

**SUMMARY PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF ALLAN DARE  
TRANSPORT**



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

**TRANSPORT AND WORKS ACT 1992**

**TRANSPORT AND WORKS (APPLICATIONS AND OBJECTIONS PROCEDURE)  
(ENGLAND AND WALES) RULES 2006**

**Chiltern Railways**

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- 1 My name is Allan Dare. I hold an MSc in Transport Planning & Management. I am the Strategic Development Manager for Chiltern Railways, and have taken a lead role in the development of the Order Scheme.
- 2 My Proof of Evidence covers the need for, and the aims and objectives of the Scheme (Statement of Matters 1); the transportation justification (Statement of Matters 3); and the alternative options considered (Statement of Matters 3). I also consider the transport services proposed.
- 3 The objectives of the Order Scheme are to:
- ***Increase rail capacity on the Oxford-Reading-London corridor***
  - ***Provide improved access to the rail network for Oxford and north Oxfordshire***
  - ***Provide a sustainable alternative to the car, particularly for commuting journeys into Oxford***
  - ***Help deliver public policies for economic and spatial development***
  - ***Facilitate the East West Rail Link***
  - ***Extend the use of an environmentally friendly and safe form of transport***
  - ***Facilitate the Redevelopment of Oxford Station.***
- 4 The Order Scheme mostly uses an existing railway, which opened in 1850 and is used for both passenger and freight trains. Much of the work will be the reinstatement of track removed in the 1970s.
- 5 In recent years, Britain's railways have seen unprecedented traffic growth; passenger numbers have increased by 67% since 1995. This is due to economic growth, highway congestion, housing and business development near rail stations, and improved train services. Rail traffic is rising again following the recession, and the Department for Transport, Network Rail and the National Audit Office have all forecast substantial further growth in future.
- 6 A number of lines have been successfully re-opened, or had double track reinstated to accommodate this growth.
- 7 Rail traffic from Oxford has increased by over 30% since 2006, and this growth is continuing. This has led to significant overcrowding on peak-hour trains to London, and at Oxford station. The lines from Oxford to Didcot and onwards via Reading to London are operating at or near full capacity, as is Paddington station, and there is little scope for additional trains. Network Rail's Route Utilisation Studies recommend that the Chiltern Scheme should proceed.
- 8 Rail traffic from Bicester to Oxford has also grown substantially, despite the relatively slow and infrequent train service.
- 9 Around 5,000 extra homes are set to be built in Bicester by 2026, together with new employment areas. Substantial housing and business growth is also expected in Oxford. The A34 and M40 roads are already operating at or near capacity, and will be at 130% of capacity by 2026.

- 10 I conclude that the demand for rail travel is growing rapidly, particularly to and from Oxford as a result of housing growth and road congestion, and that investment in extra rail capacity is needed; and that the Order Scheme will deliver this.
- 11 Despite recent growth, rail's market share from Oxford is lower than for comparable cities. This is in part due to the Oxford station being remote from many residential and business areas. The proposed Water Eaton Parkway will provide an additional railhead outside the city with convenient access for trips arising from north Oxford and north and west Oxfordshire.
- 12 Investment in the rail network is widely seen as an effective means of delivering a more sustainable transport system. A steel wheel on a steel rail uses far less energy than does a rubber tyre on tarmac, and a diesel train thus produces 45% less CO2 per passenger kilometre than does a private car. The British rail network is one of the safest transport systems in the world, and much safer than road transport. Rail provides easy access to business areas, particularly with the trend towards service-sector employment in city centres, and rail- and economic growth are closely linked.
- 13 I thus conclude that the Order Scheme will give wide societal benefits, through fewer emissions, greater safety, and by contributing to economic growth.
- 14 A range of non-rail options were considered, including:
- Park and ride to an existing railhead;
  - Conventional bus feeder services;
  - Guided bus along the Oxford-Bicester railway.
- 15 None met the Order Scheme's objectives.
- 16 Three rail route options were examined:
- Reopening the Chinnor branch line to "Aston Rowant Parkway", near M40 Junction 6: this was discarded due to low forecast patronage and lack of stakeholder support;
  - A "Southern Corridor", reinstating the along the old Princes Risborough-Thame-Oxford line, via a "Junction 8 Parkway" on the M40: this was discarded due to the old trackbed having been built upon in several places;
  - A "Northern Corridor" using the Bicester Town-Oxford line; this was chosen due to the reduced costs and disruption consequent upon using an existing railway, and the benefits of the new "Water Eaton Parkway" station.
- 17 On the "Northern Corridor" a number of options were considered for the connection with the Chiltern main line at Bicester, and for the connection with the main line at Oxford. These were discarded due to capital costs, the additional disruption to the community, and, for the former, the inability to directly serve Bicester.
- 18 Alternative station sites were considered at:
- Bicester Interchange, where the two rail lines cross
  - Bicester Ring Road, west of the A41
  - Bicester Parkway, near M40 Junction 9

- All were discarded as being less convenient for passengers than the existing Town station.
- 19 Reopening the intermediate halts that were closed in 1926 was discarded, due to their minimal revenue potential.
- 20 The option of a Parkway station at Peartree instead of Water Eaton was considered. This was dropped due to it being served by fewer bus routes; being more remote from Kidlington; and having a greater impact on the local community and the environment.
- 21 The Order Scheme complements the upgrading of the Chiltern main line, which is now in hand, and facilitates the reopening of the East-West Rail line from Oxford to Milton Keynes. It will also provide an alternative to the Great Western line to London whilst that is disrupted by CrossRail and other major projects.
- 22 I thus conclude that a wide range of options have been considered for both the route and stations, and that the Order Scheme complements other rail projects.
- 23 Chiltern Railways propose to operate two passenger trains per hour in both directions between London Marylebone and Oxford, calling at High Wycombe, Bicester Town, and Water Eaton Parkway; selected trains will also call at Islip. This meets the service requirement set out by the Secretary of State (and in the case of Islip exceeds it). Journey times between Bicester and Oxford, and between the north Oxford area and central London, will be significantly reduced. The new service will also give a direct rail link between High Wycombe and Oxford for the first time since 1964.
- 24 Should East-West Rail proceed, there will be an additional two trains each way every hour between Oxford and Milton Keynes. The possibility of an additional cross-country train each hour has also been examined in the Order Scheme's Environmental Statement.
- 25 The stations at Bicester Town and Water Eaton Parkway will be laid out to facilitate easy interchange between train, bus, bike and foot. Sufficient car parking will be provided to accommodate forecast demand, and ensure that the operation of the bus park and ride at Water Eaton is not affected.
- 26 Chiltern is not a freight operator, and Phase 1 of the Order Scheme will not result in more freight trains than currently use the existing railway. The Phase 2A works will provide enhanced clearances for 9'6" high shipping containers on conventional wagons, in line with work elsewhere on the rail network, and Phase 2B, enabling East-West Rail, may result in more freight trains. Capacity will be provided for one freight train "path" each way each hour, but as freight traffic varies with market needs I would expect perhaps only 50% of the planned "paths" to be used on a given day.
- 27 The new tracks to be built between Oxford North Junction and Oxford will only be used by passenger services; freight trains will use the existing line between these points.
- 28 I conclude that the planned Chiltern Railways passenger services to be provided by the Order Scheme will meet or exceed the requirements set by the Secretary of

State; that by being faster and more frequent than at present these will help attract passengers from road to rail; and that the Order Scheme will be fully integrated with other transport modes.

- 29 I also conclude that the Order Scheme provides for the potential operation of passenger and freight trains on the East-West Rail route.
- 30 It would not be viable to electrify the Bicester-Oxford line in isolation from the Chiltern main line to London. Nevertheless, the Order Scheme works will provide clearances for future electrification.
- 31 In summary, my overall conclusion is that the Order Scheme will materially improve the capacity, functionality and sustainability of the transport system in Oxfordshire, and between Oxford and London.