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Electronic Submission

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11 October 2021

Dear Sarah,

**Application for Prior Approval – Part 18 of GPDO at Oxford Railway Station  
21/02007/PA18  
Response to County Council Consultation**

Thank you for forwarding on the consultation response from the County Council that you have received in relation to the above application (dated: 21st September 2021).

It is positive to note that the County Council has confirmed they are supportive of the provision of additional rail capacity and redevelopment of Oxford Station.

The County note these improvements are in accordance with Connecting Oxfordshire: Local Transport Plan 2015-2031 (including the Oxfordshire Rail Strategy, the Strategic Economic Plan, and the emerging Local Industrial Strategy). They clarify that the scheme will enable growth through the creation of additional passenger and freight capacity by enabling other rail projects and development of services including East West Rail, the reopening of the Cowley Branch Line and additional services on the Cotswold Line. Whilst Network Rail isn't applying for full planning permission it is positive that it is acknowledged that the project is in full accordance with the relevant transport related policies.

This letter has been written to address further comments and issues of concern to the County (many that aren't necessarily linked to the detail in the prior approval application which is for works to buildings, bridges and alteration of a means of access to a highway for vehicular traffic) which are contained in the consultation response but all the same we will respond in writing so it is recorded and can be shared with colleagues at the County. Therefore, in the remainder of this letter I have in turn gone through the comments/ concerns in the letter and responded.

In addition, since the issuing of the consultation response we now (yesterday) agreed heads of terms of a legal agreement between the County Council and Network Rail to deal with Highways issues. Network Rail has in the said agreement committed to enter into separate legal agreements with the County required to deliver this project to include a S.278 Agreement, a Railway Bridge Agreement.

In addition to the separate legal agreements to give the County comfort that the correct highway safety standards will be delivered (for elements of the project that are not subject to prior approval) a commitment to collaborate and co-operate with the Council in formulating final designs for the development to address any reasonable requests the Council may have relating to



highway, traffic or transport issues in particular highway safety and specifically to revise current designs to (a) improve the convenience and safety of all points where cyclists leave and re-join the carriageway and (b) increase the width of the footway/cycleways on both sides of Botley Road so far as is reasonably practicable within the existing highway boundary.

Whilst the County are clear in their support for the project in their consultation response, they would like to have comfort that this scheme sits well with the future of the rest of the station and what would be essentially future phases of station works and believe this should be secured through a comprehensive masterplan.

In response to the future and further station expansion the design of phase 2 of station works (this prior approval) has been designed to facilitate a further phase 3 of station expansion and redevelopment of the main station building and other railway infrastructure primarily to the east of the railway corridor when funding comes forward. The phase 2 project should be considered as an enabler to facilitate the further redevelopment of the station of which none will be possible unless phase 2 delivers the essential changes to Botley Road to include works both to the railway bridges and the improvements to the public highway. The submitted prior approval letter summarises and describes the improvements/ benefits to the public highway and the improvement to the amenity of local residents using it.

We have submitted with this prior approval application a plan which shows how an additional through railway track will be delivered to the eastern side and as part of this current proposal we propose to use the new deck of the bridge (which will in the future accommodate the railway line) as an interim solution to the replacement pedestrian footbridge crossing Botley Road. The existing footbridge will need to be replaced as part of phase 2 as the improved highway and new grade separated cycle/ pedestrian paths underneath the bridge is now much wider than the existing.

In regard to the comprehensive station masterplan the City Council have appointed Atkins to produce this document which has been progressing for many months and both the County and Network Rail are partners in that development. It was hoped that this would have been completed by now with outputs of that work for public engagement albeit it is envisaged that this will be consulted on in the near future. Network Rail has been providing technical input into the masterplanning team and the phase 2 works has been carefully designed to facilitate the phase 3 and masterplanning of the station and the environment around it including the existing station buildings, operational station car parks and forecourt.

The County in their response have flagged up four separate points of concern. We will go through these in turn and rather than verbatim list the concern we have summarised the issues;

Firstly, the width proposed of the two-grade separated shared pedestrian/ cycle path.

Whilst the exact path width is outside of the parameters of the prior approval, as outlined above we have now have agreed heads of terms of a legal agreement where we have committed to look at this issue in more detail as we get into detailed construction design. If we are able to improve the width within the parameters of the railway bridge and the land available without the need for a further prior approval we have committed to this.

Secondly, the transition of how the shared cycle path links back into Botley Road both east and west and how it merges adjacent to the existing junctions in the public highway or public realm.

Again, as above the legal agreement between the two organisations commits Network Rail to look at this in more detail and will form part of a separate highways technical approval process during the detailed construction design work.

To this end we have agreed to be part of an independent design review of the new pedestrian and cycle paths under Botley Road Bridge. The County Council will be carrying out a procurement process that will be issued imminently inviting three separate consultancies to tender this work from their call off contracts.

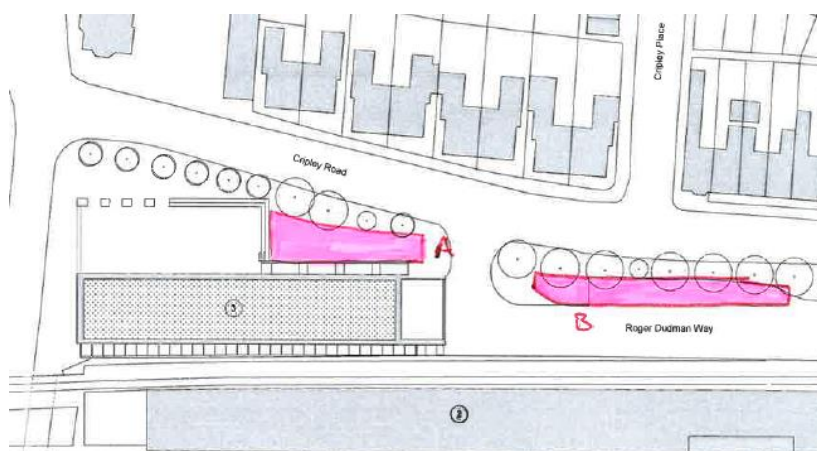
Thirdly, the design and width of the replacement pedestrian bridge over Botley Road.

The existing pedestrian bridge over Botley Road was originally constructed by Railtrack when the Becket Street car park was constructed, to essentially provide a grade separated crossing for rail passengers under the LPA reference 97/01038/NF. This current project will replace the footbridge at a similar width of the internal pathway to the existing, and as an interim the future railway deck (needed for phase 3 of the station project) will be adapted to be used as a footbridge.

Through the agreed legal agreement Network Rail has provided assurances to the County Council that fundamentally outlines the commitments made to provide a pedestrian bridge prior to the commencement of starting works. Within the Agreement of Deed, Network Rail have confirmed that the existing footbridge over Botley Road will not be removed until County Council and Network Rail have agreed upon a permanent replacement footbridge to be constructed by Network Rail as part of the Development and for that to be made available to the public prior to the Development being first brought into use.

Fourthly, the lack of cycling spaces and only providing 26 Sheffield stands.

We have already provided the city council some potential options to increase the number of cycle parking spaces in our email dated 16 September and have suggested a planning condition to that affect.



The cycle parking areas could be increased into the two areas shaded pink above and have been referred to as A and B.



In area A in terms of numbers in front of the station. IDOM haven't fitted these in as densely as they could be, there could be up to 7 rows, so  $26 + 7 + 5 + 4 = 42$  hoops or 82 bikes max with two bikes per hoop.

In area B (longer but narrower) we could achieve a similar number.

Therefore with the use of Sheffield hoops with standard bikes an approximate estimate.

A = 82 bikes

B = 82 bikes

For double decker racks, in the work Jacobs did on the ES they have calculated that you can fit approx. 2.1 as many bikes in the same space, so the figures above could be:

A = 172 bikes max

B = 172 bikes max

All of the above numbers are estimates, to be refined at detailed design so could go up or down 10-20%.

In addition, as we get into detailed design there maybe scope to provide more space further up Roger Dudman Way albeit this would be at the cost of less space for footpath, but again as we get into detailed construction design this can be explored further.

If we maximise to use double stacked at A this could change the perception of openness at the station entrance and may make more sense to use hoops in A and double stacked in B albeit this would deliver approximately 250 spaces rather than 330.

So in conclusion on cycling provision there is definitely scope to increase numbers and a planning condition could be included to be discharged in writing, we are flexible to explore this in more detail and take your guidance on single or stacked provision.

The county confirm in their response that the impact of the completed scheme shall have a negligible impact on the local highway, but in addition to the four concerns above additional concerns were expressed about construction traffic.

As part of the remit given to the successful contractor who will deliver this project there is a requirement for them to produce a Construction Traffic Management Plan. Highways England have also expressed a similar concern about construction traffic using/ coming from the A34 and they are also keen to be involved in agreeing the content of that document.

We have already made a commitment to provide a Construction Traffic Management Plan in our Environmental Statement (EIA) and we would expect the City Council to include a planning condition to that affect.

The impact of the county's strategic bus network and how any impact of temporary one way working under the bridge.



As part of the project development and implementation Network Rail has completed a Diversity Impact Assessment that will address all construction related impacts on the public and how they will be managed.

In the conclusion of the consultation the County suggest two planning conditions should be included on the decision notice in relation to cycle parking and footbridge detail.

We can confirm that we would be happy with the inclusion of both these planning conditions.

In summary we hope you can see that this letter adequately addresses all comments made by the County and some of these matters are not really relevant to the prior approval process, however notwithstanding this the County Council will retain full control of technical specification and detail through separate highways approval process. In addition, Network Rail has agreed heads of terms for a legal agreement between us and the County Council to enter into separate legal agreements with the County required to deliver this project to include a S.278 Agreement and a Railway Bridge Agreement.

If you have any queries regarding the contents of this letter or require further information on the contents, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Colin Field", enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

**Colin Field MRTPI**  
Town Planning Manager  
Wales and Western Region

Cc. Lynette Hughes, OCC  
Craig Rossington, OCC