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STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF RAILFUTURE LTD
EXAMINATION OF SALT CROSS GARDEN VILLAGE AREA ACTION PLAN (AAP)
MATTER 6 – MOVEMENT AND CONNECTIVITY

INTRODUCTION

Railfuture is Britain's leading national independent voluntary organisation campaigning for a better railway across a bigger network for passenger and freight users in order to support economic growth, environmental improvement and better-connected communities. In the Thames Valley we have several hundred members including the affiliation of most local Rail User Groups. We are independent of the industry and trades unions.

I hold an MA from Cambridge University in Mechanical Sciences, am a Chartered Engineer and Member of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers. Following engineering employment in the chemical and paint industries for some thirty years, I became a consultant service to the paint and cleaning products industries on transport matters, before retiring in 2013. In the 1970s I represented my local community in negotiations with Greater Manchester Transport and British Railways about local rail and bus services. In the 1990s I was Chairman of Environmental Services at Wokingham District Council responsible for transport and represented the authority on the South East Region Planning body (SERPLAN). Later I represented environmental organisations on the steering group of the Thames Valley Multi-Modal Study, at the Inquiry into the South East Regional Transport Strategy and as a member of the SE Regional Transport Board. I presented supporting evidence on behalf of Railfuture at the TWA Inquires in 2010 into the Chiltern Railways (Bicester to Oxford Improvements) Order and in 2018 into the Network Rail (East West Rail Bicester to Bedford Improvements) Order.

We wish to submit the following in response to the Questions raised by the Inspector:

Question 2:

Appendix 5 : Transport : Active Travel

Improved connections to Hanborough Station must include a new entrance off Lower Road to the south of the railway suitable for cyclists and pedestrians linking off the proposed improved provision along the west side of Lower Road. (This will avoid the need to loop north under the railway, on to the A4095 and back south again to the station which will discourage active travel to and from the station.)

Appendix 5: Transport: Public Transport (bus):

Improved connections to Hanborough Station must include a new entrance off Lower Road to the south of the railway suitable for use by buses and future proofed for options like self-guiding pods but not for use by private cars.

Question 12:

Paragraph 8.21 and Policy 14 correctly identifies the need for a new cycle and pedestrian route on the western side of Lower Road but this must be supplemented by a new entrance to the south of the railway to the station. It requires more than just consideration as suggested in Policy 15 – this link is vital to encourage non-car access to the station.

The bus routes connecting to the station must serve all parts of the Garden Village as well as being extensions of routes from other parts of the area e.g. Eynsham and future West Eynsham. Bus stops within the village must not be located further than 400m from dwellings as suggested in Policy 15. High bus frequency is irrelevant to the decision of people to walk to a stop, particularly in inclement weather. They will be even more frustrated if more buses pass them while they are on route to the stop.

Question 14:

Increased use of the rail network is vital to meet councils' and government's policies to reduce car use. Hanborough Station is an ideal location to meet these policies but will require an increased frequency of services and the associated infrastructure of an additional platform and other facilities set out in Policy 15 – Railway Improvements.

There is strong evidence from elsewhere that improved rail services increase land values at locations near to stations and also make new houses much easier to sell. It is therefore in the interest of developers to make financial contributions to ensure they achieve this payback.

The improved rail services and the public transport, cycling and walking infrastructure need to be in place and operational before people make decisions where to buy a house or invest in a new business location. It is appropriate for council borrowing powers to be used to invest up front and then be paid back by developers by s.106 etc as development progresses.

Question 21:

To achieve the necessary car free development it is appropriate for first occupation of houses and businesses at Salt Cross to be prohibited until all necessary infrastructure is in place and operational. As well as the specifics identified in Policy 17, this requirement should also apply to the rail infrastructure items and associated bus links between Salt Cross and Hanborough Station. This will ensure that all of the infrastructure is completed in a timely manner with the developers incentivised to deliver.

N D Rose

On behalf of Railfuture Thames Valley

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