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**Public Inquiry on the Network Rail (London to Corby) (Land  
Acquisition, Level Crossing and Bridge Works) Order**

**Closing Statement**

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**Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire**

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# Public Inquiry on the Network Rail (London to Corby) (Land Acquisition, Level Crossing and Bridge Works) Order

## CCNB Closing Statement

1 During the Public Inquiry we have seen that most of the policies cited by Network Rail for trains are equally valid for other sustainable modes of transport such as cycling.

2 This can be summed up by part of Paragraph 3.17 in the Government's National Policy Statement [NR33],

*The Government [also] expects applicants to identify opportunities to invest in infrastructure in locations where the road network .... acts as a barrier to cycling and walking, by correcting historic problems, retrofitting the latest solutions and ensuring that it is easy and safe for cyclists.*

3 Carriageway width evidence for roads in urban settings was given in CCNB's Proof of Evidence Appendices OBJ/15.2e-g. These document extracts indicate that it would be possible to install a 3.5 metre dual use cycle/pedestrian path across the proposed bridge on the north side by modifying the road bed to give a narrower carriageway width than the 7.2 metre in Network Rail's current plans. A width of 7.2-7.3 metres is now mainly recommended for high speed roads on the strategic network.

3.1 Bromham Road which goes over the bridge was downgraded from the A428 to the A4280 in December 2009 with the opening of the Bedford Western Bypass (The Branston Way) and is no longer part of the strategic network.

3.2 The cycle/pedestrian path could be installed on the road bed of the bridge currently proposed by Network Rail or on a slightly wider bridge as proposed by CCNB's Option (c) [paragraph 6.2.7.2.4] in which the width of the proposed bridge is increased by up to 500mm on either side preferably using a cantilevered precast riser approach (OBJ/15.5).

- 3.3 The latter option would not affect the substructure of the existing bridge. There would be no requirement to fully demolish the bridge or widen the existing piers or build additional foundations,
- 3.4 Either no or only minimal additional land would be required.
- 3.5 Both options would require only slight re-alignments of the approach roads with the 1.5 metre path retained on the south side and the north side path widened to 3 metres.
- 4 CCNB is grateful to Bedford Borough Council's proposal, with funding help from Network Rail, to build a separate cycle bridge alongside the main bridge.
- 4.1 Based on Network Rail's reasons for not being able to widen the main bridge it is likely that the installation of a separate bridge will bring more problems than CCNB's recommendations in 3 above with the result that it will be difficult to obtain planning permission.
- 4.2 Problems are likely with the foundations and the extra permanent land (at least four metres wide) required for the ramps. On the west side this will significantly affect the amenities of the adjacent Guinness Partnership properties in Granet Close resulting in an overbearing impact due to overlooking and loss of daylight. On the east side it will have overbearing effects on the London Planes and landscaped garden in Spencer Road. On both sides of the bridge this will result in loss of green and communal/recreational space. The visual impact of the separate bridge is likely to adversely affect the whole character of the area.
- 5 The Borough is to signal the adjacent double mini-roundabout at the Bromham Road/ Shakespeare Road/Ashburnham Road junction as part of its Transforming Bedford 2020 decongestion project after Network Rail's Bromham Road bridge work is completed. This work is expected to link the off-road dual use cycle pedestrian path from Bromham to the on-road cycle lanes into the town centre and in the future to give a direct safe route to the railway station via a redeveloped station car park.

- 6 The Inspector is requested to recommend the granting of the Order and planning permission only if a dual use cycle/pedestrian path of recommended width is included in the bridge rebuild and not as a separate bridge.
  
- 7 To conclude - In a reply to guidance published this January by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) to get people to be more active in their day-to-day lives a government spokesperson stated:  
**"DfT guidance is crystal clear that all schemes should explicitly consider both pedestrians and cyclists first".**
  
- 8 The opportunity to provide a safe crossing on the bridge for cyclists is not likely to present itself again.