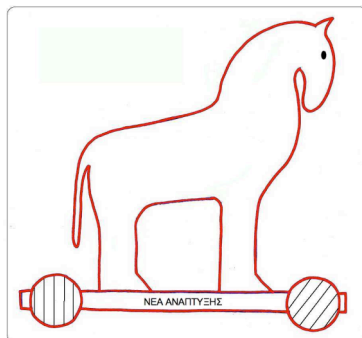


**DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT 2010**  
**Transport and Works Act 1992**  
**Transport and Works (Applications and Objections Procedure)**  
**(England and Wales) Rules 2006**  
**Chiltern Railways TWA Application 2010 to the Secretary of State**




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**SUMMARY EVIDENCE**

**as read out at the Inquiry 16 November 2010**

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Chiltern Railways, the applicant, is seeking permission to install infrastructure to allow it to operate passenger services from Oxford to London Marylebone.

5 Chiltern Railways is also seeking permission to install infrastructure on behalf of third parties to enable the operation of non-Chiltern Railways services.

10 We have been told that gauge clearing the route from Oxford to Bicester at the same time as the Phase 1 works is essential to “future proof” the development. The same argument applies equally well to installing proper and effective mitigation.

This puts many objectors in a dilemma. Who is going to pay to lessen the impact of noise, vibration and air pollution for both Chiltern Railways and third party services if just Chiltern Railways is listed as the applicant?

15 Network Rail stands to benefit from the infrastructure upgrades as it controls access to the network and the gauge clearance is being paid for by the Department for Transport. To me, it appears that by not being joint applicants with Chiltern Railways, Network Rail and the Department for Transport have deliberately distanced themselves. Either they should appear here as joint applicants or the part of the application that refers to Phase 2 (both a and b) should be struck out. How can we properly press for mitigation when all the parties who are interested in and stand to gain from the outcome of the present application are not applicants?

20 The Elephant in the room is the increase in freight services. Indeed, Chiltern Railways says “it should be noted that there is nothing to prevent many more freight trains using the line at present (including at night) should the need arise” (CRCL/R/OBJ/234, paragraph 3.44). What will impact us most in the foreseeable future is not whether or not EastWest Rail goes ahead but what use can be made of:

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- the new gauge cleared route from Oxford to Bicester,
  - the new Bicester chord, and
  - the Bicester to Bletchley line. Reinstating an operational route between Bicester and Bletchley will be elementary (Mr Patrick O’Sullivan, Tuesday, 16 November 2010).

30 If the Oxford to Bletchley line is reopened then maritime container traffic between Southampton and the West Coast Main Line (WCML) becomes possible. This route would provide capacity to relieve the eastern end of the Great Western Main Line and the southern end of the West Coast Main Line. **EastWestRail does not need to be completed for this to become a reality.**

Therefore, it is likely that the predicted freight traffic could be a serious underestimate. Bigger, longer and more numerous freight trains will have a huge negative impact. The majority of the extra freight trains could run at night-time when they do not have to compete with passenger services.

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Europe is currently trying to harmonise acceptable community noise levels. In particular the World Health Organisation has published maximum community noise levels and it is now acknowledged that in certain circumstances, such as when low frequency noise and/or vibration is also present, the levels should be even lower. The UK does not have an enforceable limit for railway noise in the community but simply allows developers to use the threshold set by the Noise Insulation Regulations to trigger noise mitigation. These limits are less stringent than in most other European countries and is it likely that the UK will come under pressure to fall into line with the rest of Europe. Therefore, it is irresponsible to allow Chiltern Railways to put in place a scheme that will actually **increase** noise levels above WHO maximum community noise levels. To endorse even any increase is unethical, reckless and against the local community.

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The Environmental Noise Directive requires the UK to produce strategic noise maps. On the basis of these maps the UK has to develop action plans to reduce noise levels. In the foreseeable future the A34 in north Oxford may need to be fitted with noise barriers. Unfortunately the result will be that north Oxford will still have two noisy mainline railways one of which should never have been allowed in the first place.

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It is time that the health and well being of the community is put above the profit driven motives of business. Reducing all the detrimental impacts of the scheme should be a fundamental condition of approval. Oxford already has a passenger route to London. Disruption that may be caused by the Reading Station upgrade is not a sufficient reason for putting a second mainline through north Oxford. If the real intention is to turn the Oxford to Bicester branch line into a strategic freight route then this should be openly admitted and appropriate, effective mitigation installed.

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In the past few decades Oxford has expanded and may well continue to do so. This scheme gives the opportunity to release much needed space in north Oxford by enclosing the railway line in a tunnel and means that new residential areas will not be blighted. This measure really **does** "future proof" the development. Anything less is unacceptable.

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