# North Doncaster Chord

The (EIA) for North Doncaster Chord was undertaken to accompany a Development Consent Order (DCO) application from Network Rail to the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) in June 2011. The Secretary of State for Transport granted the DCO for this scheme in October 2012.

## Key Issues –

The engagement and consultation requirements for the DCO application under the Planning Act 2008 and Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009 were a relatively new process at the time of undertaking the EIA, which presented a number of ongoing challenges.

The predominately rural nature of the scheme location required extensive consultation with the local residents and highways authority to ensure that the management of construction traffic was safe, effective and practical.

In addition, key concerns of local residents involved the potential effects on the landscape and the noise impacts during both construction and operation. The introduction of a new road bridge was a result of close and effective consultation with the local authority as part of the scheme but was also perceived as a negative aspect of the scheme by local residents due to the potential for increased traffic using the area once the level crossing was removed.

## Purpose of the project

In order to meet future demands for low carbon transportation, there is a strategic need to drive improvements and efficiencies for both passenger and freight services on the UK rail network. Once operational, the scheme will provide a direct link between two key freight railway lines, removing slow moving freight trains off the ECML and thereby increasing capacity and efficiency on the ECML for high speed passenger trains.

## Description of the project

The scheme is located in a predominately rural area to the north of Doncaster in South Yorkshire, UK. The North Doncaster Chord will provide a new flyover to bring rail traffic over the East Coast Main Line (ECML). In addition, a new highway bridge will be constructed to enable closure of the existing level crossing.

Once complete, the scheme will be operated and maintained by Network Rail.
Lessons learnt
- An exceptionally large number of parties were consulted by the IPC at the EIA Scoping stage. Each consultee comment had to be suitably addressed and cross referenced in the Environmental Statement documentation to demonstrate to the IPC that a full response had been given; due to the number of consultees, this was a significantly more time-consuming process than anticipated.

- The widespread consultation process led to pressure to consider indirect impacts outwith the standard study area, e.g. the effects of queuing traffic at level crossings some distance from the scheme had to be assessed post-submission as a result of consultee responses. This led to the need to undertake additional surveys and assessments, which were not identified in the scoping opinion.
- As part of the IPC process, there was a need to apply for provisional approval in the form of a letter of comfort for a Great Crested Newt licence prior to the DCO being granted. This had not been encountered on previous projects and required close consultation with Natural England to acquire approval in time for application submission.

Lessons learnt cont.
- The IPC was interested in how the proposed mitigation measures in the ES were tied into a requirement as part of Network Rail’s Contract requirements environment or additional commitments.
- In addition to the EIA, a number of supporting documents were produced such as a Sustainability Appraisal and a Carbon Footprint report to accompany the DCO application. These were produced in direct response to Network Rail’s desire to demonstrate how the scheme would contribute to and support its own Sustainability Policy above and beyond the EIA process. Mott MacDonald developed a bespoke sustainability decision model to integrate the principles of sustainability into the project and document how the design evolved to fully consider the sustainable performance of the infrastructure. These works formed a key part of responding to objections at the IPC public examination in January 2012.

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