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Secretary of State for Transport
c/o Transport Infrastructure Planning Unit
Department for Transport
Great Minister House
33 Horseferry Road
London , SW1P 4DR

By email only

Our ref. 21/02957/TWA

2 August 2021

Dear Secretary of State,

Network Rail (Cambridge South Infrastructure Enhancements) Order

South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) received formal notification on 18 June 2018 that Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (Network Rail) has applied under Section 6 of the Transport and Works Act 1992 for the abovementioned Order under Sections 1 and 5 of that Act. This letter provides the Council's formal response.

Proposed development

The Council has reviewed the whole scheme and - while noting the significant works for the construction of the station in Cambridge City administrative boundary – has focussed our comments on the works within South Cambridgeshire, comprising:

- works to Shepreth Branch Junction in Great Shelford, including remodelling the switches and minor realignment of the track for short distance to permit line speeds to be increased from 30 miles per hour (mph) to 50 mph;
- associated works to the embankments to accommodate and support the new railway infrastructure;
- Webster's footbridge installation of safety screens and a small railway maintenance area to the east of the existing Webster's footbridge;

- closure of farm crossings Dukes No.2 Level Crossing and Webster's Level Crossing at Shelford and extinguishment of the existing private access over the crossing to improve safety. A new bridge is proposed over Hobson's Brook to give access to that land from Addenbrooke's Road;
- new permanent rail systems compound to the south-west of Addenbrooke's Road (Nine Wells Bridge) within a fenced enclosure containing an electricity substation, a single storey building housing signalling and equipment, space for maintenance vehicle parking;
- attenuation ponds and drainage works to the south of Addenbrooke's Road;
- acquisition of replacement land for exchange open space land to the south of Addenbrooke's Road including landscaping works;
- relocation of existing masts and compounds;
- powers to carry out certain works in the highway and the right to use private roads for the purposes of construction, and powers to carry out works to streets including the temporary diversion of streets; and
- temporary diversion of NCN Route 11 (cycle track) and reinstatement post construction to its original alignment under Nine Wells Bridge.

It is noted that far more significant works and interventions are proposed within the Cambridge City Council administrative area, including the construction of the station itself and significant earthworks within Hobson's Park.

Site constraints

The relevant site constraints include Hobson's Brook which runs through the site and Nine Wells Local Nature Reserve within 100m of the site. The site is within the Cambridge Green Belt. The Scheduled Monument to the west of the railway line and to the south of Addenbrooke's Road is partially within the site. The Grade II Listed Nine Wells Monument is within 130m to the east of the site and there are a number of other Listed Buildings in Great Shelford within 30m of the application site boundary. The Great Shelford Conservation Area adjoins the southern boundary of the application site.

Comments

The Council overall supports the aim of the Cambridge South Infrastructure Enhancements scheme to promote connectivity within Cambridgeshire to facilitate future growth in the area and promote sustainable development, which aligns with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Local Transport Plan (2020). This supports the objectives of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 to promote sustainable economic growth, responding to climate change, and maximising sustainable transport modes (policy S/2).

Biodiversity net gain

The Council notes the applicant's commitment to achieve a 10% net gain in biodiversity in accordance with the forthcoming Environment Bill. However, the Council encourages Network Rail to align with the Council's Doubling Nature Strategy 2021 and aspire to achieve 20% biodiversity net gain through the development, which would deliver greater benefits for the natural environment. The loss of trees along the railway line and across the scheme should therefore be minimised and the Council would seek a condition to secure tree protection measures.

Having said this, we are concerned that the applicant has provided limited information about how the biodiversity net gain target will be achieved. Some biodiversity enhancement would be provided on the proposed public open space exchange land to the south of Addenbrooke's Road, which is supported by the Council's Ecology Officer. However, the applicant has also stated that the net gain targets would be achieved through options to purchase additional land to build new habitats; to purchase biodiversity units from third party organisations; or working with third parties to achieve biodiversity units on their land. The detail would be secured through a condition for an Ecological Method Statement to be submitted to the Council for consideration.

This approach is concerning, because insufficient information has been submitted at this stage to demonstrate to the Council that these options are deliverable and would achieve the target, and would provide appropriate mitigation for the scheme. These options would be dependent to some extent on third parties, either through partnership working or sale of land, and are somewhat outside of the applicant's control. In addition, enhancements should be on site or as close to the site as possible so that it provides appropriate mitigation for the scheme. Therefore, we require further clarity on this point to determine whether the recommended condition would meet the six tests for planning conditions. More information about the proposed biodiversity enhancement must be submitted before the application is determined.

Landscape and visual impact

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been carried out in accordance with the relevant guidance set out in 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition' (GLVIA3) (Ref. 1) and it is proportionate and appropriate. The Council agrees to a large extent with the findings and conclusions of the assessment in relation to both the landscape character and visual impacts. However, the findings and conclusions of the LVIA, are partly reliant on the successful mitigation through the landscape proposals. The application does not provide sufficient detail about the landscape proposals to provide unreserved assurance of the success of the mitigation.

On a more detailed point, the substation and railway systems compound to the south of Addenbrooke's Road must be carefully integrated into its rural location and the land take must be minimised to give maximum opportunity to improve the surrounding environment. The deemed planning drawing parameter plan 'heights' (158454-ARC-ZZ-ZZ-DRG-LEP-000102 P01) shows the indicative location of the

substation and other structures within the compound, however this is not sufficiently precise to control the scale and height of the building that could come forward under the discharge of conditions, which could lead to ambiguity when assessing compliance with the parameter plan. The annotations should specify a maximum building footprint and single storey height.

Impact on local residents

The applicant's noise modelling has identified construction noise levels at various locations as being potentially moderate to major by day and by night, including at Shepreth Branch Junction (particularly Abberley Wood). This was to be expected and it is acknowledged that due to health and safety reasons and access constraints, work will need to be carried out throughout the day and night depending on whether or not possession of rail tracks is required. However, site specific mitigation and attenuation measures will need to be employed at locations where works will occur that have the potential to adversely impact residential areas of Great Shelford. These measures must be included in the Code of Construction Practice.

The applicant's assessment has also identified major construction ground-borne vibration impacts at Shepreth Branch Junction. Full details of mitigation will need to be provided within the Code of Construction Practice. The applicant has committed to Best Practicable Means alongside continued liaison and communication with occupiers of the premises in close proximity to the station area, with details to be provided in the Code of Construction Practice Part A. The timing of the advanced notifications will be set out in the Code of Construction Practice Part B following consultation with the Council's Environmental Health Team. It is important to have good and early engagement with the Council and residents on both the mitigation measures and the consultation strategy to minimise the disruption to local residents and impact on mental health.

The Air Quality Assessment submitted by the applicant concludes that the development once fully operational will lead to a 'reduction of operational air quality effects' and concludes that no mitigation is required. While this is true across the wider road network and the methodology used is supported, the Council is concerned that the assessment has overlooked negative impacts on local roads around the development site due to cars waiting / idling to pick up passengers. It does not appear that monitoring the impact on adjacent minor residential roads is a requirement of the Cambridgeshire County Council Transport Team. However, the Council recommends some form of monitoring once the development site is operational is conditioned. We request further discussion with the applicant about how this could be addressed.

With regards to artificial lighting, it is acknowledged that risk to people as a result of this project is likely to be low, although there may be some impact. Generally speaking, for people, it is required that any artificial lighting installed (for construction or operational purposes) meet the Obtrusive Light Limitations for Exterior Lighting Installations contained within the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) 'Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light - GN01/20 (2020)(or as superseded)' both on-site and off-site. Replacement wording for condition 24 is recommended to

secure compliance with this guidance and to cover construction and operational lighting.

Artificial lighting

No artificial lighting for construction or operation shall be installed until a detailed artificial lighting scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The lighting scheme shall meet the Obtrusive Light Limitations for Exterior Lighting Installations contained within the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) 'Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light - GN01/20 (2020)(or as superseded)'. Development shall be carried out only in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect the risk from artificial lighting to people.

Cycle network

The works to the railway line at Shepreth Branch Junction should be accessed from land owned by Network Rail as far as possible, and access must not be taken from the NCN 11 route. The proposed temporary diversion of the NCN 11 route during the construction works should be of minimum duration and with suitable diversions in place, which should be consulted on with local cycling groups, Great Shelford Parish Council and other user groups. The timing of the construction works affecting cycle routes should carefully consider the Greater Cambridge Partnership's proposed Sawston Greenways route on the existing Genome Path between the Cambridge Biomedical Campus and Great Shelford to minimise disruption to users.

Archaeology

The works affecting the Scheduled Monument within the application site boundary must be minimal and must have the support of Historic England and Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Team, and mitigation should be secured through the consent.

Drainage

The proposed new culvert extension and drainage at Shepreth Branch Junction is located within an awarded watercourse to South Cambridgeshire District Council and any surface water drainage alterations which contribute to change of rate/volume of flow would require land drainage bye law approval by the Council. The applicant should be advised accordingly via an informative. Appropriate wording is provided as follows:

Informative: New culvert extension and drainage at Shepreth Branch junction.

The culvert is located within an awarded watercourse to South Cambridgeshire District Council and any surface water drainage alterations

which contribute to change of rate/volume of flow would require land drainage bye law approval by the Council.

I trust that these comments will be taken into account and please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further clarification on any of these points. I look forward to hearing from you with regards the next stages of the application in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Kelly
Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development
On behalf of
South Cambridgeshire District Council