



03/159

Woburn Sands

6th September 2018

Secretary of State for Transport,
Transport and Works Act Orders Unit,
General Counsel's Office,
Department for Transport,
Zone 1/18, Great Minster House,
33 Horseferry Road,
London SW1P 4DR

Dear Sirs,

Re; the application for an order to be made under the Transport and Works Act 1992 by Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd in relation to the East-West Rail link Bicester to Bedford Improvements near Woburn Sands.

I am writing to object in the strongest terms to the proposed changes to plans laid out, explained and displayed during the exhibitions and the consultation meetings which I attended. Indeed, my neighbours and I spoke to several officials, voicing our concerns about sufficient footbridge crossings replacing footpath crossings, and being reassured that the plans displayed included footbridge replacements for ALL the current footpath crossings along the railway line, across all the counties.

We understand that for reasons of safety, the footpath crossings will be more dangerous when more and faster trains use the line. However, we were PROMISED that the pedestrian footpath on the corner of Cranfield Road into the recreation ground would DEFINITELY be replaced by a footbridge.

I agree with the points made by Woburn Sands Town Council. I would also like to make the following points:

- 1) The pedestrian crossing between Cranfield Road and the recreation ground is heavily utilised by local residents, including many families, as this is the main route to the lower and middle schools, as well as local shops and health facilities.
- 2) If Network Rail intends to close this crossing, it will inflict a **MORE DANGEROUS** situation on us, in particular forcing children to cross the Cranfield Road (there being a pavement on only one side), cross a main road junction adjacent to the busy level crossing and without pedestrian crossing facilities.
- 3) This would also mean children and adults having to wait where there is no pavement (it is on the far side of the railway line), with fumes from vehicles, and on an exceedingly dangerous junction.
- 4) I cannot understand why Network Rail's planned footbridge has now been scrapped on the grounds that "it would be an eyesore". The truth is surely that it has been scrapped on the grounds of cost.
- 5) If the underlying reason is that Network Rail does not own sufficient land to construct a large bridge structure along traditional lines, then why not invite the several talented local engineers to find an innovative design solution?

As Woburn Sands Town Council point out, a footbridge would serve the needs of most local residents, even if mobility scooters had to negotiate the more dangerous option outlined in my second point.

Finally, I would draw your attention to the cynical tactics of developers and organisations like Network Rail. Consistently, if they want to push through unpopular penny-pinching plans, they do so during schools' summer holidays, in order to ensure most people are away or too busy with family commitments to object. Network Rail released information regarding the change of plans 3 days after local schools closed and our objection period ends 2 days after the new school term begins, meaning that the number of 'passers by' to witness/review the information notices pinned to the lampposts was greatly diminished as were the chance of objection.

Is it lawful for plans for such major disruption to our daily communication routes to be displayed ONLY on lampposts (in tiny print, I may add), and for local residents not to receive a letter by post?

PLEASE would you ensure that these proposals are promptly dismissed.

Yours faithfully,

Peter E Barker