

TRANSPORT AND WORKS ACT 1992
TRANSPORT AND WORKS (INQUIRIES PROCEDURES)
RULES 2004
THE NETWORK RAIL (OXFORD STATION PHASE 2
IMPROVEMENTS (LAND ONLY) ORDER)

SPONSOR
SUMMARY PROOF OF EVIDENCE
Chris Nash BEng(Hons) MBA

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Author	Network Rail
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*Summary Proof of Evidence – Sponsor***1. Introduction**

1.1.1 I am Chris Nash, BEng Hons, MBA. I have been employed in the railway industry since 2015, working for Network Rail in project roles as Sponsor and Senior Sponsor, leading the development and delivery of major projects in the Oxfordshire area. I am currently the Senior Sponsor for the Oxford Corridor Phase 2 project.

2. Scope of Evidence

2.1.1 This evidence explains:

- the background and need for the OSP2 Project
- the aims and objectives of the scheme
- timing of the need
- scope of works
- funding and delivery
- impact of not proceeding
- consultation
- conclusion

3. Background, Need and Funding

3.1.1 The OSP2 Project forms part of a package of rail enhancement schemes, which deliver significant economic and strategic benefits to the wider Oxford area and the country. The enhanced infrastructure in the Oxford area will provide benefits for both freight and passenger services, as well as enable further schemes in this strategically important rail corridor, including the introduction of East West Rail services in 2024.

3.1.2 The constraints at Oxford Station include both platform availability and pedestrian flow capacity, restricting the transition of journeys from private car to public and active modes of transport. In the existing timetable, trains are often held outside the station to wait for a through platform to become available, and services have long turnaround times in the bay platforms until paths become available on the Chiltern Main Line. The OSP2 Project is also the critical enabler for any further service increases into Oxford and is required by December 2024 to provide the required infrastructure to successfully deliver and operate the 2024 train service specification, accommodating East West Rail and supporting wider rail proposals under the Oxfordshire Connect Programme. Furthermore, the project will improve road safety through reduced risk of incidents involving pedestrians and cyclists owing to segregated routes, reduced risk of incidents involving vehicles owing to space and segregation and reduced risk of highways-induced events such as bridge strikes resulting from the greater height clearance. The Botley Road works will enable a modal shift from cars to active and public modes of transport from West Oxford

3.1.3 The Oxford Corridor project started in 2010 with initial feasibility work completed June 2011. The drivers for the project were to increase route capacity through the provision of additional passenger and freight train paths per hour in each direction and where feasible, reduce end-end journey time within the physical scope of the line of route between Didcot (North Junction) and Oxford (including to Wolvercote Junction). Development for the scheme continued with an initial option selection report produced in 2012 before being revisited in 2014 with changes made to the scope of Phase 2 works to include a new west side through platform at Oxford Station.

3.1.4 The options for the location of Oxford Station have been limited since its original construction. The provision of additional platform capacity at Oxford Station is severely constrained by the surrounding land use

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which means that only a narrow strip of land to the west and to the east are available for the construction of a new platform. The addition of a new platform has a knock on effect in terms of the need to re-align Sheepwash Bridge to the north and the land take to facilitate this. These constraints mean that any expansion of Oxford Station requires a Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) for land acquisition outside of Network Rail's ownership.

3.1.5 Single option development was completed in March 2020 ahead of an outline business case submission to the Department for Transport, which was approved in April 2021. Funding has been approved for land acquisition, consents and detailed design for the scheme. The full business case for the scheme will be submitted in January 2022 following the Public Inquiry, which is usual in terms of timing for such projects.

4. Timing

4.1.1 Oxford Phase 2 is the critical enabler for any further service increases into Oxford and is required by December 2024 to provide the required infrastructure to successfully deliver and operate the 2024 train service specification, accommodating East West Rail and supporting wider rail proposals under the Oxfordshire Connect Programme.

4.1.2 Delivery of Oxford Phase 2 by the planned Entry into Service date of December 2024 will provide the necessary interfacing infrastructure to ensure that the planned introduction of EWR services can take place, without adversely impacting existing passenger and freight services.

5. Scope of Works

5.1.1 The works at Oxford Station comprised in the application for Prior Approval can be referenced in the Planning Proof of Evidence. All of the land in the order as detailed in the Property Proof of Evidence is essential for delivery of the project.

5.1.2 The Prior Approval application for the works comprised in the OSP2 Project is anticipated to be determined prior to the Public Inquiry. It is considered that the OSP2 Project complies with the relevant national and local planning policies and accordingly, that Prior Approval will be forthcoming.

6. Funding

6.1.1 The cost of acquiring the land comprised in the Order was fully authorised as part of the £68.8m committed as part of the outline business case.

6.1.2 The costs for implementing the works comprised in the OSP2 Project will be met from the Rail Enhancements Budget allocated to Oxford Phase 2 in line with the Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline policy.

6.1.3 The final investment decision for all the remaining funding (£92.6m) will be submitted in January 2022 for a decision in April 2022 in accordance with the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline process, to support the planned delivery of the scheme by December 2024. A decision at this stage will provide the funder certainty on cost and programme for delivery of the works. The scheme has significant stakeholder support as well as a strong strategic and economic case.

7. Impact of Not Proceeding

7.1.1 The following impacts are predicted if the scheme does not proceed:

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- Passenger overcrowding will worsen at Oxford station, particularly in peak time. This will require an infrastructure intervention to alleviate congestion. The station will be non-compliant across four areas:
 - Platform clearance time.
 - Station entrance congestion.
 - Vertical transportation queueing onto the station footbridge.
 - Emergency evacuation.
- Continued delay for passenger services awaiting platforms at Oxford and the performance impact of this on passenger journeys and the wider rail system.
- Unacceptable performance levels for the delivery of the 2024 service specification.
- Slow and unreliable road journey times in the area, particularly on the A34 and routes into Banbury, Bicester, and Oxford. As an example, the Oxfordshire Local Transport plan forecasts an additional 15,400 commuter trips into the area in and around Oxford between 2015 and 2031 (D20).
- Potential for continued delays to road and rail from bridge strikes by high vehicles.
- Additional complexity of the delivery of the Oxford Station masterplan, which requires a western entrance to deliver the improvements to the east.
- Reduced accessibility and connectivity to Oxford's West End, a major area of city centre regeneration, which has the potential to support 9,700 net additional jobs county-wide.
- Perpetuation of suppression of economic growth in Oxfordshire caused by road and rail transport networks that are at, or above, capacity.
- Barriers to sustainable travel options and continued safety concerns around Botley Road Bridge.
- Constraints to further increases in freight traffic through the Oxford Corridor.

8. Consultation

8.1.1 The OSP2 project has consulted extensively with stakeholders. Overall feedback to the scheme has been positive and all stakeholders have been supportive of planned improvements to Oxford station.

8.1.2 Network Rail have taken onboard feedback and adjusted the scheme accordingly. In parallel to this the Network Rail Property Team have held extensive engagement with all impacted landowners as part of the ongoing TWAO process which is covered within the Property proof of evidence.

9. Conclusion

9.1.1 Overall, Network Rail considers there is a compelling case in the public interest for the powers sought to be granted as part of the Order. The Prior Approval application for the works comprised in the OSP2 Project is anticipated to be determined prior to the Public Inquiry.

9.1.2 The OSP2 Project is the critical enabler for any further service increases into Oxford and is required by December 2024 to provide the required infrastructure to successfully deliver and operate the 2024 train service specification, accommodating East West Rail and supporting wider rail proposals under the Oxfordshire Connect Programme; it will bring significant benefits to the station and region once delivered.

Network Rail will provide evidence at the forthcoming public Inquiry to address the concerns raised and to support its position that the Order be made.

10. WITNESS DECLARATION

I hereby declare as follows:

OFFICIAL

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This summary proof of evidence includes all facts which I regard as being relevant to the professional opinion which I have expressed and I have drawn the inquiry's attention to any matter which would affect the validity of that opinion.

I believe the facts which I have stated in this proof of evidence are true and that the opinions are correct.

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. M. M. G.', is written over a faint, light blue circular watermark. The signature is fluid and cursive.

8 November 2021