

THE NETWORK RAIL (CAMBRIDGE SOUTH INFRASTRUCTURE ENHANCEMENTS) ORDER

OPENING STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

1. As you will be aware, the University is the owner of several land interests in parts of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, including a long leasehold interest in the Anne McLaren Building, known as the AMB.
2. The University is one of the most prestigious academic institutions in the world. Its ability to provide an environment which allows its teaching and research to flourish is critical to its historical and continuing success. The Campus, which accommodates the University's Schools of Clinical Medicine and Biological Science, is vitally important to its core research activity. It is the largest centre of medical research and science in Europe. Locating world-leading academic scientists on the same site as teaching hospitals, as well as international biomedical and pharmaceutical companies, allows the rapid and effective translation of research into clinical practice.
3. The AMB represents a major UK investment in scientific research. Named after Dame Anne McLaren, one of the world's leading specialists in reproductive medicine, it is a unique facility, supporting globally important biomedical research activity across the Campus, helping to further our understanding of how diseases occur and to develop new treatments for conditions including cancer, cardiac and respiratory disease, dementia and diabetes. The AMB is currently expanding its operational capacity, but currently hosts 119 individual research grants, supporting a total of c. £41.5 per annum of research grants.
4. The work within the AMB includes the use of extremely valuable high resolution MRI equipment, as well as the use of rodents and fish, to test disease treatments. The MRI equipment requires a specialist working environment that is acutely sensitive to external vibration. It is critical to avoid vibration that would cause abnormalities in images, thereby impairing or rendering useless crucial research work and its efficient transfer into clinical treatment. Home Office licence conditions require, but the University aims to meet, the highest standards of animal welfare. This also requires tightly controlled laboratory conditions to avoid noise and vibration which risks harm to animal welfare as well as the outcomes of research work.

5. Noise and vibration on work at the AMB could have devastating impacts for the crucial research activity on the Campus. It was primarily concern about these potential impacts which prompted the objection by the University to the Order before you. The proximity of both the construction and operation of the Order scheme, including the provision of new track closer to the AMB, has caused serious concern. Environmental information which accompanied the proposals predicted significant effects, even without properly considering the full extent of impacts which could arise to such a specialist facility, or proposing adequate mitigation. Similar disquiet with the ability to understand the potential effects of the scheme arose in respect of drainage and electromagnetic interference, as well as highways-related effects. Concerns with potential operational impacts also applied to the development potential of Plot 9, in the freehold ownership of the University and located next to the AMB.
6. Set against these concerns was the support that the University has consistently expressed for the strategic objectives of the scheme and the benefits that it holds in prospect, including access to the Campus itself. As preparation for the inquiry continued, the University therefore set out in its evidence not simply the potential effects on the AMB, but key criteria which the construction and operation of the Order scheme would need to meet in order to resolve its concerns and safeguard the work carried on there.
7. It is not necessary at this stage here to rehearse the detail of these issues, because some additional information has been provided and further discussions have taken place between the University and Network Rail leading up to the inquiry. Progress has been, and continues to be, made. The University hopes that the positive engagement, particularly on draft Heads of Terms over the last week or so, will carry on in the coming days. **[Oral addition:** *However, it is noted that the “formidable armoury” of control of the effects of the scheme claimed by Network Rail in its opening included reliance of legal agreements which not only go beyond the environmental statement but have yet to be agreed. This emphasises the importance of Network Rail continuing discussions with objectors, including the University, to ensure that concerns relating to the Network Rail assessment work can be properly addressed].*
8. Apart from discussions over controlling and mitigating the potential effects of the scheme, the University has identified issues regarding the clarity with which the draft Order, Book of Reference and Deposited Plans have together identified the precise

effect of the Order on its land interests. *[Oral addition: The University has not seen the latest draft Order mentioned only this morning]*. The University will raise these with Network Rail outside the inquiry. The University has also reserved its position on attendance to explain how its position can be protected through the drafting of the Order or proposed conditions.

9. We anticipate that these matters, along with the wider issues raised by the evidence, can be the subject of further discussions on a Statement of Common Ground which we will support Network Rail in progressing. We will update the Inquiry accordingly and as soon as practicable in advance of our timetabled appearance, along with suggested arrangements for a site visit inside the AMB should that prove to be necessary.

SCOTT LYNESS QC
1 FEBRUARY 2022

