

THE NETWORK RAIL (LONDON TO CORBY) (LAND ACQUISITION AND BRIDGE WORKS) ORDER

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OPENING SUBMISSIONS ON BEHALF OF THE PROMOTER

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1. The Promoter, Network Rail Infrastructure Limited, seeks an order under s 1 and 5 Transport and Works Act 1992 to facilitate the delivery of the London to Corby Electrification and Capacity Upgrade Project (“L2C”).
2. L2C is a project of considerable significance for the railway. It delivers a material increase in capacity on the Midland Main Line between London and Corby, one of the most crowded parts of the rail network, and one of the most constrained locations on the entire rail network. There can be little doubt as to the significant public interest in the delivery of L2C. One of the key components of the L2C project is the electrification of the line from Bedford to Kettering and Corby.
3. Much of the L2C project is capable of being delivered without the need for this Order. A large proportion of the works lie within railway land, avoiding the need for third party land and enabling the Promoter to rely on permitted development rights. Other consents, such as Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders, have been secured to enable the delivery of elements of the project. Further, in several instances where the Promoter requires third party land, or rights over that land, these have been acquired by agreement.
4. However, there remains a residue of matters which are necessary for the delivery of the benefits of the L2C project which require the powers in this Order. The Inspector is being invited to report on the revised Order, which is further limited in scope due to the resolution of issues by agreement prior to the Inquiry. The fact that the powers

sought are now, in the context of L2C as a whole, relatively limited, does not detract from their importance in the delivery of the project and its substantial public benefits.

5. One of the key sets of works comprised in L2C relates to changes to bridges over the railway to accommodate the electrified railway. At Bromham Road, immediately to the north of Bedford Station, the bridge structure is too low to accommodate the electrified lines and there is no practical scope for lowering the lines. Accordingly, it is necessary to demolish the bridge, and reconstruct it on its existing alignment with greater clearance to the railway. Without those works, the OLE cannot pass beneath the bridge and the electrification would not be possible.
6. At Irthlingborough Road, the Promoter has the necessary powers to demolish the existing bridge to enable the OLE to be installed beneath it, and has carried out those demolition works. However, to reinstate the bridge on its raised alignment it would require land and rights from third parties.
7. At three locations, the OLE apparatus needs to be installed on the outside of viaducts, potentially extending into airspace which is outside the Promoter's control. For that reason, it needs additional rights in these locations.
8. The proposed Order would authorise:
  - a. The works at Bromham Road bridge and matters ancillary to those works;
  - b. The acquisition of land and rights (including temporary possession) relating to:
    - i. The reconstruction of bridge 83 carrying Irthlingborough Road over the railway;
    - ii. The attachment of apparatus to three viaducts: Sharnbrook, Irchester, and Harpers Brook.

9. The Inspector and the Secretary of State are also being invited to consider the grant of deemed planning permission for the reconstruction of Bromham Road.
10. There is little opposition to the Order generally, and several objections have either been resolved or are in the process of being resolved. This Inquiry is therefore focused on two locations: Bromham Road and Irthlingborough Road.
11. At Bromham Road, a non-statutory objector, CCNB, objects to the fact that the proposed works would not make provision for a segregated cycleway over the railway. There is no such cycleway at present; and the Promoter is neither remitted nor funded to deliver such an enhancement. The detailed proposals for the replacement bridge are agreed by Bedford Borough Council as local highway authority.
12. It is no part of the purpose of this Order to deliver such improvements but the Promoter is supportive of the desire to improve provision for cyclists in Bedford. Accordingly it has agreed with Bedford Borough Council to contribute to the development of proposals for a cycle bridge over the railway in the vicinity of Bedford Station.
13. At Irthlingborough Road, Bovis Homes Limited object to the proposed acquisition of land. There is a reasonable expectation that the Promoter and Bovis can reach agreement early in the Inquiry which would avoid the need to hear Bovis's objection. For that reason, it is not proposed to say anything further on that matter at this stage. If it is necessary for the objection to be heard, the Promoter may wish to open its case on that issue separately.
14. The Promoter will update the Inquiry as to the position with outstanding objections where the objectors are not appearing.
15. The Promoter will demonstrate through its evidence to this Inquiry the compelling case for the Order, and will invite the Inspector to firmly recommend its confirmation to the Secretary of State.

Richard Turney  
Landmark Chambers

5 February 2019