

Network Rail (Cambridge South Infrastructure Enhancement) Order

Summary Proof of Evidence of Charlotte Burton

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Principal Planning Officer, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning

On behalf of South Cambridgeshire District Council (OBJ-24)

Relating to Statement of Matters (211027) items 3. (i) The effect of the proposal on biodiversity including biodiversity net gain; and 10. The conditions proposed to be attached to the deemed planning permission for the scheme.

07 January 2022

1. My name is Charlotte Burton, and I am a fully qualified planning officer presently employed by Greater Cambridge Shared Planning as a Principal Planning Officer. I am appearing at the Inquiry into the application for the Network Rail (Cambridge South Infrastructure Enhancement) Order on behalf of South Cambridgeshire District Council (hereafter referred to as 'the Council').
2. I am a fully chartered member of the Royal Town Planning Institute with 7 years' post-qualification experience. I have a Bachelor of Arts degree in Geography and a Master of Science degree in Spatial Planning. The evidence which I have prepared and provide for in this Proof of Evidence is true and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.
3. The Council supports the aim of the Cambridge South Infrastructure Enhancements scheme, which aligns with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Local Transport Plan (2020) and the objectives of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 to promote sustainable economic growth, respond to climate change, and maximise sustainable transport modes.
4. Notwithstanding this, the Council has raised objections to the scheme where the proposal fails to comply with the adopted development plan and other material considerations, which are summarised in our representation to the public consultation (OBJ-24) and Statement of Case (E11-OBJ24). Since then, officers for the Council have engaged with the applicant to seek to resolve these objections, including several meetings and exchanges of correspondence.
5. Correspondence summarising these discussions and the current position on our objections at the time of writing is provided in the letter from the Council dated 07 December (Appendix B) and the response from the applicant's Planning Manager dated 10 December (Appendix C). My Proof of Evidence has been prepared based on the content of these documents, although review of the documents is ongoing at the time of writing.
6. The Council maintains its objections to the scheme because, on the basis of the material in front of the Council at this time, the proposal fails to accord with the adopted development plan for the following reasons and having regard to the planning balance, material planning considerations are not sufficient to overcome the objections:
 1. The application has not provided sufficient information to demonstrate the 10% biodiversity net gain target is achievable and can provide appropriate mitigation on or near to the site, and as a result has not demonstrated compliance with Local Plan 2018 policy NH/4, and NPPF 2021 paragraph 174.
 2. The loss of trees along the railway line and across the scheme must be minimised in accordance with Local Plan 2018 policies HQ/1, NH/2, and NH/4.
7. The proposal therefore fails to comply with the development plan, because of the conflict with Local Plan policies HQ/1, NH/2, and NH/4 due to the impact on

biodiversity and existing trees, and there are no material considerations to outweigh these conflicts. As matters stand, planning permission should not be granted, and the Order should not be made, and a certificate under section 19(1)(b) of the acquisition of Land Act 1981 should not be granted.

8. The Council's objections to the proposal could be overcome through the submission of acceptable details about the proposed onsite mitigation and how options for further onsite mitigation (including the retention of existing trees) have been exhausted; and acceptable details about the proposed delivery of offsite mitigation at Lower Valley Farm (including an acceptable legal mechanism to secure delivery) to demonstrate that the proposals will lead to genuine and demonstrable gains for biodiversity that are resilient to future pressures and supported by appropriate maintenance arrangements, in accordance with the NPPG, the NPPF and policies HQ/1, NH/2, and NH/4.
9. Should the Secretary of State be minded to grant deemed planning consent, then the Council requests that planning conditions are applied. At the time of writing, the Council has not agreed a set of draft conditions with the applicant. Discussions are ongoing and the Council anticipates agreeing draft conditions in the Statement of Common Ground to be submitted.
10. I have provided comments on the most up-to-date set of draft conditions available to me at the time of writing (Appendix A). In summary, the Council supports the substance of most of the conditions, however further discussions are required on the conditions relating to archaeology, biodiversity net gain, surface water drainage, public art and lighting. The Council also requests an additional condition to secure compliance with the mitigation measures within the Environmental Statement.
11. My Proof of Evidence therefore relates to the following matters on behalf of South Cambridgeshire District Council as outlined in the Statement of Matters:
 3. (i) The effect of the proposal on biodiversity including biodiversity net gain;
10. The conditions proposed to be attached to the deemed planning permission for the scheme.

END – 875 words