DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT

3 January 2019

TRANSPORT AND WORKS ACT 1992

TRANSPORT AND WORKS (APPLICATIONS AND OBJECTIONS PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND AND WALES) RULES 2006

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

SUMMARY PROOF OF EVIDENCE
of
EDWARD AKERS – NEEDS CASE

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 My name is Edward Akers. I am employed by Network Rail Infrastructure Limited as a Senior Sponsor with two and a half years' experience in the role. I have been employed by Network Rail in various other positions over the last 11 years. In my current role, I am accountable for delivery of benefits, corporate governance, stakeholder relationships, budget and requirements of the London to Corby Electrification and Capacity Upgrade Project (L2C).

2. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

2.1 Scheme Context and Outcomes

2.1.1 The Midland Main Line (MML) runs from Sheffield in South Yorkshire, through the main urban conurbations of the East Midlands in Derby, Nottingham and Leicester and serving Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire into London St Pancras.

2.1.2 Crowding on MML services into and out of London in the morning and evening peak is worse on East Midlands Trains long distance services than on services run by other intercity operators in and out of London. Passengers in Excess of Capacity (PiXC) statistics from 2015 show that 10% of morning peak trains were in excess of capacity and 7% of evening trains. Further statistics show that during an average weekday in 2015, around 15% of intercity services using the Midland Main Line were crowded, with passengers standing as there was insufficient seating. About a third of all weekday services were found to have at least 80% of seated capacity in use.

2.1.3 PiXC statistics from Autumn 2017 show that PiXC is a worsening trend on East Midlands Trains long distance services compared to 2015, with 11% of morning peak trains being in excess of capacity and 17% of evening trains.

2.1.4 The capacity issue means that peak journey times are also extended as services from Nottingham, Derby and Sheffield into London additionally call at outer suburban London commuter stations, such as Kettering, Wellingborough, Bedford and Luton in order to provide capacity.

2.1.5 The Midland Main Line Programme (MMLP), which includes the scheme comprised in the Network Rail (London to Corby)(Land Acquisition and Bridge Works) Order (the Order), will produce the following outcomes:

1. Reduced journey times for passenger and freight trains
2. Increased capacity of the infrastructure leading to more train paths being available
3. Greater capacity on trains to cater for the projected increase in passenger numbers travelling on the route
4. Greater capability on the route to handle longer passenger trains

5. Improved gauge capability for large box container trains
6. Reduced railway industry costs
7. Reduced carbon emissions though the creation of an electrified route from London St Pancras to Corby

2.2 The London to Corby Electrification & Capacity Upgrade Project

2.2.1 The works for which the Order seeks powers form part of the London to Corby Electrification and Capacity Upgrade (L2C) project, which includes the electrification of the Midland Main Line.

2.2.1 The L2C project extends along the Midland Main Line from St Pancras Station to Corby Station. The powers being sought under the Order (the 'Order Scheme') are limited to specific locations along the route between Bedford and Corby.

2.2.2 The L2C project scope allows the following outputs and outcomes to be achieved:

- additional capacity in the form of a new line and signals between Bedford & Kettering;
- electrification (Overhead Line) between Bedford, Kettering & Corby;
- a stabling facility for electric trains at Kettering;
- the capability to run longer trains of up to 240m between London St Pancras, Kettering and Corby;
- a route which is clear for loading gauge W12 from Bedford to Kettering and Corby; and
- provision of axle weight clearances between Sharnbrook Junction and Kettering South Junction of Route Availability 10 at 60mph and Route Availability 8 at 90mph (permissible speed) on the new line.

2.2.3 Amongst the outcomes noted above, the introduction of a new (fourth) line between Bedford and Kettering will allow for an increase in capacity. The existing three lines have capacity for 5 passenger and 2 freight trains to be run in the standard hour. The new line will increase this to 6 passenger and 3 freight trains, allowing a second London to Corby passenger service to run. Electrifying the line to Corby and making the two Corby services electric trains will also create more capacity, and help reduce journey times to and from the East Midlands into London.

3. REGULATORY BACKGROUND

3.1 Network Licence and Enhancement Delivery Plan

3.1.1 The activities of Network Rail (as network operator) are regulated by the Office of Rail and Road by means of a network licence granted under section 8 of the Railways Act 1993. This network licence requires Network Rail to secure the replacement and renewal of the network.

3.1.2 Network Rail's licence requires it to publish a delivery plan that sets out its obligations for enhancement projects. This allows train operators to plan their businesses and funders to plan their finances with a reasonable degree of assurance. For CP5, any projects to enhance the rail network are listed in Network Rail's Enhancement Delivery Plan. The L2C project which is the subject of this proof of evidence and the order, is a listed regulated project within the Enhancement Delivery plan. The regulated output date for delivery of the project is May 2020.

4. THE BUSINESS CASE

4.1 There is an economic business case for the MMLP, which is owned and managed by the Department for Transport (DfT), which sets out the case in economic terms. This includes the Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) information which gives the project a 'value for money' rating.

4.2 The 'Midland Main Line Upgrade Programme Economic Case' was produced in August 2017 to support the full business case approval and final investment authorisation of the programme by DfT. It should be noted that the subject of this evidence, the L2C project, does not have a standalone business case, but instead forms part of this DfT economic case for the whole MML programme.

4.3 The BCRs for the MMLP range between1.69, 1, 6.87 and 52.87 for three different scenarios based on three different timetable baselines which have been considered by the DfT in the economic case for the MMLP. 1.69 is considered 'Medium' Value for Money whilst 6.87 and 52.87 are considered 'Very High' value for money.

4.4 In September 2017, the business case for the L2C project was approved by the Secretary of State for Transport.

5. EARLY SCHEME DEVELOPMENT & ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

5.1 This order authorizes the works to facilitate the electrification part of the L2C project. It should be noted that no alternatives to electrification of the Bedford to Kettering and Corby section were considered. This is due to Network Rail being remitted to deliver an electrification output by the DfT.

5.2 Referenced in the Railway Act Statement 2005, the Midland Main Line electrification (MMLe) was a named project that formed a key part of the MMLP for Control Period 5. It was listed in the CP5 Enhancement Delivery Plan and was part of the overall government strategy of a rolling programme of electrification.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 Network Rail project team members have met with representatives of several councils, MPs and councillors to highlight the benefits of the electrification programme. General awareness events have been held in council buildings, at the Houses of Parliament and in public venues. For specific elements of project scope related matters, public

events have been targeted near to the work sites as both awareness and information events.

6.2 Property negotiations have been taking place in parallel with the Order application process through direct contract with land owners.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 In conclusion, the Order scheme has a business case that is at worst 'medium' and at best 'very high' value for money. I believe the evidence given in my proof of evidence makes it clear that L2C will contribute to economic, environmental and societal benefits to the UK, notably the East Midlands. This evidence demonstrates a clear needs case for the Order scheme.

7.2 The needs case has not been the subject of objections, and there is clear support for the Order scheme from Secretary of State for Transport and the DfT. Importantly the Order Scheme will be in clear accord with the Government's stated aim to improve the MML through the Secretary of State's High Level Output Statement.

7.3 My colleagues will demonstrate that Network Rail has undertaken the appropriate level of assessment on all design options for the works comprised in the Order (see Mr Butterworth's Proof of Evidence – NR73).

7.4 I urge the inspector to consider this evidence, in conjunction with that of my colleagues, and I respectfully request the inspector to recommend that the Order be made, and that the relevant powers required by Network Rail to complete the works be deemed to be granted.