

Angela Foster

030/12

From: Andrew Smith <Andrew.Smith@GTRailway.com>
Sent: 03 August 2018 14:10
To: TRANSPORTANDWORKSACT
Subject: Network Rail (London to Corby) (Land Acquisition, Level Crossing and Bridge works order)
Attachments: GTR_Response_Bedford.pdf

All,

Please find enclosed a response from GTR to the above application.

Regards

Andrew

Andrew Smith
Station Access Contracts Manager
Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR)

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Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) Limited

Registered in England and Wales No. 07934306. Registered office: 3rd Floor, 41-51 Grey Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 6EE

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Secretary of State for Transport
c/o Transport and works order unit
Department for Transport Zone 1/18
Great Minister House
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR

30th July 2018

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Transport and Works (applications and objections procedures) (England and Wales) rules 2006.

Proposed Network Rail (London to Corby) (Land Acquisition, Level crossing and bridge works) order

We have received five such notifications in relation to the above order which relate to the following sites:

135, 128, 130, 125, 129, 132, 134, 133 and 136

As the documents correctly identify, GTR is the Station Facility owner for these sites and leases these areas from Network Rail. Included in the Station lease boundary as granted by Network Rail and renewed in 2014 is a significant area allocated to customers of GTR and other operators who use the station (East Midlands Trains and West Midlands) for car parking. The proposal seeks to remove on a temporary basis an area of that car park that is sufficient to displace a large number of our customer's cars from the spaces they currently use. To date we have been unable to ascertain from Network Rail how long they mean by temporary use of part of the existing station car park? Or discuss with Network Rail exactly how many car parking spaces they intend to use. This proposal raises a number of related issues which to date have not been addressed.

- 1) Where are the displaced customer's cars going to park? The car park is completely full, so there is no prospect of being able to accommodate the loss of significant parking spaces at the station.
- 2) Will the customers not chose to park in the streets surrounding the railway station which is not in the centre of Bedford and is largely residential? Without any indication of a solution/plan to tackle the car parking problem that has been presented to us, there is a strong risk customers will park in the local area and compete with residents for parking spaces. This is an issue that will upset local residents through either loss of parking facilities or finding their vehicles being obstructed by our customers parking in that area. This may generate some adverse publicity for the industry.
- 3) As they will be significantly insufficient space for current users of the car park, there will be competition for spaces with many customers unable to secure one

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either regularly or at all. This is likely to upset a number of our customers and lead them to have to scour the local area looking for somewhere to park thus potentially missing their train to work. Or require the customer to arrive well before their train is due which may have consequences for them in not being able to take children to school etc. as its too early.

- 4) GTR has been through a significant timetable change through changes to the Thameslink services which has not gone as smoothly as we would like. On top of this one of the consequences of the Thameslink timetable has been the reduction in some East Midlands Train services in the peak calling at this station, taking away some services customers use. The industry has upset a number of its customers with these changes. We believe the perception by some of our customers of the railway is poor and this proposal will just add to that view. We could really do with a period of stability to re-build relationships with the industry's customers rather than add what will be long term disruption. Train Operators are also judged by their passengers through the National Rail Passenger surveys twice a year. This proposal may well encourage customers to score the station poorly. GTR within its franchise agreement has a financial regime connected to these survey results. Poor scores attract penalties. There is a question within the survey specific to car parking. If the scores across our Network are below a certain score we pay fines and the car parking score if its low enough and there have been enough questionnaires filled could contribute to that.
- 5) Neighbouring stations such as Flitwick and Harlington which are on the Thameslink network already have full car parks, so there is no opportunity for displaced customers to transfer to those stations and park their cars there and then catch their trains to their destinations.
- 6) GTR derives considerable income from Bedford Car park which requires compensation for that loss of revenue which GTR would have received. There has been no discussion from Network Rail about this. As under its franchise agreement, revenue from passenger travelling ticket sales goes to the Department of Transport, car park revenue is a significant portion of GTR's income from ancillary revenue which we do get to keep. At this stage we are unable to assess how much revenue we would potentially lose as we do not know from Network Rail how long they want to take occupation of part of the car park. On current calculations GTR would lose on average about £2,000+ per annum for each parking bay lost. This is one of GTR's highest earning car parks, so agreeing a compensation package would be rather important to our business. To date we have had no opportunity to discuss any of this with Network Rail. We would also be concerned about the longer term impact on our car park revenue if people locate alternative places to park further away at no cost. They may feel its worth continuing to use those alternative locations rather than return to the station car park, if enough customers do this we could lose some revenue even after the car park has been returned to full use. GTR has some customers who use the car park who have annual parking permits they have already paid for. If they are unable to find spaces, those customers will be seeking refunds from GTR for a service we are no longer able to provide.

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We are concerned about the size of the area Network Rail are seeking to temporarily take out of the station lease boundary. GTR believes with some discussion with Network Rail we may be able to find a way of minimizing the size of the site taken out of the station lease, which would reduce the disruption to our customers and reduce amount of compensation that would need to be paid to GTR as result of a loss of car park revenue. GTR would be happy to enter into discussions with the applicant to explore if we can arrive at a 'better' solution, that assists in achieving the two objectives outlined above. However until that discussion takes place GTR cannot support this application.

GTR would welcome early engagement with the applicant.

Yours faithfully



Andrew Smith
Station Access Contracts Manager

