



Network Rail Consultation Response

To:	Ms Genna Henry
Date:	23-Jan-23
Application reference:	20221064
Location:	Northfleet Harbourside - Land Surrounding Ebbsfleet United Football Club, Stonebridge Road, Northfleet
NR Position:	Request for Contributions

Dear Ms Henry,

Thank you for consulting Network Rail on the above planning application.

Network Rail is the statutory undertaker for maintaining and operating railway infrastructure of England, Scotland, and Wales. As statutory undertaker, Network Rail is under license from the Department for Transport (DfT) and Transport Scotland (TS) and regulated by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) to maintain and enhance the operational railway and its assets, ensuring the provision of a safe operational railway. Consequently, any third-party proposal that impacts Network Rail's ability to deliver a safe operational railway is a concern.

As a public funded company, Network Rail has responsibilities to spend public funds efficiently which consequently means we do not have the funds available to mitigate the impact of third-party development on railway stations.

Due to the increased footfall associated with the size of the development, we are seeking contributions towards accessibility and improvement of the nearby stations to ensure rail travel remains an attractive option.

While Network Rail do not have objections to the proposals in principle, a key issue for us as purveyors of the railway is the impact of cumulative development in the area. We note that

this development - alongside the London Resort Theme Park and the Ebbsfleet Central East development (EDC/22/0168) – is certain to drive increased station capacity requirements in future. In this respect, Network Rail would look to work with local authorities or developers to explore options in ensuring sufficient capacity is provided in the medium and long term, easing the burden on individual stations. We have also issued a response to Ebbsfleet Development Corporation in relation to the Ebbsfleet Central East development, noting how the impact of different developments within the area will drive the need for station-related improvements.

In terms of this development, the proposed site sits approximately 500m from both Northfleet and Swanscombe stations, meaning the impact felt by the railway is likely to be significant. This has been demonstrated by the trip generation figures in the applicant's Transport Assessment, expecting an additional 94 AM and 114 PM rail passengers during peak times. However, we expect a development of this size and proposed number of residential dwellings to have a higher trip generation rate, especially considering the regularity of trains into London. In addition, the proposed stadium renovation is also a concern - the scheme does not appear to take into account the impact of acute and high railway usage on match days.

Following an internal consultation, which included the train operating company Southeastern Railway, several improvements have been identified across two stations that will be impacted: Northfleet and Swanscombe.

Northfleet

- Refurbishment of existing assets, including the station building.
- Shelters on platforms.
- Investment into pedestrian and cycle routes and facilities.
- Contribution towards an Access-for-All (AfA) style bridge and lifts.
- Booking hall with provision for staff quarters.
- New Ticket Vending Machines (TVM's).

At present, the station is not in a good state and due to the uplift in journeys brought about by development in the area, there is a need to modernize and upgrade its condition.

Accessibility for Platform 1 is poor, so there is a requirement for an overbridge or lift, hence why we are asking for contributions towards AfA improvements.

The proposed development is less than a 10-minute walk to much of the site, it is therefore likely to be the preferred railway option for journeys into Gravesend, Dartford and Central London. The installation of new TVMs and platform shelters, as well as refurbishment of the open hall would be needed to control congestion of the station and maintain safety. Considering the station resides in a residential setting close to homes, minimizing the spillover effects of rail passengers is of utmost importance to Network Rail.

While we appreciate the burden of providing cycle and pedestrian paths may not necessarily reside solely with the developer of this scheme, it is worth noting to the Council that we would like to see investment into these forms of infrastructure so that rail remains a attractive form of travel.

Swanscombe

- AfA access to platform 2
- Platform shelters
- New TVMs
- Booking hall with provision for staff quarters.

Like Northfleet, Swanscombe station is similarly in poor condition and would require upgrades to keep up with the impact of additional usage from the development. This involves a footbridge or lift to provide pedestrian access between platforms 1 and 2.

Furthermore, the addition of TVMs within a new booking hall for passengers would help to ease the burden on the residential street. It is noted the station is currently accessible by foot on a narrow, residential street. We would be concerned by the safety precautions of spillovers during peak times as the entrances and exits lead straight to/from a road. Therefore, the introduction of a booking hall would give rail passengers opportunity to wait inside within a contained area – rather than the public street or outside people's homes.

Alongside this, the addition of platform shelters would also help to ease congestion by allowing rail passengers to utilize the fuller extents of the platforms. Again, this is an important part of our safety mitigation concerns as it prevents bottlenecks at station entrances and spillover impacts on the public highway.

In summary, Network Rail are seeking significant contributions for improvement of infrastructure that will aid accessibility and integration of Northfleet and Swanscombe stations. This will improve passenger experience for the new occupiers of the development at Ebbsfleet, as well as provide benefit to the wider community that are impacted by the large-scale development.

I trust that the above clearly sets out Network Rail's position on the proposal and we look forward to further engagement to establish costs and the mechanism of effective delivery of the improvements. Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Sam Bhatti

Graduate Surveyor | Property (Southern)

Network Rail

1 Puddle Dock, London, EC4V 3DS

M 07514 734709

E Sameem.Bhatti@networkrail.co.uk

www.networkrail.co.uk/property