

THE NETWORK RAIL (HITCHIN (CAMBRIDGE JUNCTION)) ORDER
Summary of Closing Submissions By Network Rail:

All landowners whose interests would be compulsorily acquired have either withdrawn their objections or are imminently expected to; or have not appeared to pursue them. NR's assertion that no farm would go out of business has not been challenged. The objections of the statutory authorities have also been withdrawn.

Delivery by rail is no longer being advocated by the Councils.

Existing long distance train journey times decrease with the scheme. In the May 2011 emerging timetable an aggregate 20 minutes of pathing time will be saved for 20 long distance ECML services with trains saving half a minute to 2 minutes. These savings generate £800k per annum of benefits using the DfT appraisal guidance.

Every southbound train from Peterborough (around 60 long distance trains together with outer suburban and freight services) on any day of operation has the potential to be delayed by the flat junction. Based on current service levels, train performance modelling shows that the scheme provides annual benefits of £3M using DfT appraisal methodology. The scheme also helps to maximise timetable options by making journey times quicker by avoiding the need to build in pathing time to account for infrastructure constraints on the line and by improving the reliability of services.

The Hitchin grade separation benefit:cost ratio has been calculated at 5.5 over 60 years.

The current running time between Hitchin and Letchworth will be increased by 30 seconds for some trains and 45 seconds for others; but the average journey time increase will be offset by removal of the pathing time at Hitchin in Cambridge Line services (28 services affected per day in the May 2011 timetable for a total of 45 minutes).

The flyover will not accommodate the heaviest freight trains (in excess of 2000 tonnes trailing load) and the flat junction will be left in for exceptional train movements which would be timetabled in quiet periods.

Materials will be transported via Wilbury Hills Road. There are currently 17 HGV's in the AM peak hour or one every 3.5 minutes. But for 70% of the 27 month construction period 10 HGVs would be added in the peak hour making 27 or one every two minutes;

NR has asked 5 years (rather than the usual 3 years with ordinary planning applications) before commencement of works as time may be needed to exercise powers of compulsory purchase and they may well have to go through a public procurement exercise before any powers granted can be exercised.

JERRY ALDERSON 29/5/2010