



THAMES VALLEY

Please reply to:

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Response to Network Rail's Oxfordshire Level Crossing consultation from Railfuture* Thames Valley

Railfuture welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation. We do not consider it to be within our remit to make comments on the details of the design or layout of the individual replacement bridges and associated works at these three level crossings. However, we welcome and support the replacement of the three crossings with bridges and we consider that this work should be expedited and completed at the earliest opportunity for the following reasons.

The elimination of risk is, of course, a key benefit especially at Sandy Lane which is a very high risk location. However, the wider benefits also justify the works. The elimination of these crossings will allow for additional capacity on the already busy Thames Valley - Midlands route which will be very welcome in enabling increased connectivity in the future.

Additional paths for freight, especially intermodal to and from Southampton, will be essential to relieve capacity on the congested A34/M40 roads and for future de-carbonisation of freight.

Additional passenger services on this route will also be enabled by the removal of these crossings. There has been talk in recent years of an additional hourly service between Birmingham and Oxford (or beyond) to cater for increased demand and to reduce the current levels of crowding on existing services on this corridor. In particular, the Banbury - Oxford travel market would benefit from a more frequent train service. Other comparable towns serving the Oxford employment sector such as Bicester and Didcot enjoy at least half hourly trains all day which is not the case for Banbury, resulting in suppression of latent demand. Additional trains on this route will result in modal shift to rail by making rail a more attractive option for travelling to Oxford whether for work, study, health or leisure reasons.

Replacing these level crossings with bridges is a necessary precursor to these enhanced services and should thus be undertaken as a priority.

We trust you'll be able to take our points into consideration.

Andrew McCallum

Secretary
Railfuture Thames Valley Branch

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