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

Proofs of Evidence
Summary

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Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire

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CCNB Proofs of Evidence Summary

- 1 Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire (CCNB) for its 'Proof of Evidence' has taken in order the 'matters to be raised' given in the Department for Transport's Statement of Matters published by the TWA Orders Unit in November 2018 [GI02].
 - 1.1 CCNB has no comments to make on items 1, 4, 5(d-f), 6, 7, 8, 9 and 11 in the above document.
 - 2 See the full document for additional comments on the other items.
 - 3 **The main alternative options considered by Network Rail and the reasons for choosing the proposals comprised in the scheme.**
 - 3.1 CCNB has not been party to any of the alternative options.
 - 3.2 Proposals for a dual use cycle/pedestrian path across the bridge and an underpass into the station car park were first discussed with Bedfordshire County Council (BCC) and Railtrack, the precursor to Network Rail in the late 1990s.
 - 3.3 Bedford Borough Council, who replaced BCC in April 2009, took these proposals on board and discussed them with Network Rail as soon as the need to raise the bridge was found necessary for the electrification of the Midland Main Line.
 - 3.4 No information had been given at any Cycle Strategy Group meetings attended by CCNB with Bedford Borough Council between 2014 and 2018 and it was not until immediately prior to a public consultation on Friday 20 April 2018 that a plan was seen.
 - 4 **The extent to which the proposals in the TWA Order are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework, national transport policy and local planning, transport and environmental policies.**

4.1 CCNB has examined the following policies;

The National Planning Policy Framework
National Policy Statement
Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy
Bedford Development Framework
Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan
Allocations & Designations Local Plan
Town Centre Area Action Plan
Local Transport Plan
Local Plan 2030

4.2 All the policies indicate that sustainable transport, cycling and walking, must be considered and incorporated in all new or modified transport schemes.

5 See full document for comments on each policy.

6 In relation to the reconstruction of the bridge carrying Bromham Road over the Midland Main Line:

6.1 the possible provision of a dedicated cycleway and segregated pedestrian footway;

6.1.1 The Mayor of Bedford has proposed to build a separate cycle/pedestrian bridge on the north side at an estimated cost of £3 million. The bridge would require a strip of land parallel to the existing bridge around 5.5 metres wide (4.5 metres for the bridge to give a 4.0 metres minimum width for the cycleway with a 1 metre separation from the main bridge).

6.1.2 Extra permanent land required will be required and the nearby presence of five protected London Plane trees within a community garden may be a problem for planning approval.

6.2 adequacy of the design of the bridge for all users including wheelchair users and cyclists;

- 6.2.1 CCNB has no objection to the rebuild of the bridge only to the absence of a dual use cycle/pedestrian path across the bridge on the north side.
- 6.2.2 **Present Bridge** - The present bridge has a south footpath width of 1.579 metres, a carriageway width of around 7.1 metres and a north footpath width of 1.96 metres.
- 6.2.3 **Proposed Bridge** - Network Rail's proposed bridge [**Document NR10 - Drawing Number 143058-JMS-DRG-ECV-140201 Revision A02 of 19 April 2017**] is approximately 600 mm wider than the current bridge obtained by using narrower 430 mm wide parapets. The proposed deck profile is a 2.0 metres south footpath, 7.2 metres carriageway and 2.0 metres north footpath, to give a total width of 11.2 metres between parapets. The height of the parapets is 1.85 metres minimum. The overall height of the bridge will be increased by approximately 320mm.
- 6.2.4 The north footpath is therefore almost the same width as at present which is insufficient for a dual use cycle/pedestrian path.
- 6.2.5 For a two way dual use cycle/pedestrian path on the north side, Department for Transport Shared Use Routes for Pedestrians and Cyclists (LTN 1/12) [**OBJ/15.2c**] under paragraph 7.34 recommends a preferred minimum effective width of 3.0 metres where the route is not bounded by a vertical. As the parapet height of the proposed bridge is 1.85 metres minimum under paragraph 7.46 of the same document 0.50 metres must be added to give a total minimum width of 3.50 metres.
- 6.2.6 For the gradient, Department for Transport Cycle Infrastructure Design (LTN 2/08) [**OBJ/15.2d**] under paragraph 8.7.2 recommends a maximum gradient of 3% but this can rise to 5% over a distance of up to 100 metres. Note - A gradient of 5% is usually taken as the standard for the design of footpaths for manual wheelchair users.
- 6.2.7 Network Rail has put forward a number of reasons for not being able to increase the width further:
- 6.2.7.1 **The budget for the bridge rebuild is extremely tight and the brief is to build only like for like.**

6.2.7.1.1 CCNB has not seen the cost allocated to the bridge rebuild or the initial brief.

6.2.7.2 It is planned to demolish the existing piers only halfway. A wider bridge would require full demolition and rebuild from the ground upwards with a significant increase in costs to the tax payer.

6.2.7.2.1 CCNB has not seen the estimated cost increase for a wider bridge. It disputes the necessity of having to completely demolish the bridge piers to achieve the extra 1.0 to 1.5 metre width required. A number of options should be possible:

6.2.7.2.2 (a) re-assignment of the proposed road bed from 2.0/7.2/2.0 metres to 1.5/6.3/3.3 metres with a 20mph speed limit and a HGV ban except for access [OBJ/15.2e];

6.2.7.2.3 (b) building a 1.0 metre wide cantilever on the north side of each pier to the width required to give, for example, a road bed of 2.0/6.7/3.5 metres;

6.2.7.2.4 (c) building a 0.50-0.75 metre wide cantilever on both the north and south sides of each pier to the width required to give, for example, a road bed width of 2.0/6.7-7.2/3.5 metres.

6.2.7.3 Amendments would have to be made to the existing approach road alignment to cater for a wider road profile.

6.2.7.3.1 The extra width in (b) above is only required on the north side and would not affect the existing approach road alignment.

6.2.7.3.2 Only a slight road alignment is required to give the extra width in (c) above.

6.2.7.4 A wider road would require the acquisition of additional land which would impact on nearby residential properties. It has also been stated that some houses close to the bridge would have to be compulsory purchased [OBJ/15.2b].

- 6.2.7.4.1 The extra width required on the north side would be less than that required for a separate cycle bridge and would not impact on nearby properties.
- 6.2.7.4.2 Plans of the proposed bridge show there is adequate room for extra width on each side of the bridge.
- 6.2.7.5 There was a priority to minimise disruption to Bedford residents. A new bridge would take much longer to build and increase disruption to road and rail users.**
- 6.2.7.5.1 CCNB believes a few days extra construction time on top of the expected construction time of 13 months (including 6 months bridge closure) is insignificant when building a 'fit for all users' bridge which would be expected to last at least 100 years.
- 6.2.7.6 The provision of a new dedicated cycleway and segregated pedestrian footway would be an enhancement and sits outside the current scope and funding for this scheme, particularly as this structure is not in Network Rail's ownership. No feasibility studies have been undertaken to determine whether this option is workable.**
- 6.2.7.6.1 There have been two previous attempts over the last 19 years to build a separate cycle bridge but funding and, in one case, planning permission has not been available (see paragraphs 6.1.1 and 6.1.2). This is why the proposed rebuild of the bridge is a 'once in a lifetime' opportunity to have a cycle path included for the reasons cited in this document.
- 6.3 impact on community gardens facilities and mature trees;**
- 6.3.1 CCNB's proposals to slightly increase the width of the bridge over that proposed by Network Rail will have significantly less impact than the construction of a separate bridge (see paragraph 6.1).
- 6.4 See full document
- 6.5 impact of construction work and temporary alternative route on nearby residents and users of the Bromham Road bridge;**

6.5.1 There are access concerns for cyclists crossing the temporary bridge - will tricycles, tandems and bikes with child trailers, etc be able to cross. No details have been given except that cyclists will have to walk across with their bicycles.

6.6-6.8 See full document

6.9 Network Rail's proposals for funding the scheme.

6.9.1 CCNB has no knowledge on the scheme's funding.

6.10 See full document

6.11 Any other matters which may be raised at the inquiry.

6.11.1 CCNB has no further matters to raise.