Angela Foster OBJ/9

From:
Sent: 02 August 2018 21:44
To: TRANSPORTANDWORKSACT
Subject: Objection to "London to Corby" Transport and Works Act Order.

I am N. Ben Foley of Bedford, . I am making an objection to the application for the "London to Corby" Transport and Works Act Order.

I wish to object on the following grounds:

1) the work will cause excessive disruption, closing an 'A' road, and will take longer than necessary. Information provided by Network Rail (NR) as part of their consultations indicates they have planned 7 months partial closure of the road and 6 months full closure. I believe there would be disruption for a shorter time to knock the bridge down completely and to build new, than with the planned approach of knocking down to a precise point part-way down.

2) the rebuilt bridge doesn't make enough provision for cyclists and pedestrians (including people getting to/from the station): because the plans are to still use parts of the current bridge near the ground, the new bridge won't be wide enough to take proper cycle paths as well as pavements on both sides of the road, and won't be long enough to allow for a cycle path and footpath under the bridge to allow for a safe and easy way to cross Bromham Road – an 'A' road – when high numbers of people have to cross the road to get to/from the station.

3) the rebuilt bridge will actually be in the way of Bedford having good Intercity train services in the long term: platform 4 at Bedford was designed and built to allow for fast trains to use both sides (giving a new 'platform 5'. But for this to be possible, they would need to knock Bromham Road bridge right down to the ground. By doing the partial rebuild they are planning, Network Rail would be getting in the way of long-term planning made by Railtrack only 20 years ago.

4) while the work goes on, the Queens Park district of Bedford will be a de facto (and possibly official) diversion route for A-road traffic, and have a big increase in on-street parking by commuters: there has been contradictory information about where the official diversion route will be, but whatever it is, while the bridge is closed, many people who currently routinely use Bromham Road will use Ford End Road bridge (and some of the time the end of Hurst Grove will be closed too, sending traffic round the back streets). With over a hundred spaces in the carpark temporarily used by the builders, drivers coming in from the west and northwest of Bedford won't make the effort to get through the worse-than usual jams to get to a car-park that is much more likely to be full than at present.

5) the rebuilt bridge will mean wheelchair users and young and elderly cyclists having to climb an extra 320mm height to get across the railway: even if the increase in gradient is within legally acceptable limits, there will be an increased gradient (and/or length of climb). As a wheelchair user who quite often crosses the bridge, I know that the effort involved is already significant, and beyond all but unusually fit wheelchair users. Any increase in the climb will make the bridge an even more significant barrier to mobility. While, by comparison, a smaller proportion of young and elderly cyclists will see the increased climb to cross the bridge in future as a barrier, it will, nonetheless increase the danger to them, as their speed declines more than at present near the summit. In the cases both of wheelchair users and elderly/young, I believe mitigation should have been considered and attempted, but there is no evidence of it having been.

6) this work is being conducted as part of a scheme to electrify the line to Corby only, however, a consequence of that is that through trains between Bedford and Leicester/Nottingham will be completely, or very largely, withdrawn, as outlined in the Department's invitation to tender for the East Midlands franchise. In doing so, the work will leave Bedford with a worse train service. However, even according to the NR documentation, none of the consultations that ought to accompany work that results in such a change have taken place.

7) a single span bridge would make future improvements to the railway easier: a single span bridge might enable the North Siding at Bedford to be extended to take a 12 coach train. Similarly, a single span bridge would allow greater flexibility in future about alignments, positioning of crossovers and turnouts.

Yours,

N Ben Foley