

Transport and Works Act 1992

**The Transport and Works (Applications and Objections Procedure) (England and Wales) Rules
2006**

Network Rail (Chart Leacon) Order

CONCISE STATEMENT OF THE AIMS OF THE PROPOSALS

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This document is intended to provide a brief overview of the aims of the proposals to which the application for the Network Rail (Chart Leacon) Order (**'the Order'**) relates.
- 1.2 The frequency of the Thameslink service operated by Govia Thameslink Rail (**'GTR'**) is planned to increase through the addition of 2 trains per hour (tph) between Cambridge and Maidstone East (via London Bridge). The Department for Transport is working to deliver the additional train services between Maidstone East and Cambridge as part of the December 2019 timetable. The addition of these services is a key part of the £7bn Thameslink investment programme. To accommodate the additional trains needed to run this service increase, and thus realise the benefits of the major investment by the UK Government, additional stabling in the Kent area is required for six 8-car GTR trains.
- 1.3 To support GTR in providing the 24tph Thameslink service, a decision was taken by the Department for Transport to make the existing Hitachi Depot at Ashford available to GTR prior to the Maidstone East to Cambridge services commencement date for the purpose of stabling the GTR trains. This depot is currently utilised by South Eastern trains. As a result, trains operated by South Eastern will be displaced from the Hitachi Depot, meaning that stabling is required in the Ashford area to accommodate these displaced South Eastern trains (the **"identified stabling need"**).
- 1.4 Chart Leacon has been identified as the most suitable site for accommodating the identified stabling need on a long term basis.
- 1.5 GTR will require 3 months to prepare for the start of the new services. Hence to accommodate additional train services in December 2019, GTR's stabling, and consequently the identified stabling need, is required to be in place and fully operational by September 2019. It is recognised that it is now unlikely that permanent additional stabling can be secured in advance of September 2019. A partial solution has been identified which could meet the required need on a temporary basis. However, that arrangement is sub-optimal. As a result, a permanent stabling solution that is capable of satisfying the identified stabling need at the earliest possible opportunity after September 2019 is required.
- 1.6 The proposed order does not contain any works powers. The stabling works to be carried out will be authorised by a separate planning permission, for which a planning application has already been submitted (the **"Stabling Works"**).

- 1.7 The Order would:
- (a) confer powers of compulsory acquisition on Network Rail to acquire land and rights over land to facilitate the construction, maintenance and operation of the Stabling Works; and
 - (b) authorise the stopping up of land for the same purpose.
- 1.8 This document is produced as one of the documents required to be submitted with the application under Rule 10(2)(c) of the Transport and Works (Applications and Objections Procedure) (England and Wales) Rules 2006.

2 Background

- 2.1 Demand growth for the rail network is predicted to increase in future years. Key growth regions include Cambridge – Stansted Airport, Bedford – Milton Keynes, Surrey – Gatwick Airport and Ashford. The forecast growth in travel demand for the routes covered by the planned Thameslink network would, in the absence of the Thameslink programme, result in more severe on-train crowding and a suppression of demand, with a detrimental impact on economic activity.
- 2.2 The UK Government has therefore invested c. £7bn in the ambitious 10-year Thameslink Programme, part of which includes the delivery of 115 new Class 700 trains.
- 2.3 The Thameslink service to be operated by GTR is planned to increase through the addition of 2 trains per hour (tph) between Cambridge and Maidstone East (via London Bridge). These additional services form a key part of the Thameslink programme to increase passenger services.
- 2.4 The new Thameslink Class 700 Maidstone East to Cambridge services will take over existing Southeastern services from Maidstone East to London Blackfriars, resulting in a net increase of 48 mainline vehicles (six 8-car trains).
- 2.5 To accommodate the additional trains to run this service increase, and realise the benefits of the major investment by the UK Government, additional stabling in the Kent area is required for six 8-car GTR trains.
- 2.6 To support GTR in providing the 24tph Thameslink service, a decision was taken by the Department for Transport that these new GTR trains will be stabled at the existing Hitachi Depot at Ashford. This depot is currently utilised by South Eastern trains. As a result, trains operated by South Eastern will be displaced from the Hitachi Depot, meaning that stabling is required in the Ashford area to accommodate these displaced South Eastern trains. It is accommodating these trains that gives rise to the identified stabling need.
- 2.7 Various options for accommodating the displaced trains have been considered, but the site at Chart Leacon has been identified as the most appropriate site to accommodate this need. It is, however, currently in third party ownership and attempts to acquire by agreement have failed.
- 2.8 The proposed Order is therefore necessary to ensure that Network Rail can deliver the required stabling facilities at Chart Leacon as part of realising the full benefits of the Thameslink project.

3 The Stabling Works

- 3.1 Although the land which is the subject of the Order has an extant planning permission for use as a rail depot, the existing facilities are not suited to modern operator requirements or safety standards. A planning application has been submitted to Ashford Borough Council for the development of a light maintenance depot including the demolition of existing structures, the provision of a two storey 500sq.m workers accommodation block, 36 parking spaces and associated works for the movement in, and stabling of, railway rolling stock and associated equipment.
- 3.2 In order to facilitate the carrying out of the Stabling Works and deliver a secure stabling facility, Network Rail needs the Order in order to acquire land, and various new rights over land, owned by third parties and stop up highway land. It is necessary for land to be stopped up to ensure that the Stabling Works can be properly secured.
- 3.3 The Order provides for compensation for compulsory acquisition of land.
- 3.4 The Order includes protections in favour of statutory undertakers who are understood to have apparatus in land to be acquired and stopped up under the Order.

4 Aims of the Stabling Works

- 4.1 It is anticipated that the new infrastructure at the site would have an asset life of around 20 years. As explained above, the Stabling Works will enable Network Rail to meet the displaced stabling and servicing needs of South Eastern trains and thus to realise the full benefits of the government's investment in the Thameslink programme.
- 4.2 The proposals have been developed with regard to the following objectives:
- (a) Meeting the displaced stabling needs of South Eastern by providing so far as is practicable a suitable alternative.
 - (b) Improving efficiency, connectivity and supporting growth. The Thameslink upgrade comprises extensive infrastructure improvements and delivery of 115 new Class 700 trains with the ambition to transform north-south travel through London. The introduction of additional train cars onto the railway is a necessary requirement of improving that connectivity as is the need to provide additional stabling facilities as services increase. It also contributes to the wider rail growth agenda, providing additional facilities to support that growth.
 - (c) Contribution to sustainable transport modes. Proposals to improve and increase rail capacity has wider advantages in promoting sustainable patterns, assisting modal shift from private car to public transport modes. Suitable facilities to stable and maintain trains are integral to achieving and sustaining enhanced and increased rail movements.
 - (d) Improving comfort, safety and security. The ability to repair, service and clean train cars is a fundamental requirement not only to maintain the safety of trains on the railway, but also to provide a level of cleanliness for passengers using the service. It is also an essential requirement that when trains are not in use they can be stabled in secure locations to prevent vandalism and maintain the integrity of train operation.