

## **EWR Phase 1**

### **Points arising from WAPC Briefing meeting, 6 September 2016**

#### **Would a 3dB reduction from SilentTrack removing eligibility for noise insulation be a 'significant' benefit?**

Having considered the Officers' Assessment section of the Officers' Report to the West Area Planning Committee (WAPC) regarding Application numbers 16/01858/VAR (route section H) and 16/01861/VAR (route section I-1) we note there is a specific point made by Arup in its report (Appendix 4 of the Officers' report) which is then relied upon in the Officers' Report which NR feel should be explained further to the WAPC .

Arup considered the significance of the estimated noise reduction from SilentTrack and argued, contrary to the evidence provided by Network Rail, that changes of 3 dB would be significant. The reasoning was that reducing noise by this amount would reduce the numbers of properties experiencing external noise levels above the noise insulation trigger levels in the Policy (see officers report paragraph 41). However, if this noise levels were reduced slightly by Silent track to below the threshold the buildings would not qualify for noise insulation following the application of the hierarchy for noise mitigation required by the SoS. Since the effect of noise insulation and associated ventilation is that window can be kept shut and this has a large effect on internal noise level, the effect of introducing glazing is expected to of the order of at least 10 dB(A). At night (which is the critical period when impacts are highest) it is the noise environment inside a property that is of key concern. Therefore, whilst SilentTrack would be likely to reduce the external noise levels by a small number of decibels, the net effect would be to increase the noise levels by upwards of 7 dB(A). Therefore, this would result in an adverse impact at properties where this situation occurred.

If insulation has already been offered (and is being installed), then NR would argue that providing SilentTrack in addition would be beyond what the SoS had required through the hierarchy.

#### **Noise monitoring after EWR Phase 2**

A number of questions went to this issue and a range of overlapping answers was given, which may leave doubts in Members' minds, so should be clarified by Officers at/before the WAPC meeting on 13 September.

References in the NVMP to Phases 1, 2A and 2B are nothing to do, directly, with EWR Phase 2 (ie the works between Bicester and Bletchley, allowing services to Milton Keynes/Bedford/Aylesbury). They are references to the physical phases of work approved under the Bicester to Oxford TWA Order. At the time when the TWA Order was granted, the intention was to build Phase 1 and 2A first and 2B as a separate construction contract.

For clarity, Phase 1 was to be twin track railway from the Chiltern mainline at Bicester to the MoD depot south of Bicester; from Islip to Peartree Junction and from Woodstock Road junction to the Oxford North junctions with the mainline. The sections through Wolvercot tunnel and from Oxford North into Oxford were to be single track. Phase 2A was the tunnel lowering at Wolvercote. Phase 2B was installation of the second track between MoD Bicester and Islip and through Wolvercot tunnel.

Condition 19 as drafted anticipated the submission of two sets of Schemes of Assessment for Noise and Vibration in each section, once covering services running after Phase 1/2A was completed and a second after Phase 2B. This is clear from the wording. As in the ES, two different train service scenarios would have been used for these.

In practice, all of the works authorised by the TWA have been delivered by Network Rail as a single delivery package. Hence, only one set of N and V SoAs have been produced, based on the overall train service scenario, which includes services likely to be introduced once what is now called EWR Phase 2 has been completed. The noise mitigation has been designed and installed as a single tranche of barriers etc capable of mitigating the overall EWR Phase 2 train services scenario.

The key point of this long explanation is that Network Rail's position in interpreting para 2.11 of the NVMP differs from that of the Council's Solicitor.

Network Rail only now intends to undertake one round of monitoring, 6 and 18 months after the railway opens. As explained correctly by David Stevens to Members this includes measurements of individual trains, but grosses up the results to correspond to the EWR Phase 2 train services scenario. The TWA Phase 2B works have been completed and no additional mitigation is intended to be provided between Bicester and Oxford after the Phase 2 EWR services start to operate.

Para 2.11 in the last sentence, has to be read as a whole and refers to the repeated post-construction monitoring (to test mitigation performance) after Phase 2B works have been completed and EWR (as against Chiltern Railways) services have been introduced.

**Since all of the mitigation for Phase 2B is already in place, the whole of the last sentence of para 2.11 is redundant and of no effect.**

OCC is, of course, free to make representations to the planning authority that determines the applications made for EWR Phase 2 works seeking additional monitoring to be undertaken after EWR Phase 2 services are in operation.

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**EWR**

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