

DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT
2010

Transport and Works Act 1992

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

THE CHILTERN RAILWAYS (BICESTER TO OXFORD IMPROVEMENTS) ORDER

Statement of Aims under Rule 10(2)(c)

Introduction

The purpose of this application is to provide The Chiltern Railway Company Limited ("Chiltern Railways") with powers to authorise the construction of a new railway (including the reconstruction of existing railway) between Bicester and Oxford together with the construction or reconstruction of stations at Bicester Town, Islip, Water Eaton and Oxford. This will facilitate the operation of direct railway services between London, Marylebone, High Wycombe, Bicester Town and Oxford.

The extension of the Chiltern Railways network to Oxford is a key element of Chiltern Railways' "Evergreen 3" project for improving rail transport in the London-Oxfordshire-West Midlands corridor. It follows the previous "Evergreen 1" and "Evergreen 2" projects. These have demonstrated Chiltern Railways' ability to deliver large-scale infrastructure projects, and transformed the Chiltern route from a moribund secondary line into a busy intercity artery.

The Evergreen 3 project will, over time, earn sufficient net revenue to pay for its construction, and can thus be delivered as a private sector project. It will not require subsidy, and there is therefore little risk of the work being delayed or cancelled due to the scarcity of public funds.

The application also includes powers for gauge enhancement works and additional double-track between Bicester and Oxford to facilitate the East-West Rail project, which proposes the re-opening of the rail links from Bicester to Bletchley, Milton Keynes and beyond.

Key objectives

The key aims of the Scheme are as follows:

1. **To increase rail capacity on the Oxford-London corridor**

Rail traffic in Great Britain has grown strongly over the past decade, and growth is forecast to continue. Railway capacity on the Oxford-Reading-London corridor is now under considerable pressure, and this will increase with planned economic growth and housing development in southern Oxfordshire and the Thames Valley. By providing an additional and alternative route to Oxford the Chiltern proposals will add extra capacity in this corridor. This will benefit both passengers between Oxford and London, and the substantial freight business from the Midlands via Oxford to the Solent ports.

In addition, the Chiltern line will provide an alternative route during the major engineering works planned in the Thames Valley over the next decade, including the Reading remodelling, CrossRail construction and Oxford re-signalling.

2. To provide improved access to the rail network for Oxford and north Oxfordshire

Oxford station is sited to the west of the city centre, and is remote from many of the city's residential and business areas. It also suffers from congested local roads and a lack of car parking spaces. Chiltern Railways' proposed Water Eaton Parkway station will, in contrast, give easy access to the rail network from many parts of Oxford, by bus, cycle or car. It will provide Kidlington with its long-desired railway station, and act as a railhead for other parts of north Oxfordshire which do not enjoy direct rail service. This will in turn relieve pressure on the existing car park at Oxford station, and thus release capacity there for traffic growth from other areas.

3. To provide a sustainable alternative to the car, particularly for commuting journeys into Oxford

In common with other successful cities, Oxford and surrounding areas suffer from severe traffic congestion, particularly at peak periods. Commuter journey times into Oxford are amongst the longest in the country, whilst longer-distance journeys are affected by delays on the motorway and trunk road networks. However, rail's market share on the Oxford-London and Bicester-Oxford routes is low by comparison with similar corridors elsewhere, due to the inconvenient location of Oxford station, and the relatively slow and infrequent train services.

Chiltern's proposals will deliver a major increase in train frequency; greatly reduce journey times between Bicester and Oxford and give a direct rail link between the sub-regional centres of Oxford and High Wycombe for the first time in over 40 years. In addition the interchange with express buses at Water Eaton Parkway will give direct access to major employers, such as the Radcliffe hospital who are currently hard to reach by rail. The railway will thus become a realistic alternative to the private car, and help relieve congestion on the A34, M40 and connecting roads.

4. To help deliver public policies for economic and spatial development

By improving access to Oxford for both long-distance and commuter journeys, the Chiltern proposals will help reinforce the city's position as an economic and research hub, whilst minimising the environmental impacts of the transport system. This Chiltern Railways development is consistent with national, regional and local policies that address not only transport issues, but also wider issues including strategies for planning, environmental concerns and economic stimulus.

National policy, specifically PPS1 and PPG13, emphasise the need to combine spatial planning with an appreciation of transport networks to promote development around public transport routes and to provide an attractive and sustainable alternative to using a car.

At regional level, the Scheme will deliver strategic public transport links to support planned growth advocated through the South East Plan, and support the Plan's Central Oxfordshire sub-regional strategy. It has been endorsed by the South East Regional Transport Board. At a local level the scheme will support Oxford City and Cherwell District Councils' spatial plans to encourage

alternatives to the car, support growth and protect the environment, and these authorities have endorsed the Scheme.

5. To Facilitate the East West Rail Link

Provision of a rail link between Oxford, Milton Keynes and East Anglia is widely regarded as key to both the future success of the Oxford-Cambridge “Knowledge Arc”, and to the growth of Milton Keynes. It is identified as a regional investment priority by the South East Regional Transport Board, in support of the South East Plan and the Regional Economic Strategy. East-West Rail would also deliver benefits to the wider railway network, which are recognised by the Network Rail and the Department for Transport.

The East-West Rail Consortium of local authorities together with the South East England Partnership Board and the Milton Keynes Partnership have been actively developing plans to re-instate this route, with the Oxford/Aylesbury-Bletchley/Milton Keynes section being the first priority. The Chiltern proposals to upgrade the Bicester to Oxford section will significantly reduce the amount of public funding needed to deliver East-West Rail, and Chiltern Railways and the Consortium have thus worked closely together to maximise the wider transport, environmental and economic benefits.

6. To extend the use of an environmentally friendly form of transport

Due to running on steel rails and carrying a large number of passengers per vehicle, trains are significantly more energy-efficient than road vehicles. In turn they produce far lower emissions. Studies show that the average CO² emission for Chiltern Railways’ train services is one third of the equivalent passenger journeys made by car.

Rail also has an excellent safety record, and by encouraging modal shift to train the Chiltern proposals will contribute to reducing road casualty levels.

7. To Facilitate the Redevelopment of Oxford Station

Oxford station has long been recognised as a poor quality gateway to one of Britain’s finest cultural and academic centres, which has inadequate capacity to meet the future demands of a growing city. Network Rail and Oxfordshire County Council are therefore planning comprehensive remodelling of the station. The Chiltern proposals are designed to accommodate this objective and to enable the future construction of a high-quality station that is both welcoming for passengers and an asset for the City of Oxford.

**DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT
2010**

Transport and Works Act 1992

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

**THE CHILTERN RAILWAYS (BICESTER
TO OXFORD IMPROVEMENTS) ORDER**

**Statement of Aims
under Rule 10(2)(c)**

**The Chiltern Railway Company Limited
Western House
14 Rickfords Hill
Aylesbury
Bucks HP20 2RX**

**Eversheds LLP
One Wood Street
London EC2V 7WS**

Solicitors and Parliamentary Agents