



Mr K Dove
Planning and Economic Growth
Luton Borough Council
Town Hall
Luton
LU1 2BQ

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

23 January 2019

Ref: OBJ/244

Dear Mr Dove,

I write in response to the objection (ref: OBJ/244) dated 6th September 2018 sent on behalf of Luton Borough Council in respect of the proposed Network Rail (East West Rail Bicester to Bedford Improvements) Order (the Order).

Network Rail welcomes Luton Borough Council's support for the scheme and is excited to deliver this scheme which will reinstate and upgrade the railway to provide better cross-country journeys between Oxford, Aylesbury, Milton Keynes and Bedford. Better connectivity is one of the benefits of the scheme, which is part of suite of improvements to the national rail network to meet the increasing demand for rail travel and to support economic growth across Britain.

Manor Road Level Crossing, Kempston Hardwick

Safety is the overriding factor in the decision-making process in managing the 6,000 level crossings across the national railway network and reducing the risks that level crossings present. Network Rail's Regulator, the Office of Rail and Road, expects it to follow its national policy of reducing level crossing safety risk as far as is reasonably practicable at any given location.

Due to the increased train service as a result of the operation of East West Rail Western Section Phase 2 (EWR2), Network Rail has conducted a risk assessment at every existing level crossing located along the EWR2 route. This assessment considered a number of important factors, such as the crossing's location, how much traffic (rail and pedestrian) it receives, and the crossing's history of near misses or incidents. This assessment has identified Manor Road Level Crossing has an intolerable safety risk following the completion of EWR2 and as a result action needs to be taken prior to the introduction of the EWR2 train service.

Network Rail and its regulator believes the most effective way of reducing and removing level crossing risk is by closing level crossings and providing an alternative means to cross the railway. To this end, Network Rail is proposing to replace the existing Manor Road Level

Crossing with a new overbridge. This overbridge will not prevent the EWR route being extended further east to Cambridge and the EWR2 project is continuing to work closely with the development team responsible for the progression of the EWR Central section to ensure the aims of both schemes are met in the most effective way.

Network Rail is in discussion with property developers in the Stewartby and Kempston Hardwick area that are looking to redevelop land in the vicinity of Manor Road. Network Rail continues to work very closely with these developers that are looking to pursue bridge options in the area which are alternative to what is outlined in the Order. This may result in the bridge at Kempston Hardwick not being constructed in its proposed current location. However, any deviation from the works proposed in the Order will be subject to the relevant third party obtaining the necessary funding and consents prior to the construction of EWR2.

Marston Vale Line speed improvements

The EWR2 scheme does not intend to make any alterations to line speed or track on the southern approaches to Bedford. The existing line speeds and track layout on the approach to Bedford are sufficient to accommodate the new Oxford to Bedford train service and as a result any additional work is not required and is not included within the scope of the EWR2 scheme.

I hope this clarifies some of your concerns regarding the proposed Order, if so, can I request that you write to the Transport and Works Act Orders Unit notifying it that the objection (ref OBJ/244) is withdrawn.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Moeng', written in a cursive style.

Sophie Moeng

For and on behalf of Network Rail