

CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL

PLANNING COMMITTEE

23 JULY 2009

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT CONTROL AND MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

PROPOSED RAILWAY IMPROVEMENT SCHEME BETWEEN BICESTER AND OXFORD

1 Introduction and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform Members of the proposed improvements to the railway line between Bicester and Oxford as part of the proposals by Chiltern Railways for a new route between Oxford and London, so they are aware of the proposal prior to detailed proposals for the scheme being submitted.

2 Wards Affected

- 2.1 Bicester South, Bicester Town, Launton, Blacktorn, Ambrosden, Piddington, Wendlebury, Islip, Oddington, Charlton-on-Otmoor, Kidlington South and Gosford and Water Eaton.

3 Effect on Policy

- 3.1 Policy S17 of the Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan identifies the Bicester Town railway station land to north of the railway line for mixed use development and identifies an area specifically for uses related to the railway station. Policy TR29 safeguards land at Gavray Drive for the provision of the new 'chord' line relating to the improved railway network.
- 3.2 The land just south of Wendlebury lies within the Oxfordshire Green Belt. The developments, particularly relating to Islip Station and Gosford and Water Eaton must therefore be considered under Policy GB1 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan and Policy GB1 of the Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan together with Central Government Guidance within PPG2 'Green Belts'

4 Contact Officers

- 4.1 Linda Griffiths Ext: 7998
Jenny Barker Ext: 1828

5 Background

- 5.1 This proposal, together with a number of possible options for each of the stations within Cherwell District, those being Bicester Town, Islip and Gosford and Water Eaton have been the subject of a public consultation and public exhibitions which took place in April 2009.
- 5.2 A report was submitted to the Executive for consideration on 15 June 2009. A copy of that report (appendix 1) and the comments made (appendix 2) is attached.
- 5.3 The proposed improvements to the rail line will be made by Chiltern Railways as a commercial project, rather than through public funding. It is intended to deal with the matter through a Transport and Works Act Order in October 2009 followed by a Public

Inquiry during Summer 2010. It is anticipated that a decision will be received by early 2011 with construction commencing in 2013.

- 5.4 Part 17 of the GPDO gives railway undertakers extensive permitted development rights for development on operational land required in connection with the movement of traffic by rail. Development however is not permitted if it consists of or includes the construction of a railway, railway station or bridge. Chiltern Railways therefore intend to deal with the proposal under the 1992 Transport Works Act, with a TWA order application followed by a Direction application and then Public Inquiry. The Secretary of State determines the Order and attaches conditions to the Direction which will be discharged by the Local Planning Authority. In effect this means that Cherwell District Council will discharge and agree the detailed designs of the buildings and bridge etc following the presentation of illustrative proposals at the Inquiry, but will only be involved as a consultee on the general principles of the proposals.
- 5.5 Oxfordshire County Council as Highway Authority have also been consulted on the proposals and will respond separately to Chiltern Railways in respect of highway matters and any subsequent issues. In terms of the possible highway implications, the increased use of the line through Bicester Town by increasing the level of the service will result in a greater number of closures at the London Road crossing. A traffic impact assessment is currently being looked at within the town regarding this with Oxfordshire County Council. Car parking provision is also still under consideration, but there is an agreement relating to the joint use of the car parking adjacent to Bicester Village.
- 5.6 Business consultants are working with Halcrow to look at the impact on the Central Oxfordshire Transport Model. In terms of the proposed new station at Gosford and Water Eaton, the transport modelling is expected to be complete by the end of the month.
- 5.7 As the scheme progresses details relating to the proposed station improvements and bridges and other works will be submitted to the Council for comment or determination.

6 Risk Assessment, Financial Effects and Contributions to Efficiency Savings

- 6.1 Risk Assessment agreed by Rosemary Watts (Ext: 1566)
- 6.2 Financial effects approved by Eric Meadows (Ext: 1552)
- 6.3 Efficiency savings – None

7 Recommendation

- 7.1 **That Members note the report and the response provided by the Executive to the consultation from Chiltern Railways.**

Background Papers:

- a) Public consultation information submitted by Chiltern Railways in connection with the proposals.
- b) Report to Executive 15 June 2009.
- c) Scoping Opinion Consultation 09/00002/SCOP