

Charlene Baker
ERM

Dear Ms Baker,

19th August 2010

Draft Chiltern Railways (Bicester to Oxford improvements) Order
Objection number 122 - D.I.Scargill (on behalf of Oxford Green Belt Network)

Thank you for your letter of 29 July about the above Draft Order. I was also pleased to receive, on behalf of the Oxford Green Belt Network, the letter sent to us by your colleague Sarah Goodall on 27 April. We understand your wish to satisfy objectors in the hope that they will withdraw their objections, but we feel that what we have been offered so far is an explanation of what Chiltern Railways want and no flexibility so far as we can see in meeting our objections.

Although our concerns extend to the impact of the Chiltern Railways scheme on all parts of the Oxford Green Belt, our major concern is over what is likely to happen at Water Eaton. The danger, as we see it, is that the new station complex will act as a catalyst to further development in the immediate vicinity, putting the Green Belt at risk. The last thing we want at Water Eaton is a business park or industrial estate growing up to take advantage of the transport facilities there.

The Order includes an intention to relocate the stone depot to a greenfield site to the north and we remain strongly opposed to this and to the perimeter road intended to serve the new location. It has been suggested to us that the present operator, Hansons, have never applied for planning permission to operate at Water Eaton and, if it is the case that they have never felt this need, they might be prepared to move to another already established depot which is not in the Green Belt. Perhaps you could tell us whether any negotiations have taken place with Hansons with this possibility in mind. We would also be grateful if you could confirm that, if the Secretary of State were to grant the Order, this could not apply to the stone yard since, under the Order, use of the land must be operational land for the statutory undertaker (Chiltern Railways) and does not extend to third parties. If this is the case, it would seem that deemed planning permission cannot be obtained for the relocation of the aggregates depot.

So far as Grundons are concerned, we appreciate that the scheme does not allow for any co-location of the waste facility at the site. But, as Ms Goodall points out in her letter, the County Council, having given Grundons permission for a waste facility here, might be considering applying to put it on a neighbouring site like the aggregates depot. Do you happen to know what the County are up to because, until we know what the County have in mind, we have to assume that our worst fears might be realised and we shall finish up with an aggregates depot, new access road, and a waste handling facility, all on greenfield land?

I am afraid that until we know for certain that the new station will be unaccompanied by any further developments of the kind referred to above, we have to maintain our objections.

Coupled with the fears expressed above, we would like to know what plans there are for further expansion of the parkway station complex itself, (1) if the use of the station proves to be very successful, and (2) if the EW Rail proposals were to go ahead on top of the current proposals. Clearly any such expansion could not take place without impacting on the openness of the Green Belt in the immediate vicinity of the station.

Meanwhile it would be helpful to know whether all the Statements of Case are now available on a website? We were kindly sent the Chiltern Railways SOC by Eversheds but have had difficulty locating any others.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Scargill

Dr D.I.Scargill, Chairman, Oxford Green Belt Network