

January 2019

East West Rail Western Section Phase 2 project – Transport and Works Act Order
PROOF OF EVIDENCE SUMMARY

Lidlington Parish Council wishes to include the following as evidence for the public enquiry to illustrate the challenges the local community has faced on multiple occasions during the various consultations.

Network Rail showed consistently to residents, the Parish Council and Central Bedfordshire Council the different options being considered for Lidlington which reflected this commitment to a structure or similar being built an alternative route at the School crossing.

This is further reinforced by Network Rail who commented to a planning application registered to the local authority in September 2015 CB/15/03335/FULL Land south of Thomas Johnson Lower School, Hurst Grove, Lidlington, Bedford, MK43 0SB - Construction of a nursery and associated facilities on former paddock land. The site plan is LPC DOCUMENT 1. Network Rail responded to the consultation, see LPC DOCUMENT 2. The planning application was refused by Central Bedfordshire, the applicant took to appeal in 2016. Network Rail then made further representation to the Planning Inspector in 2016, LPC DOCUMENT 3 and the Inspector in their appeal decision makes reference to this, LPC DOCUMENT 4.

As survey data of the School crossing showed high volumes a consultation event specifically for Lidlington was held in June 2016 to look at the options, the accompanying documents show the proposals. See the main consultation documents LPC DOCUMENT 5 and LPC DOCUMENT 6.

These clearly show again the further commitment to an alternative.

Residents engaged with this process in person and with their responses to this June 2016 consultation.

LPC DOCUMENT 7 is the extract from the June 2016 Parish Council meeting minutes to show the challenges faced during the consultation.

It took until January 2018 for Network Rail to commission a survey of the crossing. Footfall will naturally be lower during the coldest season which disappointed the Parish Council.

The feedback from this was not provided to the Parish Council until when Network Rail representatives attended a Parish Council meeting in July 2018. So two years from consultation on options through to relevant feedback. LPC DOCUMENT 8 is a copy of the presentation made to the Parish Council. LPC DOCUMENT 9 is the extract from the July 2018 Parish Council meeting minutes to show the discussion of the meeting with Network Rail representatives recorded.

Follow up requests were made by the Parish Council for receiving a copy of the diversity and inclusion assessment document. As well as follow up the issue raised by Councillors regarding non compliant signalling system and excessive barrier down times and checking that the risk assessment referred to in the presentation included child and adult divisions. It was also felt it would be helpful to understand the near miss and emergency stop data over the last two year period to see any trends, and to understand what the risk matrix considers as high risk data for the stretch of line in Lidlington, as well as the data for Woburn Sands in order to have some comparable data as well. Evidence of these requests can be seen on LPC DOCUMENT 10 and LPC DOCUMENT 11.

Resident objectors are fatigued by the whole process which has gone on over a number of years, and have included so much changing information presented by Network Rail to them, regarding the various options that were being considered. They attended events in their hundreds to give their opinion and select their preferences, only to have them discounted and be told they must exist with access to their local amenities removed and instead deal with lengthy detours and diversions putting themselves at risk.

The Parish Council continue to be committed to ensuring the residents of Lidlington are not forgotten in this.