

From Gordon Crosby

27 February 2018

Crossing S01

While giving evidence about crossing S01 at the Inquiry today Mr Kenning of Network Rail seemed to explain that two of the options for a diversion path for S01 had been dismissed due to the intended construction of a "train depot" on the brownfield industrial site beside the rails. You may recall that I asked a question as I had read recently in the local press (East Anglian Daily Times) that the proposals for the depot were now being reviewed by its backers, Greater Anglia, with the clear impression that another site elsewhere was more likely.

Subsequently I found out that the MP for the area had written to the Parish Council just a few days ago on this very subject – please see attached copy – where he makes the future development of the site for rail use appear highly unlikely.

It would seem to me to be rather premature to dismiss what may be rather more suitable and convenient alternative routes for the diversion given the status of the proposals for the site. While I appreciate that at some stage the design environment has to be frozen this is such a major change it needs to trigger a reassessment of the options. A decision on the future of the train depot looks set to be confirmed well before any Order can be finalised, and, in any case, given the industry would seem to be an issue where further information on the actual situation could be readily sought.

The danger is what may be the most suitable and most convenient option for a diversion path could be ignored in favour of a less suitable and less convenient option for the sake of some investigation and a few weeks delay.

The housing development which has planning permission appears to provide housing on a different part of the site combined with mixed industrial development on the area where the train depot would have stood. On cursory examination the proposed layout would not appear to prevent a suitable and convenient footpath routed from the existing tunnel under the tracks. Details of the site masterplan which forms part of the extant planning permission should have already been supplied as part of the Network Rail evidence.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Brantham Parish Council
C/O Sarah Keys – Parish Clerk
15 Palfrey Heights
Brantham
Manningtree
Suffolk
CO11 1SE

7th February 2018

RE: BRANTHAM INDUSTRIAL SITE

I am writing to update you on recent developments regarding the Brantham Industrial Site.

As you may be aware, I was very pleased when Greater Anglia announced that they were planning to locate their new railway depot on the industrial site. My support was based on the fact that it seemed to be a suitable solution for the site, providing much-needed regeneration from a prestige client with good quality engineering jobs, but also minimising the amount of additional traffic that could be generated by traditional light-industrial activity.

Unfortunately, I have recently been informed that the Greater Anglia development is in significant peril, and as it currently stands is unlikely to move forward. There are a number of reasons for the current position but the main issue revolves around the level crossing at Manningtree Railway Station. I am aware that this crossing has been a point of concern for many years, and I am deeply disappointed that its lack of available capacity may cause our area to lose this important development.

Since being contacted by Greater Anglia in mid-January, I have been in constant communication with the relevant stakeholders, including the Secretary of State for Transport, and have held several meetings both in Suffolk and Westminster to apply as much pressure as possible. It is now apparent that the issues may not be resolvable without a much more significant improvement to the level crossing. As such, I have been working with my colleague, Bernard Jenkin MP, to expedite a solution. In March we will be holding a meeting with Essex County Council, Suffolk County Council, Babergh District Council, Tendring District Council, Network Rail, Greater Anglia and the Department for Transport to discuss the future of the crossing. Yesterday we both met with the Transport Secretary, the Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP, and he will now also be looking into this matter further.

However, even if we do succeed in securing a commitment from all stakeholders to move this project forwards, we have to be realistic about the time-scale. The rail franchise promised a new fleet of trains which will start arriving on the tracks as early as the end of this year. It is essential that a rail depot is delivered to enable the stabling of these new trains. As such, it is very unlikely that the Brantham site would be developed for the current franchise needs as a level crossing solution will take many years of work before construction can begin. I do not



say this to be pessimistic, but rather to be honest and realistic. We are now looking at the short-term possibility of the site as a solution for a wheel lathe location, or a full depot for the next franchise.

If there is a positive to be drawn from all of this, it is that we now have even more reason to address the issues of the Manningtree crossing. If we are able to find a solution it will not only be good news for the local community per se, but would ensure that the viability of Brantham as an employment site was strengthened, keeping open the possibility of rail use.

I know that this will cause a certain level of distress to both Councillors and Brantham residents, and I am committed to keeping Brantham Parish Council as updated as possible, subject to commercial sensitivity.

As always, please do not hesitate to get in touch if I can be of any assistance.

Yours sincerely,

James Cartlidge
Member of Parliament for South Suffolk



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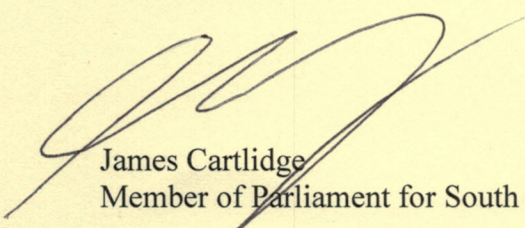
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