

**Angela Foster**

035/15

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**From:** Peter Blakeman <  
**Sent:** 30 July 2018 17:32  
**To:** TRANSPORTANDWORKSACT  
**Subject:** Network Rail (London to Corby) (Land Acquisition, Level Crossing and Bridge Works) Order  
**Attachments:** BromRdRailBrdge\_DfT\_180730.docx

Please see our attached response to the above subject.

Peter Blakeman  
Chair - Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire

Bedford

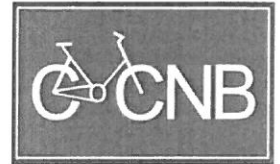
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# CYCLING CAMPAIGN FOR NORTH BEDFORDSHIRE



Vision: To see Bedford as a 'Town of Cyclists' and 'Cycle Friendly Communities'

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30/07/18

Secretary of State for Transport  
c/o Transport and Works Act Orders Unit  
Department for Transport  
Zone 1/18  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
London SW1P 4DR

Dear Sir,

## **Re: Network Rail (London to Corby) (Land Acquisition, Level Crossing and Bridge Works) Order**

Cycling Campaign for North Bedfordshire (CCNB) **OBJECTS** to the Order and resultant planning permission being conferred on Network Rail to reconstruct the bridge carrying Bromham Road over the Midland Mainline railway, in the County of Bedfordshire, Borough of Bedford rail bridge unless provision is made to provide a 3 metre or wider dual use cycle/pedestrian path on the north side of the bridge. We believe this could be achieved by either reassignment of the road bed to 1.5/6.7/3.0 metre or use of a 0.5 metre cantilever of the north side on the existing foundations.

**The reconstruction of the bridge MUST be treated as a 'special' case.**

If the cycle infrastructure proposals are provided they will unlock a huge pent-up demand from residents who would like to cycle safely to the railway station, school or work, making them not only more healthier but at the same time helping to ease the chronic congestion and pollution currently experienced in this area.

Bedford has always been a 'Town of Cyclists' with cycling levels in the late 1940s approaching Dutch levels of use. Since this time the old Bedfordshire County Council followed by Bedford Borough Council have progressively created an extensive cycle network of safe off-road/quiet road routes.

Recent government figures from the 2016 Active Life Survey show that 22% of residents over 16 years old cycle making the borough in the upper quartile of UK local authorities.

The current lack of safe cycle infrastructure across the bridge is one of major gaps still remaining in the cycle network preventing higher cycling counts and acts as a divide for cyclists between the east (railway station and town centre) and the rapidly growing west areas of Bedford borough.

In April 2017 the government published its Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) which outlined the government's ambition to make cycling and walking a natural choice for shorter journeys, or part of a longer journey (for example by train). Without the provision of safe cycling infrastructure across the bridge this will be harder to achieve.

Cycling minister, Jesse Norman, has reiterated many times over the last year the statement - "I want us to become a nation of cyclists, and to make cycling a natural choice for people of all ages and backgrounds."

The bridge is used by 'several hundred' cyclists every day, half of them school children to Biddenham Upper School and commuters to the railway station. Due to its narrowness and incline on each side, crossing the bridge using the carriageway is very dangerous for young and inexperienced cyclists with HGVs and buses trying to squeeze them against the kerb. As a result more than half of the cyclists ride illegally across on the narrow pavement. The dangerous nature of the bridge has been brought out in a number of questionnaires carried out over the last few years as well as by a petition from students of the nearby upper school listing it as one of the top safety concerns of young cyclists.

The old Bedfordshire County Council had been waiting for such an 'once in a lifetime' opportunity to arise since the 1990s to allow the creation of a safe off-road route to Bedford railway station.

CCNB, and we believe Bedford Borough is in agreement, would like to see the reconstruction to have a wider pavement (equal to or wider than 3 metres) on the north side to create a dual use path together with an underpass on the east side from Spencer Road into the station car park. Bedford Borough Council's 2002 Local Plan has a saved cycle route from the bridge to the station. This would then give a safe pedestrian/cycleway for cyclists from Biddenham/Bromham, via a spiral ramp into Spencer Road and the underpass, as well as for cyclists from Clapham/ Brickhill to reach the station and the town centre.

CCNB is a member of the Borough's Bedford Station Travel Plan group which is designed to encourage more customers to arrive at Bedford station using sustainable modes of transport. In Govia Thameslink's revamp of the plan (incidentally through a DfT grant) one of the plans main actions is to improve cycle routes and notably support the widening of the Bromham Road railway bridge. The number of residents currently cycling to the station has increased by 90% over the last 12 years since July 2006 and represents around 9% of station users but has the potential to easily double with safe cycle infrastructure provided.

We would appreciate your URGENT support for these proposals and only confer the Order on Network Rail and deemed planning permission if conditions are attached to implement the required safe cycle infrastructure to enable the scheme to be implemented 'fit for purpose' for all users and the future of the town. The opportunity is not likely to present itself again.

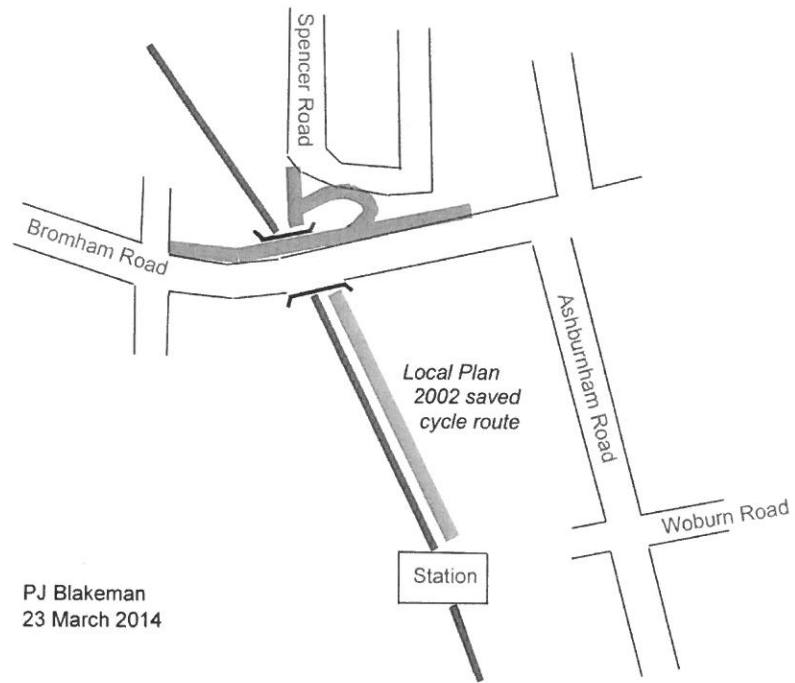
Yours sincerely,



Peter Blakeman – CCNB Chair

Sketch of CCNB's proposal for improved and safe cycle infrastructure

CCNB - PROPOSED BROMHAM ROAD RAILWAY BRIDGE CYCLE IMPROVEMENT



PJ Blakeman  
23 March 2014

