

REPORT TO PICKMERE PARISH COUNCIL

6th June 2023

AGENDA ITEM 9.4 HS2B - ARRANGEMENTS FOR PAYMENT OF EXPENSES AND FEES IN RESPECT OF PARLIAMENTARY SELECT COMMITTEE APPEARANCE

1. REPORT

- 1.1 The Parish Council has been involved at all the stages of the HS2 proposals since its inception 7+ years ago and has submitted objections and representations at all its stages. Along the way it has secured a significant amendment to the scheme where the route crosses Pickmere Lane, and it may be able to report a further detailed success early in June (a meeting has been arranged with HS2 Ltd on 7 June).
- 1.2 The Council has held public consultation/information events at various points and has advertised locally HS2's consultation processes.
- 1.3 The HS2 process has now passed its final consultation stage – that was the publication of the Hybrid bill for HS2B which provided the ability of persons or bodies concerned to submit petitions of objection. Parliament's Select Committee is now holding hearings into the various petitions received. There is no possibility at this stage of objecting to the principle of the scheme. These stages are documented in previous council reports and minutes, and a number of documents can be found on the Council's website.
- 1.4 The Parish Council submitted a petition of objection to the Hybrid bill and have been called to appear before the Select Committee in London, who will explore our petition, on 26 June 2023.
- 1.5 Former Parish Councillors Sarah Flannery and Chris Tarrant (as well as former Parish Councillor Andrew Shore) have been the key actors in relation to the petition and the first two of these had intended (and still intend if supported by the new Council) to attend the Select Committee on behalf of the Council. They are currently preparing the relevant statement and other evidence.
- 1.6 The Parish Council has authorised payment of the expenses of the two persons, in having to travel to London for the Select Committee and possibly to have to stay overnight, within a limit of £250 per person if no overnight stay is required and £500 if such a stay is required. In addition Council has authorised a budget of £3000 for the preparation of any evidence and supporting information required for this appearance.
- 1.7 These are extant decisions of the Council and no additional confirmation of these decisions is actually required. However in the light of the recent change in the composition of the Council, and the need for these two persons (as well as the company preparing the graphics evidence) to be sure that the Council will honour these decisions, it seems desirable for the Council to be asked to re-confirm these arrangements at its meeting on 6 June. Should this not happen then

the Council's petition of objection will go unsupported, to the detriment of the Parish's longstanding views about this project.

- 1.8 There is no rational way in which persons not familiar with the development of the scheme over the years, and all the issues that surround it, could credibly appear before the Select Committee in place of the persons identified.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That members note the report and reconfirm the Council's decisions of 6 September 2022 and 7 February 2023 in respect of authority to pay expenses and costs as outlined in the report.

Jack Steel
Acting Clerk to the Parish Council