Ward Councillor for Milton and Waterbeach

Initial comments

Residents in Waterbeach have expressed concerns about the time for which the barriers will be down. The frequency of trains in the morning peak period could mean that the road is closed for a significant period of time under this scheme. The impact on traffic on Station Rd, station users and those accessing the area to the east of the railway could be significant.

As far as I know we have not been provided with any detailed information about the duration for which the barriers will be down and the frequency of closure. I received one suggestion that the barriers might not be raised at all between 7.53 and 8.25 in the morning due to frequency of trains and duration of closure. This would also mean that passengers could not cross to the railway to access the platforms during this period which is clearly not acceptable.

If the closure duration and frequency is significant then foot passengers walking or cycling to the southbound platform would cross the railway at the manual (UWB) crossing at Burgess Rd and walk along the footpath east of the railway line. This type of crossing is regarded as a less safe crossing. Furthermore, under a separate scheme Network Rail have been considering closing the Burgess Rd crossing altogether.

Under these circumstances, Waterbeach railway station would become unusable for passengers during peak times. They would instead choose to drive or cycle to Cambridge North or not use the train altogether.

I would be surprised if it is Network Rail's intention to make the station unusable during peak periods but I have not seen any information that provides me with an understanding of the implications of longer barrier closure times.

In addition, the crossing is used by residents to access the river. Many people use the river path for leisure or as a commuter route by bicycle into east or central Cambridge. It is also used to access Cow Hollow Wood a popular place for walking dogs and exercise.

Extremely long barrier closure times might also result in frustrated passengers climbing the barriers.

If the barriers are to be closed for extended periods of time at peak times then provision should be made for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the railway.

I understand that there is an alternative crossing type (AHB+) which is half barrier with obstacle detection which would result in a shorter period of closure but it's not clear why Network Rail have not considered this type of crossing instead.

Follow-up comments

Under the 2018 traffic scenario queues in the morning will reach back to the village green. This could lead to extremely chaotic scenes in the village.

As far as I could see the modelling doesn't take account of the development of the New Town with first occupation early next year. This means that the traffic growth figures are probably too low. However, it does consider the relocation of the station and the effect this might have on car travel to the station car park. On one hand it assumes an upside (no car park traffic) but not the downside (traffic travelling to Cambridge from the New Town on Clayhithe Rd)

There is going to be a shuttle bus service from the New Town to the station so that New Town residents can access the current station without adding to the traffic levels. However, the bus stops are currently proposed to be either side of the station. This will add to the traffic congestion. Anna is in discussion with Campbell Ross-Bain at CCC about the possibility of using the car park for bus drop off and pick up but it's uncertain at this time whether this will be a possibility. In any case this shuttle bus is going to get extremely caught up in the traffic at peak times.

Councillor for Little Wilbraham & Six Mile Bottom Parish Council

The linked documents are somewhat baffling: it appears that all the land outside the old station is being acquired compulsorily (cars are currently parked here for Station House and 1 Station Cottages), and the VISSIM model for SMB suggests there will be significant increased queue with the Do Something model, possibly justified (p39) because the longer barrier down time 'allows multiple trains to pass at once' - but this is single track, with one train each way each hour.