE CHAIR: Yes, get stuck in because I've been incredibly generous in –

104. MR COOPER: I know, you are.

105. THE CHAIR: – offering time. You've got four minutes. That's the absolutely. I'm sorry.

106. MRS ROBERTS: Okay. Basically, the school request that you look carefully at all the alternative solutions that other people are going to produce. However, should the current proposals go ahead we would ask, one at the very least consultation with the school on operating times; two, as far as possible the peaks periods being phased during school holidays; three, any reduction in HGVs travelling through the village be pursued; four, measures to mitigate queueing and therefore noise disturbance to be pursued; and five, improvements to key areas of the pavements are investigated.

107. MR COOPER: So, can I hurriedly say what we want? The alternative routes that we've suggested – if we give them an order of priority which we favour. The first is the Madeley chord using the West Coast Main Line for the delivery of materials and equipment to the site and using the Madeley chord for unloading etc. That's our first option. A parish councillor is coming to give evidence tomorrow on her own petition and we had agreed with her that she would speak to you in a bit more detail about Madeley chord because it is in her petition as well.

108. The second option in order of priority is Junction 15, accessing the M6 to and from Junction 15 via Whitmore and Baldwins Gate and turning into Manor Road. That is outlined in our petition and it's shown on A97, if you want to look at it. The third option – do you want me to move on to the third, or shall I wait while you?

109. THE CHAIR: Yes.

110. MR COOPER: The third option is on A99. And it's the M6 being accessed via Keele services.

111. The fourth option – and it's the fourth option because it does not get rid of all the traffic – it would only get rid of 30% we're told by HS2 – is the longer, deeper tunnel, which you're considering. And that does not preclude such traffic, the 70% of traffic that would still remain going by either the second or third options that we've just outlined. Do you follow me?

112. THE CHAIR: Yes. Okay.

113. MR COOPER: Yes. Alright. Thank you. If we put mitigation forward we're not saying, 'This is a satisfactory solution'. We're not wanting to relieve you of the difficult choices that you face. But there are things. There is car park opposite The Swan which is privately owned and it's I think intended for development. The parish council has registered that as a community asset. If HS2 wanted to buy that and turn it into a civic car park to relieve all the parking problems in the centre of town that would be wonderful. There obviously are mitigation measures about pavements and things but we are in difficulties because we're not the technical people – we're not the highways authority. And there is a concern that if you put loads of mitigation measures in it alters the entire nature of what is a very rural village.

114. THE CHAIR: That's great. Thank you very much, Mr Cooper. Quick question from Sandy and then just so – I'm going to go immediately to Mr Mould and then you will get a right of reply briefly at the end. Sandy?

115. MR MARTIN: Yes. It's something that hasn't come up, Mr Cooper. It's probably a completely barmy idea but I wanted to run it past you in case you could tell me whether it's a completely barmy idea. Woore – the centre of the village is quite restricted. It would be quite difficult for lorries passing in opposite directions. Would it be feasible to have a one way direction of lorry traffic down Gravenhunger Lane or do you think that's completely out of –

116. MR COOPER: No. No, Gravenhunger Lane is really narrow.

117. MR MARTIN: It's far too narrow, even for one direction?

118. MR COOPER: No, I think you –

119. MR MARTIN: Okay. Fine. Right.

120. MR COOPER: No, no, no.

121. THE CHAIR: I think that's a definite no. Mr Mould, over to you? Thank you, Mr Mould.

Response by Mr Mould

122. MR MOULD QC (DfT): First of all, I'd like to show the Committee what the predicted numbers are in relation to traffic through Woore. P209(3) please. And as you will recall – you're familiar with these plans now – we're showing the average daily weekday traffic flows in the peak month.

123. And you can see, if we blow up the plan, the principal route with which the petitioners are concerned is the route up north and south on the A51 through point KNL, and then the right turn into the Newcastle Road, the A525, through points INJ, to access these construction sites here and in particular this satellite compound, the Madeley tunnel south satellite compound, the Madeley tunnel south transfer node, the Madeley cutting satellite compound and the River Lea viaduct satellite compound. Those are the principal origins and destinations for traffic through Woore.

124. A51, traffic is coming up from as far south as Lichfield. The A51 of course carries on. It's the main road through this part of the world up to Chester and beyond. The A525 is the main part of the primary road network between Newcastle to the east and then going through Whitchurch and then out into north Wales, going through to the west. So, that's the existing function of these parts of the primary road network.

125. The traffic that they carry – if you keep in mind KNL, which is the traffic on the A51 and then INJ, the traffic on the A525. If we go to KNL, we can see the predicted 2023 future baseline. So, that's non-HS2 traffic using these routes in 2023. We can see on the A51 south of Woore 3,693 vehicles northbound, 3,384 southbound. And on the 525, we've got 2,200 vehicles eastbound. And we've got 2,144 vehicles westbound. Of which in each case there is a substantial component of HGV traffic. On the A51 we've got 148 predicted northbound, 45 south and on the A525, we've got 70 eastbound and 92 westbound.

126. In the peak months we are adding in to that 274 HS2 HGV vehicle movements on

the A51 and 261 on the A525 and they are the large part of the HS2 development traffic added into the existing mix because as you can see in each case all vehicles – 350 on the A51 each way and all vehicles 297 each way on the A525. So, that gives you a sense of the degree to which HS2 is adding vehicles into the mix. If we turn then to the next slides –

127. MR WHITFIELD: Sorry, before we leave that, if we look at J –

128. THE CHAIR: Sorry, sorry. Sheryll's trying to come in.

129. MR WHITFIELD: Oh, sorry, Sheryll.

130. MRS MURRAY: Can I ask how long the peak period is going to be please?

131. MR MOULD QC (DfT): That's my next point. Can I come to that next? I need to show you a slide for that.

132. MR WHITFIELD: Sorry, I was going to say, if we look at J, we have 4% – we have 2,144 vehicles, 92 HGVs, 4%. Then we go to 297. But we then get an increase to 261 HGVs, which is HS2 traffic, which seems exceedingly more than 14% of the baseline.

133. MR MOULD QC (DfT): The HGV percentage is the –

134. MR WHITFIELD: Percentage of the total, isn't it?

135. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Yes. So, that's telling you – the HGVs go up from 92 to 92 plus 261, and then the percentage you're seeing on the right hand side is that as a percentage of overall traffic.

136. MR WHITFIELD: The total – yes.

137. THE CHAIR: It's a bit of a spurious number in relation to what we're looking at today.

138. MR MARTIN: Yes, it is more than doubling –

139. THE CHAIR: We've done this one before, haven't we? We don't have a useful figure, but it is a figure that's true, just not a useful figure.

140. MR MOULD QC (DfT): If it was down to me, I wouldn't show you percentages at all because I would suggest that the actual numbers are much more useful.

141. THE CHAIR: Yes. Yes.

142. MR MOULD QC (DfT): We won't go there at this time in any event. Can I go on then –

143. THE CHAIR: Mr Wiggin rather bluntly said, 'It is down to you' but perhaps through you, as the local persona of the Secretary of State, we can tell the Secretary of State –

144. MR MOULD QC (DfT): You assume –

145. THE CHAIR: – it is neither useful to his QC, nor the Committee, thus perhaps maybe he can alter his ways in the future so as to facilitate?

146. MR MOULD QC (DfT): I don't always get my way in what is shown on the detail.

147. THE CHAIR: Yes. But maybe you can pray in aid that the Committee is saying it would be helpful.

148. MR MOULD QC (DfT): I shall certainly do that. If we turn then to show you the graphs, P209(4)? This is the flow on the A51. The answer to Mr Murray's question is you can see there are two peak months – December 2022 and December 2023. And then outside of those two peaks we can see that the levels of traffic – although – I'm not going to say that they're insignificant because they're not – but they're considerably less than the peak. And then if we turn to the next slide you can see the position on the A525, which as you would expect, corresponds to the picture we saw on the previous.

149. MR WHITFIELD: It coincides with the darkest months.

150. MR MOULD QC (DfT): It coincides with the darkest months indeed.

151. MR WIGGIN: And the school holidays.

152. MR MARTIN: Some of the school holidays. That was a request.

153. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Bear in mind of course these are traffic flows which are at the present time, at this early stage in the process of detailed planning, are predicted during an HS2 ordinary working day, which is eight in the morning until six in the evening with the two shoulder hours, as you recall on either side. So, if you want to do the simple maths to work out if one takes it as a straight average how many that is an hour, then it's possible to do it that way. But I haven't put that figure in.

154. THE CHAIR: Sheryll Murray?

155. MRS MURRAY: Is it possible because obviously a lot of it would be in the school holidays for its peak use, around the Christmas period, but would it be possible to adjust your traffic usage to fall in line with school starting and ending, the main ones? I appreciate we've been told that sometimes people are going to and from the school throughout the day. But the main school opening times are obviously going to be set at – I don't know what time they open – but a quarter to nine to quarter past and –

156. MR MOULD QC (DfT): One of those factors, local considerations which those who develop the detailed local traffic management planning for these routes are required to consider under the code of construction practice is opportunities for fine tuning the timing of HGV vehicle movements through sensitive areas such as past schools so as to try and tie in with school delivery times and so on. So, the answer is – is it possible? It may very well be. I can't say whether it will be definitely or not because as you know we are at a very early stage in the detailed planning of this railway.

157. My next point to you is going to be to remind you very briefly, if I may, that there is a statutory regime for the approval of traffic routes under this Bill and the responsibility for regulating main traffic routes lies with the local highway authority, Shropshire County Council. They haven't chosen to petition. I don't know why that is. But you may feel that it's possible to infer that they are comfortable with the notion that they will be able to –

158. THE CHAIR: Sheryll Murray?

159. MRS MURRAY: Can I ask, Mr Mould, how much dialogue you've had with Shropshire Council particularly on this issue but also on the air quality situation and the impact possibly on air quality?

160. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Well, in terms of the traffic, we have met with Shropshire in April of last year. We have sought to arrange meetings with Shropshire County Council since then and Shropshire have not met with us. I can't tell you why that is but they are the local highway authority who will be responsible as and when this Bill becomes law for policing the statutory regime that I've mentioned.

161. Air quality, the methodology for assessing air quality is something that is dealt with through the district level authority rather than the county council. And we are in liaison with environmental health officers along the affected areas of the route in order to share with them the results of our modelling. I can show you in a moment, briefly I hope, the results of the modelling in terms of air quality for this area. Can I come to that in order of priority, as it were?

162. MRS MURRAY: Yes, just finally, you can categorically state that you did realise that this village fell under Shropshire County Council and not Staffordshire?

163. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Yes, because we spoke to Shropshire last April before this Bill deposited in order to discuss with them the proposed routing of traffic along these roads.

164. MRS MURRAY: So, you're happy to go on record that there was no confusion on HS2's part at any stage?

165. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Well, I can't say whether at any stage there was. But certainly I'm telling you that in April 2017. I mean, if you'd like me to follow that up and to see whether there was any misunderstanding as to who was the local highway authority I will do so.

166. THE CHAIR: Thank you.

167. MR MOULD QC (DfT): But I'm more anxious to look forward and to try and help you with reassurance.

168. THE CHAIR: You've given us that assurance you will look at it.

169. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Yes.

170. MRS MURRAY: Absolutely.

171. THE CHAIR: Let's move on.

172. MRS MURRAY: That would be useful. Thank you.

173. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Right. Okay. That is the scale of the predicted impact on the assessment we've carried out. We have no reason to suppose that the traffic surveys that were carried out and which are part of the process of building up this picture are affected by any abnormal conditions that would call them into question. The word 'neutral' means that as far as HS2 is aware the days on which those surveys were carried were ordinary days for the operation of the highway. And certainly, the methodology that we adopted is that which is standard for carrying out work of that kind.

174. I am aware, from instructions I've had, that the local community has carried out its own traffic surveys. You haven't been told about them today. If they had suggested that HS2's results were apparently at odds with those that were found by the local community, one would have expected that they would have made that known to you. They have not. I am therefore going to proceed on the basis that our surveys are –

175. THE CHAIR: Stop. Can you not do that? I'm interested in the points of seasonality and clearly there's not the evidence of what is a neutral day in the seasonality. But the petitioner made a very specific point around the seasonality of certain businesses. I don't expect the information now but I think it would be helpful to the Committee to get a bit more gradient. It is quite possible that it is totally outwith what has been done. It's also possible they were unaware of the seasonality issue which will have a material effect. So, can we not make an assumptive close? And rather can the Committee request more information on that point?

176. MR MOULD QC (DfT): You want information to confirm that we surveyed on reliable days?

177. THE CHAIR: Yes, and that include the seasonal fluctuations, if there are any. The petitioners asserts they are. So, either to give us a reassurance that the figures you've got are good and we can rely on them 100% or provide us with some additional figures, depending on what you find.

178. MR MARTIN: And may I suggest, Chair, we have a season coming up very briefly where somebody might decide they wanted to do another traffic count?

179. MRS MURRAY: Yes.

180. THE CHAIR: Fair point. And equally, the petitioners would have heard what you said and will no doubt want to provide you with any information they have because it may be quite a tight period of seasonality. I'll hand back to you, Mr Mould, if that's oaky. I can see Mr Cooper's trying to catch my eye but you're in the chair, as it were.

181. MR MOULD QC (DfT): I will ask. I will find out what we can provide to you.

182. THE CHAIR: Thank you very much.

183. MR MOULD QC (DfT): I would make the point that the garden centre that was mentioned is to the north of Woore and therefore is unlikely to affect the two routes that I have shown you, which are the key. If you go back to P209(3)? The movement of traffic associated with HS2 is through KNL and INJ. There is HS2 construction traffic through MNN but it's a much lower level. That doesn't provide an answer to the concern but it does set it into some sort of context. But I will ask that we provide you with –

184. THE CHAIR: Yes. I totally agree with your point about MNN but I think the point the petitioner would make is traffic travelling through MNN, then goes on to travel through KNL or INJ.

185. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Some of it does. The numbers are on the –

186. THE CHAIR: Well, let's not – you've agreed to go away. I don't want to get into any more detail. But the traffic, faced with the option of going two ways, goes one way or the other.

187. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Thank you. Can I then just move back to the question of process? I've mentioned the statutory regime under schedule 17. Under the code of construction practice, two local level plans have to be prepared. The first is a local environmental management plan, known by the acronym LEMP. The second is a local traffic management plan, the LTMP. In each case, the code of construction practice

requires the nominated undertaker to engage with the local community during the preparation of those documents. That work has yet to be done because we are at an early stage in the preparations. So, there will be ample opportunity during those processes for concerns raised by the local community to be raised so that they can feed into that more detailed planning.

188. And it is important that people don't misunderstand the stage we have reached. This is a – what I have shown you is an estimate based on an accepted methodology which is applied by development traffic management experts up and down this country with a view to trying to understand at this stage in the planning of the scheme what the likely level of impact of the development of traffic is going to be. This is a construction phase problem. It's not an operational phase problem. I don't denigrate the duration of the thing, but I've shown you that the two main peaks are relatively short lived in duration. And it is important that we keep a sense of proportion in relation to the scale of impact here. I'm not trying to suggest it's negligible –

189. THE CHAIR: Absolutely. I'm going to stop you because Sheryll's been – I've been trying to subtly catch your eye –

190. MR MOULD QC (DfT): It is possible to overstate it.

191. THE CHAIR: – to stop you. I'm stopping you now. Sheryll Murray?

192. MRS MURRAY: You've just said that you will engage the local community on the local environment management plan and the local transport management plan.

193. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Yes.

194. MRS MURRAY: How do you do that? Do you do that through the local parish councils or do you merely go to the local highways authority –

195. MR MOULD QC (DfT): No, no.

196. MRS MURRAY: – or the primary authority and expect them to engage further down?

197. MR MOULD QC (DfT): No, no. The way in which the local environmental management plans are drawn up often will involve discussion with the parish council.

198. MRS MURRAY: And that's as a standard, is it?

199. MR MOULD QC (DfT): As I understand it, yes. Yes. That's what's been happening on the Phase One, as I understand it. Yes.

200. MRS MURRAY: Thank you.

201. MR MOULD QC (DfT): It's been made very clear to me since I have been representing the company and the Secretary of State – made very clear to me that the last thing the project wants is a situation in which it is unable to run its construction vehicles through relatively sensitive parts of the primary route network because of local traffic management problems that are not properly understood and properly provided for. And the code of construction practice and the traffic management planning process is designed to enable those things to be done. And obviously, local information – which is achieved during the preparation of these local plans – is a vital component of gaining that knowledge.

202. I understand why people are sceptical and nervous about these things because this is a large scale scheme honing into view with at this stage relatively little of the detail known – to us as much as to anybody else. But that is why these arrangements are in place, to seek to ensure that as we go forward, the process gives people some degree of reassurance that these matters will not be ignored. And one of the things, for example, that one would expect in principle to be at the forefront is whether there are measures beyond the putative temporary adjustments to street furniture and so forth at the junction to enable lorries to get around the corner, whether there are further measures such as for example whether it would be appropriate even on a temporary basis to erect some sort of safety barrier in the immediate environment of the school. If things can be done within the highway, there's no need for any compulsory purchase of land because the land is within the operational control of the highway authority.

203. But we cannot do anything unless they highway authority tell us that it is something that they think we should do. And so, that is why I emphasise the role of Shropshire County Council because they are the statutory body who are responsible ultimately for managing this. And HS2 is as beholden to them as are the people who sit to my right. Now, I'm conscious of the time. Can I give you quickly the references in response to the alternatives that have been put forward?

204. THE CHAIR: Yes.

205. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Firstly, A98. This is the proposal for, as I understand it, re-operating the part of the disused railway line. The response to that you'll find on P209, slides 18 and 19. If we go to the next slide, you'll see that this would obviously reduce traffic but it would have a number of challenges which the project is concerned would need to be overcome. I won't read these all out given the time. I'll just give you the references.

206. Then we go back to the second, which is A97, which is the proposal to go through Manor Road. And if we go on to P209(16) and (17)? And then 17 – Manor Road is a much less suitable road to use for the level of construction traffic that we are predicting here than the primary route network that takes us through Woore. And that is reflected in the fact that we have given an assurance – of which I think you're aware to Whitmore Parish Council – that we will not route vehicles through Manor Road. Unless we are asked to do so by the county council in the exercise of their statutory powers – which brings me back to the point that they bear the whip hand here.

207. The others that have been put forward are at A99, A100 and A101 and the answers are given at P209(22), P209(15) and P209(27). If you want me to go through those now I can but we've given our responses and obviously the petitioners have had an opportunity to read those because they've seen the slides in advance of today's hearing. But essentially whether it be routing traffic along the disused railway line, whether it be routing traffic through Keele services, whether it be taking traffic on a wide arc around the area to the north – each of those involves substantial additional work and in our current judgment they are disproportionate to the scale and duration of need that I have shown you on the traffic slides that we have put forward, having regard to the procedural safeguards that I've mentioned under the aegis of the highway authority and through the local community engagement regime.

208. The air quality point – if we put up R121? If we can blow up please? You can see the red dots denote air quality assessment points in and in the vicinity of Woore. You can see that we have three assessment points here – one corresponding to the school, one corresponding to the square in Woore. If I put up R120? And if we can go down two or three pages, just scroll slowly down. Keep going. You can see that we provide

in the environmental statement a summary of the modelling work for predicted pollutant concentrations and the impact of construction traffic. If we go on to the next slide, turn that around? In the middle of the page you can see this relates to nitrogen dioxide and you can see for the square in Woore the degree of change is 0.2 on the relevant index and the assessment is the impact is negligible and no significant effect. If we go to –

209. THE CHAIR: Alright. Sorry, Mr Mould, what's an unacceptable point, that starts raising red flags? What's the concentration level one starts to worry?

210. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Forty. I'm told it's 40 in the directive.

211. THE CHAIR: Okay.

212. MR MOULD QC (DfT): But the conventional measure of adverse effect is to whether the predicted quantity of increase is one that gives rise to what is considered to be a more than negligible effect. And the methodology that presently applies to changes in air quality, for reasons that I needn't explain to the Committee – you'll be very familiar with the challenges that the government faces in this respect – that the methodology imposes a very strict threshold for anything above negligible. So, the fact that we have here a series of predictions both for NO₂, for PM₁₀ and for PM_{2.5} which for both the square in Woore and for the school are in each case negligible – it gives you some reassurance that in terms of air quality the traffic that will flow through this village on these roads is not going to have a significant impact. I won't scroll through all of the pages. It's on the system at R120 if people want to have a look at it and find those.

213. MR WHITFIELD: Can I just ask Mr Mould, as a sort of two-pronged clarification? The first of is in the environmental assessment it talks about 'actual receptors' where this is 'modelled receptors'. Am I right in saying that the actual air quality receptors are as disclosed here which has a number of areas which I think are predominantly to the east of where Woore is? And the calculations that have been made for Woore are based on those, would that be right?

214. MR MOULD QC (DfT): The monitoring locations are shown on R121.

215. MR WHITFIELD: So, they are actual receptors there rather than modelled receptors?

216. MR MOULD QC (DfT): There is – because of the scale here it’s not –
217. MR WHITFIELD: Yes, I appreciate that.
218. MR MOULD QC (DfT): But I can tell you for example that existing monitoring was done at a point. It’s reference C –
219. MR WHITFIELD: No, that’s fine.
220. MR MOULD QC (DfT): – just to the east of the school.
221. MR WHITFIELD: My apologies, Mr Mould. I was reading ‘modelling’ as in ‘modelled from the other receptors’ and the receptors that are discussed in this don’t specify the ones in Woore at all.
222. MR MOULD QC (DfT): That’s right. The way it works is rather similar to the way we deal with noise, as you’ve heard from Mr Thornely-Taylor. You take measure the baseline through putting up machinery and so forth which takes levels. You then calibrate to use it as representative of locations where the impacts assessment is going to be carried out in relation to – and then you do the modelling of the basis of that work.
223. MR WHITFIELD: My second question that flows from that. I noticed somewhere an undertaking with regard to the fact the vehicles are being used, they will all comply with the European –
224. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Euro 6, yes.
225. MR WHITFIELD: Yes.
226. MR MOULD QC (DfT): They will be required to fulfil that requirement, yes.
227. MR WHITFIELD: And with a very quick Brexit head on, that, presumably, undertaking will continue off into the future irrespective of our relationship with Europe and those –
228. MR MOULD QC (DfT): It’s certainly not qualified by or conditioned upon remaining within the European Union, that’s for sure.
229. MR WHITFIELD: I’m grateful.

230. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Yes. Far from it. The aspiration is to continue to comply in the future with further changes. At the moment we expect Euro 6 to remain the standard. But obviously if the standard changes –

231. MR WHITFIELD: And that undertaking will relate to that even if that were to change in Europe for some reason?

232. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Yes. No, the commitment is to Euro 6 without any qualification on what happens politically here. Yes.

233. MR WHITFIELD: I'm grateful.

234. MR MOULD QC (DfT): And so, the position in summary is I would invite the Committee to consider the degree and the duration of effect; the rate of traffic that we add on to the streets. I recognise the sensitivity of the location but it is part of the primary road network and the alternatives – for reasons we've set out – we don't think with respect that those are proportionate to the scale and duration of effect. We think that the focus should be on careful management of this traffic. And I've identified the procedural mechanisms that are there to enable that process to take its course as the detailed planning of the scheme and the construction of the railway is undertaken.

235. THE CHAIR: Thank you. Sheryll Murray?

236. MRS MURRAY: Just finally, Mr Mould, it would be open for the parish council to make representations to the local highways authority when the local transport management plan were being discussed with HS2 if they hadn't been consulted or felt that their views weren't being taken account of?

237. MR MOULD QC (DfT): It most certainly would. It most certainly would. Yes.

238. MRS MURRAY: Thank you.

239. THE CHAIR: I'm curious because we have today a petitioner who's a parish councillor that does not have direct control over the traffic. We have a county council, Shropshire, that for perhaps understandable reasons didn't petition, in our decisions we can clearly compel HS2 to do certain things, can we compel an engagement with a county council that hasn't petitioned? Or is that irrelevant?

240. MR MOULD QC (DfT): No, that would be a very unusual thing for a Select Committee to do. Your task is to deal with petitions rather than to adopt a wider remit of policing the construction of the railway. You could certainly express your desire and your expectation that traffic through Woore deserves careful consideration through the procedures that I have outlined to you. Yes.

241. THE CHAIR: And name Shropshire. Excellent. I think Sandy, then Martin.

242. MR MARTIN: Well, I was going to say, notwithstanding Mr Mould's belief that we cannot in any way compel Shropshire County Council, the fact is you are going to be having to draw up a local traffic management plan. It would be quite difficult to do that without the cooperation of Shropshire County Council, would it not?

243. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Oh, yes. There's no question of Shropshire County Council not being actively involved in this process because the law – assuming this Bill is passed into law in its current terms – the law will require them to make decisions about the routing of traffic through their area. They can't absolve themselves from that. It will be one of their statutory functions. And as you know arrangements have been made to provide appropriate funding to enable them to discharge that responsibility. It's not my belief, by the way, it's my submission to you on the basis of my understanding of parliamentary procedure.

244. MR WHITFIELD: Okay.

245. MR MARTIN: And can I ask you whether the local traffic management plan would be capable of encompassing any or all of the following: speed restrictions or speed calming measures in Woore; use of The Swan car park; and protection of the pavements in Woore – because all three of those were practical issues which were raised by the petitioners which appear to have some significant bearing on how safe Woore is going to be during the construction phase.

246. MR MOULD QC (DfT): The provision of calming measures within the highway would be a matter which the county council would be empowered under their statutory powers to do. And if they felt that were a necessary condition of approving the routing, then they would be able to impose that requirement. HS2 will need to discuss carefully with the county council what they expect to be done in order to safeguard these routes, if

anything. Likewise, speed restrictions – obviously the country council will think very carefully about whether it's appropriate to impose speed limits because they have to think about the function of this road, which is a multi-functional part of the primary road network. I fear that it is not within their power to require HS2 to make the car park available because as you heard that's private land. And so, it wouldn't be possible for them to seek to bring that within their jurisdiction. And as to the other matter, whether it's appropriate to put up safety barriers whatever – again, if it's in the highway that would be something they could raise.

247. MR MARTIN: Can I follow that up Mr Chairman? It does appear to me that HS2 Ltd would have a vested interest certainly during those peak periods for there to be somewhere for people in Woore to park their cars other than on the highway where they are going to get in the way of your lorries. And that it would be in everyone's in best interests if that car park were available. Notwithstanding the fact that it's a private car park and that it is not within the jurisdiction of Shropshire County Council, it might be sensible for HS2 to negotiate privately with the owners of the private car park in order to make sure that was available during the period of construction. I can't imagine if I was building houses that I would want to build the houses while the peak period of the lorries was going through Woore anyway. I would want to wait until after the construction was over before building houses.

248. MR MOULD QC (DfT): You may very well be right and I'm not ruling out what you say. But if that is, as we've been told, a site with development potential to build houses, that obviously presents an important factor that would need to be considered because HS2 would not wish to be responsible for delaying the provision of no doubt much needed new housing and that is certainly a factor that we'd need to weigh heavily in the balance. Equally, I'll be frank about it, if land is ripe for development and that development is able to come forward because HS2 beings to be constructed in earnest, the Secretary of State would wish to think very carefully about the financial consequences of delaying a valuable development scheme. So, it's not beyond the bounds of possibility, but one needs to be realistic about how likely that is to provide a solution. The point that there would need to be consideration of how to manage the potential conflict of cars parked on the street during those relatively limited periods of peak use of course is I accept a perfectly sensible one. Yes.

249. THE CHAIR: Sheryll?

250. MRS MURRAY: Yes, just very quickly to reassure myself. Any traffic regulating orders that would result from a local traffic management plan, would HS2 assist the local highway authority in funding that? I'm thinking of speed restrictions and other restrictions that would require TROs and that sort of thing.

251. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Well, if in order to provide the basis for an approval of the routing under schedule 17 it were necessary to impose conditions requiring certain temporary changes to the highway, then yes, prima facie HS2 would expect to be responsible of the costs of those –

252. MRS MURRAY: Thank you very much.

253. MR MOULD QC (DfT): – because they would be part of the costs of course constructing the railway. Yes.

254. MRS MURRAY: So, traffic calming measures, speed measures –

255. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Yes.

256. MRS MURRAY: – that sort of thing. So, it could benefit?

257. MR MOULD QC (DfT): Well, it could do. But obviously again – I don't want to raise expectations – if it's suggested that a package of measures valued at say £500,000 should be brought into play in order to accommodate two discrete peak months of lorries on the primary road network, HS2 would probably want to say something about whether that is justified. The decision would be for the county council. But HS2 would want to consider with them carefully – no doubt in consultation, as I've said, with the local community – whether that package is justified or something less could be achieved. These are all matters that we perforce today have to speculate upon. But you're right – none of them is beyond the scope of the process that I have described to you very briefly during the course of my submission.

258. MRS MURRAY: Thank you.

259. THE CHAIR: Thank you very much, Mr Mould. Mr Cooper, if you want to speak for literally one or two minutes on any additional points – nothing new – just

anything that's cropped up?

Final Submissions by Mr Cooper

260. MR COOPER: I'm slightly bemused that none of you, as the Select Committee, have questioned Mr Mould about his silence on the issue of the smart motorway and its effects.

261. THE CHAIR: We've covered that in previous evidence.

262. MR COOPER: Have you? I do apologise. Right.

263. THE CHAIR: We could very well come back to it again. I wouldn't read anything into that.

264. MR COOPER: Obviously we're bemused by –

265. THE CHAIR: We've covered it in quite some detail. You've added a bit more. We may come back to it again through other guises.

266. MR COOPER: Thank you. On the question of the usefulness or otherwise of Shropshire Council and Highways department, we were offered a meeting by HS2 last week, as they usually do I think to all petitioners, to see if any points of concern could be thrashed out. And we said to Shropshire Highways, 'Well, do you want to come along to such a meeting because we don't have the expertise to deal with highway matters?' and there wasn't a refusal; there was just no response. I just mention it as an inertia on the part of Shropshire Council to date.

267. Mr Mould has rightly said that everything is at a very outline stage. I can't see how a construction project can realistically say that its peak activities will take place during school holidays because of all the slippage possibilities that there are. I don't think you should give much – they call it an indicative programme, it will move. Timescales move – and that's nobody's fault but it's just not realistic.

268. At the peak, one HGV will go through the parish every minute of the working day. There will be one HGV journey. There will be 540 or thereabouts, 550 journeys. We calculate that's one a minute of the working hours that HS2 say.

269. THE CHAIR: We've got the figures in front of us. I'm not going to take questions because this is a summation.

270. MR COOPER: I'm just saying that so that you appreciate that at lesser times when – Mr Mould draw your attention to the peak times – at other times, the impact will still be substantial. That's all I say.

271. THE CHAIR: Okay.

272. MR COOPER: The only other point I would make is that on 209(17), which is HS2's reasons why the Manor Road cannot be used, the bottom one, 'Assurance has been given to Whitmore Parish Council in relation to use of Manor Road' – I'm afraid we only learnt of that when the exhibits were served on us last Wednesday. We had no idea that any undertaking had been given. And that's indicative of how Woore feels about this: that it's been left out and presented with a fait accompli. Thank you.

273. THE CHAIR: Thank you very much, Mr Cooper. We're now going to meet in private.