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By e-mail

20 February 2019

Ref: SUPP/132

Dear Mr Landells,

I write in response to the representation of support sent on 29 August 2018 in respect of the proposed Network Rail (East West Rail Bicester to Bedford Improvements) Order (the Order).

I have duplicated in italics the points raised in your letter and have provided a corresponding response below.

We believe that the distance between Bicester Village and Winslow is too great for there not to be an intermediate station. There has been, and will continue to be, significant housing development in the intervening section and there are already outline proposals for there to be a huge programme of house building in this sector. We would, therefore, strongly urge you to reconsider this omission. We do not see that the possible site at Queen Catherine Road, Steeple Claydon is the best for this purpose, as inevitably, it will require a drive to the station and anyone leaving SC travelling east is likely just to remain in their vehicle. We see the more appropriate sitings to be as close to Addison Road as possible, or on the Aylesbury spur where the sidings are being taken away or at the original Marsh Gibbon station site.

The distance between Bicester Village and Winslow stations is roughly 12 miles; the addition of more stations on the OXD Line is not desirable for to the following reasons:

1. An increase in journey times between terminus stations due to an increased number of station stops will affect the business case for the scheme.
2. It would lead to a reduction in capacity on the OXD Line because trains would be utilising more capacity in stopping at additional stations.
3. The inclusion of any additional stations does not form part of the Department of Transport remit for East West Rail Phase 2 (EWR2) and as a result such stations are not included within the cost estimate or business case analysis.
4. The current draft Order does not include powers to construct an additional station between Bicester and Winslow and consequently this has not been assessed in the Environmental Statement.

Previously, there had been passive provision for a station at Steeple Claydon within the scheme. However, this element was removed in 2017 following instruction by the Department for Transport as a result of cost challenges. EWR2 now makes no passive provision for any new stations. Provision of such stations could be considered in the future but would be subject to securing the necessary development consents.

We think that not having a south to west chord at the junction from Aylesbury spur towards Oxford is a serious omission and removes much of the utility of the line for those living in Calvert Green, Twyford and Steeple Claydon who are as likely to wish to travel west as east. We provided an explanation for this in our submission to the Inquiry into the Sidings Move TWAO in July 2017.

An Aylesbury to Oxford direct connection would require the construction of a significant amount of heavily engineered new infrastructure, in order to facilitate a new west chord at Claydon Junction. This is due to the proximity of the HS2 infrastructure, which would necessitate the EWR2 infrastructure being lifted up onto retaining walls, bridges and viaducts in order to pass over both the HS2 main line as well as the HS2 depot rail access infrastructure. This additional infrastructure would require additional authorisation, as it is not included in either EWR2 or HS2 consents. Furthermore, a west chord would pass through the Calvert Jubilee nature reserve.

Therefore, for reasons of cost, programme and environmental impact, as well as the scheme's business case, the Department for Transport has instructed Network Rail to develop proposals on the basis of an east facing chord at Claydon Junction which will allow passengers to change at Winslow to travel west.

In the EWR benefits document access to HS2 was cited as a benefit. Frankly this is a red herring; in order for someone in this parish to benefit from HS2, by using EWR in its currently planned configuration, for the next close to two decades would require one the following journey plan. Leave Twyford by car, drive to Winslow Station (20+ minutes), park and wait for one of the two per hour trains via Aylesbury, or return past Twyford to Bicester Village, travel to Marylebone via Aylesbury et al (60 mins?), alight at Marylebone and find one's way to Euston (20mins min), take HS2 northward, pass Twyford and wave. Approximately 120 minutes, at best, after leaving Twyford. Alternative, drive northwards to Birmingham under 100 mins! The only way in which EWR will benefit Twyford residents in using HS2 is if there is an interchange between EWR and HS2 at Calvert. Whilst this doesn't appear likely if the HS2 speed, for cost reasons, is reduced then it appears madness not to implement same. The upheaval and inconvenience caused by the works for HS2, EWR, IMO, moving gas main, putting in additional electricity supplies to Bicester from East Claydon, possible Oxford to Cambridge Expressway, means that we deserve some benefits.

The benefit stated relates to the connection from EWR2 to HS2 within the Calvert Infrastructure Maintenance Depot. This will allow for the delivery of materials and machinery for HS2 from the conventional network thus reducing reliance on road haulage.

There are no plans for an interchange station for HS2 at Calvert; any proposal for this would constitute a separate project and additional land take outside the Order boundary. However,

residents of Twyford will be able to use Bicester or Winslow Station (within 8 miles) to access direct services to Oxford, Aylesbury, Milton Keynes and Bedford.

I hope the above is of some assistance to you, in advance of your appearance on 21 February at the Public Inquiry into the Order.

Yours sincerely,

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

Sophie Moeng

Consultation Manager

For and on behalf of Network Rail