



Launton Parish Council
c/o Mrs Jane Olds
Parish Clerk
13 Oak Close
Bicester
Oxfordshire
OX26 3XD

Sophie Moeng
Consultation Manager
Network Rail
Fourth Floor
One Victoria Square
Birmingham
B1 1BD

By e-mail

4 February 2019

Ref OBJ/174

Dear Mrs Olds,

I write in response to the objection (ref: OBJ/174) made to the Department for Transport dated 7 September 2018 in respect of the proposed Network Rail (East West Rail Bicester to Bedford Improvements) Order (the Order) on behalf of Launton Parish Council.

EW2 Western Section Phase 2 (EW2) will reinstate and upgrade railway lines to enable new train services to run between Oxford and Milton Keynes, Oxford and Bedford and Milton Keynes and Aylesbury.

Thank you for taking the time to provide a response in respect of the proposed Order. I will respond to each of the concerns raised in your objection in the order that you raised them.

1. Use of lane between parish hall and school

The lane between the Parish Hall and School in Launton is to be used to facilitate construction access to the proposed Manor Farm Launton overbridge, ref OXD/35B. In general terms East West Rail's traffic management will be undertaken in a manner which will provide for the safety of all EW2 staff, their subcontractors and the public. It also ensures that road and footpath users are not exposed to foreseeable risks. A fully accredited gateman / vehicle marshal will be appointed to control access and egress to all worksites; this operative will be responsible for sighting oncoming traffic beyond any obstructions in visibility and ensuring oncoming traffic has slowed and is aware of any egressing vehicle. The gateman will also be responsible for ensuring that the condition of the access track and public highway is not affected either by increased use or deposits of mud or debris from the work site. The gateman will be required to wear highway compliant high visibility clothing and a detailed risk assessment and task briefing will be developed for this operation.

Notwithstanding the above, discussions are progressing with the aim of extinguishing the existing crossing rights over the Manor Farm Launton level crossing by agreement. If successful, this would enable Network Rail to remove the proposed overbridge from the scope of the Order scheme. Once removed from the Order scheme, Network Rail will be able to commit not to use the lane for works access. However, I note your concerns in

relation to loss of income from Parish Hall rents if the lane were to be used for access to build the overbridge. Should a loss occur due to the Order scheme I can confirm that compensation would be payable under the Compensation Code and Network Rail's appointed property consultants, Bruton Knowles, would contact you.

2. Storage site haul route

The 'storage site' at the former Launton Station that you refer to in your objection is in fact Construction Compound A2. Access for HGVs to this site will be gained by the vehicles travelling along the route of the existing railway from Construction Compound A1 at Bicester along a haul road. The route allows all HGV traffic to avoid Launton village entirely, using only the rail network. I trust this provides you with the reassurance you were hoping for.

3. Bicester Road closure

The proposed road closure where Bicester Road crosses over the railway, reference OXD 34, is to facilitate installation of a new bridge deck. All preparatory works to this structure will take place using lane closures and temporary traffic lights to control the traffic, with any proposed road closures taking place at night, when traffic volumes are reduced, to facilitate the removal of the existing bridge deck and installation of the bridge deck replacement. Throughout these works EWR2 will liaise with the local highway authority, Oxfordshire County Council, in respect of any appropriate diversionary routes.

4. Footpaths

The general approach that Network Rail and EWR2 have taken in respect of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) will be to close them temporarily throughout the works. This is to remove the interface between people and plant which is one of the highest risks associated with construction of the works. The affected PRoW will be re-opened at the earliest opportunity once it is safe to do so. We have a duty of care not only to EWR2 staff and its sub-contractors but also to members of the public, and the outlined approach poses the smallest risk.

a. Footpath No. 272/7

For Footpath No. 272/7, the closure is associated with the works to build Charbridge Lane Overbridge OXD36AA. Given the location of this footpath (272/7) it is expected that it can remain open throughout the majority of the construction period for the structure, with closure only being necessary during part of the embankment construction and the second temporary highway diversion. Closures of this footpath will be made public via notice beforehand. Given the limited duration of this closure it would be disproportionate to construct a temporary diversion.

b. Footpath No. 272/20

For Footpath 272/20, the closure is associated with works on the main route. As such, this closure will need to be in place for the duration of the works until such a point that the footbridge at Grange Farm is constructed. Throughout the construction period this section of the route will be subject to a large volume of construction traffic. All HGV traffic to Construction Compound A2 Launton will use the route for access, with over 500 HGVs a day using the route. Any diversion to keep this footpath open would have to be significant in length, being routed via

Charbridge Lane / Bicester Road or Station Road Launton level crossing. Land has not been taken in the Order to accommodate such a diversion, primarily as it would involve directing footpath users onto roads with no footpath. As such this option has been ruled out.

We hope that our response has provided sufficient clarity on each of the points made in your objection. If you are satisfied that the concerns in your objection have been addressed, please would you formally withdraw your objection by writing to the Transport and Works Act Order Unit, quoting OBJ/174.

Post

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General Counsel's Office
Department for Transport
Zone 1/18
Great Minister House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Email

transportandworksact@dft.gsi.gov.uk

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Moeng', with a stylized, cursive script.

Sophie Moeng
Consultation Manager
For and on behalf of Network Rail