

Overall traffic speeds would not be increased, to ensure that extra traffic was not attracted from elsewhere.

39. Paragraph 7 of the Secretaries of State's report to the Committee indicated that BR had agreed to enter into an agreement with the Department whereby they would undertake not to bring the low-level station into operation before the road scheme was in place. BR consequently believed that road traffic was not an issue with which the Committee had to be concerned.

(vi) *Subsequent use of land*

40. BR does not intend to use operationally all of the land acquired under the bill once the works are complete. BR is in discussion with the Local Authorities concerning a planning brief for subsequent use of the land.²⁷ Mr Snowball, an Associate Director with Ove Arup and partners and leader of the team of planning consultants supporting the project, told the Committee that it "was always the Board's intention" that new building work would overlap with construction, subject to Local Authority Planning Briefs and the wishes of landowners.²⁸

THE CASE AGAINST THE BILL

INTRODUCTION

41. One hundred and fifty nine petitions were originally lodged with the Committee of which 18 were subsequently withdrawn. Many of these were from individual local people affected by the works. Most were petitions against the Preamble to the bill: that is, they objected to the scheme as a whole and wished to see the bill thrown out by the Committee. But various petitioners also made specific requests for amendments to the bill and for undertakings from the promoters.

42. Some of the petitioners argued that BR did not need the powers they sought because there was no case for the new station as proposed. Mr Ian Crawley, Head of Planning and Transportation for the London Borough of Islington, had no objection to the independent LUL works but told the Committee that BR's scheme conflicted with the Local Authorities' planning and conservation area policies²⁹ and with Government policy on regenerating Docklands which would in the long term shift London's centre of gravity and relieve pressure on the central area.³⁰ And in the view of both Camden and Islington Councils which he represented:

"whilst improvements are needed to British Rail's Thameslink station at King's Cross, we are submitting that British Rail have not proved that an eight-platform low-level station is required, and that therefore they need the powers that they are seeking in this current Bill."³¹

43. Some of those petitioners who recognised BR's operational needs put forward alternative schemes which they believed would allow BR to meet those needs. The Committee was not able to hear detailed evidence in favour of such schemes because it was our task only to examine the bill before us. But we did allow petitioners to present such alternatives as part of their case that the Preamble for the bill was not proven because BR could achieve their objectives more cheaply—and with less local impact—by other means.

44. Camden and Islington Councils had submitted to the Commons Committee a plan for a two platform low-level station, which solved the problem of the tunnel constraint for Thameslink services. This indicated the sort of alternative they wished BR to consider because it would involve a cheaper and less devastating project. But Mr Crawley admitted that if BR wished to run international trains to King's Cross via Snowhill, four platforms would be required.³² Mr Schabas, an independent consultant appearing on behalf of the local residents' group Crossfire, suggested running international trains from the Channel Tunnel and Stratford into St. Pancras via the Tottenham to Hampstead line,³³ while Mr Mason, a partner in Alan Baxter Associates, representing the same petitioners, suggested a smaller international station to the north of the mainline station, or improvements to the existing Thameslink station.³⁴

²⁷Day 3, p37, QQ2-3.

²⁸Day 9, p50, Q6.

²⁹Day 10, p15.

³⁰Day 10 p57.

³¹Day 10, p15, Q3.

³²Day 11, p28, Q7.

³³Day 12 pp75ff.

³⁴Day 12, p97, Q8.