OxSRFI

OXFORDSHIRE

STRATEGIC RAIL FREIGHT INTERCHANGE

Passenger Rail: OxSRFI Wider Benefits

Document 10.3B
Revision V1

On behalf of
Oxfordshire Railfreight Limited

Prepared by Oxalis Planning
October 2026

PINS REF:	TR050008
Document Reference	10.3B
APFP Regulation	5(2)(q)
Author	Oxalis Planning
Date	October 2026
Revision	V1

Passenger Rail: OxSRFI Wider Benefits

CONTENTS

1. **INTRODUCTION**
2. **OXSRFI SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY**
3. **FUTURE POTENTIAL 'ARDLEY' PASSENGER STATION**
4. **OXSRFI 'PASSENGER STATION NOTE'**
5. **OXSRFI – SUMMARY OF RAIL RELATED BENEFITS**
6. **WIDER OXSRFI 'ACCESS' BENEFITS**
7. **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

1. Introduction

1.1 This note has been prepared by the Applicant following discussions held at the first set of Issue Specific Hearings (ISH) on 29th and 30th September.

1.2 During the ISH there was discussion about the extent to which the Proposed Development and the Applicant is making, or could make, a contribution to help deliver local aspirations and objectives relating to the potential future reinstatement of a passenger rail station as part of a strategy to enhance public transport connectivity in the area. This discussion made reference to the potential for wider growth – planned or proposed – in the area, as well as the proposed OxSRFI scheme.

1.3 This note is a response to that discussion with the ExA and is submitted as part of the Applicant's post-hearing submissions. It seeks to supplement and expand upon the discussion held at the ISHs, and is structured around a number of relevant topics to outline the ways in which OxSRFI as submitted would directly deliver significant contributions and wider benefits to local accessibility and connectivity, including a potential future passenger station.

2. OxSRFI Sustainable Transport Strategy

2.1 The Sustainable Transport Strategy (STS) for OxSRFI **(TA Appendix 1, Document 6.3A.01, pages 206 to 295) (AS-055)** is agreed with the Transport Working Group established by the Applicant, comprising Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), National Highways, and Cherwell District Council.

2.2 The STS sets out the significant package of connectivity improvements that will be provided by the Proposed Development to ensure that OxSRFI is provided with high-quality healthier 'active travel' and lower carbon transport options in contrast to single occupancy car trips. A passenger rail station does not form part of, and is not required, as part of the agreed STS. However, as set out below, the Proposed Development does not prejudice the potential future reopening of Ardley railway station for passengers.

2.3 The Public Transport Strategy (PTS) **(TA Appendix 5, Document 6.3A.02, pages 475 to 517) (AS-056)** forms part of the STS and was developed with significant input from OCC. It is agreed with OCC that the PTS should focus on providing new and enhanced bus service connectivity to Heyford Park, Bicester, and Banbury, with passenger rail travel facilitated by the bus service link to Bicester and its railway stations. The package of bus related improvements identified represents a multi-million investment in the local network of services funded by the OxSRFI scheme.

2.4 The public transport mode share for OxSRFI therefore already takes account of bus and rail modes. Accordingly, and for the reasons set out by the Applicant during **ISH2 (EV5-001)**, a reopened Ardley passenger rail station would not significantly alter transport patterns associated with OxSRFI and would not represent a significant change in the modal share for public transport associated with the Proposed Development, which would remain similar to the levels agreed in the STS and assessed in the TA **(Document 6.3A.01/AS-055)**.

3. Future potential 'Ardley' Passenger Station

3.1 The proposed future passenger station at Ardley has no formal status at present. Indeed, the proposal has only recently been introduced into the wider public domain, and there were no public proposals for a potential new passenger Station when the OxSRFI scheme was first conceived (around 2019), nor through the majority of the application preparation process. OCC's '*2040 Rail'* Vision was published in November 2025 and states that a station at Ardley could be reinstated by the end of the next decade "*if feasible*"[1] but does not identify how this would be funded, or whether the proposals have in-principle support from the railway industry.

3.2 The Applicant understands that the railway industry (DfT, Network Rail, Chiltern Railways) is not actively promoting the reinstatement of a station in the Ardley area.

3.3 Recent verbal updates from OCC have indicated that pre-feasibility work has now been completed, and have stated that it shows that a new Station is feasible (the Applicant has not yet seen the results of that work), but OCC have also confirmed that there is no promoter of the Station, and no 'business case'. As far as the Applicant is aware this pre-feasibility work has not yet been published.

4. OxSRFI 'Passenger Station Note' (OxSRFI Planning Statement Appendix C – Document Reference APP-164)

4.1 Notwithstanding its current status (see above), the Applicant has engaged positively in dialogue with OCC, Network Rail and other interested parties. Direct regard has been had to the potential for a future Station and the Applicant has assessed whether the OxSRFI scheme might prejudice its delivery if it were brought forward by others. The findings of the work undertaken is set out in the submitted '*Passenger Station Note*'.

[1] OCC 'Rail 2040', Appendix A page 67, third bullet point.

4.2 An assumption has been made that the location for a new passenger station would be the former Ardley Station Site (until its closure in 1963). This is understood to be the site favoured by OCC. That site sits outwith the Order Limits to the north and is unaffected by the OxSRFI scheme proposals.

4.3 The Applicant's assessment has concluded that there is no obstacle to constructing a passenger station based on initial consideration of engineering and topographical issues and the likely scope of the station facility. The siting of the OxSRFI northern and southern main line connections and signals would be sufficiently far apart to allow a new station at Ardley to be sited between the two. Indeed, the delivery of signalling infrastructure forming part of the OxSRFI proposals alongside other benefits would assist with the operation of a new passenger station.

4.4 Therefore, the OxSRFI proposals do not prejudice proposals being advanced by any other parties for the delivery of a new passenger station at Ardley. This has also been agreed in the signed SOCG with Network Rail (Document 8.1/AS-092). Moreover, the OxSRFI proposals will deliver rail and accessibility improvements which could help facilitate such proposals (see below).

5. OxSRFI – summary of rail related benefits

5.1 The OxSRFI scheme will bring about direct and indirect benefits to the rail network which will also be of direct benefit to the costs of delivering as well as the operation of, a future passenger station if delivered by others, as agreed with Network Rail.

5.2 The rail related benefits of the OxSRFI scheme to the rail network and to the delivery of a future passenger station are explained in a number of submitted Application Documents[2] - they explain that the OxSRFI scheme will deliver the following rail related benefits:

I. **Signalling**: The siting of the OxSRFI northern and southern main line connections and signals would be sufficiently far apart to allow a new station on the former Ardley Station Site to be sited between the two. Signalling forming part of the OxSRFI proposals will significantly improve the headway (minimum time between successive train passes in the same direction of travel) from 5 minutes to 3 minutes on the Chiltern Main Line between Aynho

[2] In particular:

- The SoCG with Network Rail (Document 8.1/AS-092) paragraph 6.2;
- The Rail Report (Document 7.2A/APP-312), paragraph 7.1.3 and 7.1.4
- The Passenger Rail Station Note (Document 5.4C/APP-164), paragraph 3.13.

Junction and Bicester North. This would improve route capacity in both directions for all train operators. The positioning of the signals are such that they could also potentially be used to control passenger trains serving a new station on the former Ardley Station Site. Overall, the proposed signalling as part of the OxSRFI scheme could reduce the investment (i.e. reduce costs) in new signalling otherwise required to facilitate a new station. This is agreed with Network Rail and OCC.

II. **Safety**: The OxSRFI scheme would eliminate (close) the Bucknell Farm level crossing, removing risks to users of the crossings and of rail services. This fully aligns with Network Rails stated policy which seeks to close as many of these crossings nationally as reasonably practicable. Without OxSRFI, any future passenger station would likely be required to and cover the costs of the closure of the level crossing and deliver the necessary footpath and bridleway diversions;

III. **Drainage**: works to be undertaken as part of the construction of OxSRFI include drainage proposals which will assist with moving groundwater and run-off away from the Chiltern Main Line towards the south and west. This will address an existing issue with flooding on the Main Line. These are issues that a future passenger station would likely otherwise need to address, including bearing the associated costs;

IV. **Engineering access**: additional access points will be provided to the main line from the OxSRFI site for Network Rail personnel, vehicles, on track plant (such as tampers and stoneblowers) and road rail vehicles. This will reduce the time taken to deploy personnel and equipment to and from the main line, reducing the time otherwise required for engineering possessions of the main line, therefore benefiting the network including passenger services;

V. **Operational Resilience**: the OxSRFI scheme will provide facilities for the stabling and light maintenance of rolling stock and locomotives, which may enable faster recovery of failed trains on the local network than possible from existing operating bases elsewhere. This will benefit the network including for passenger services;

VI. **Loading gauge:** whilst not directly relevant to passenger services or a potential future passenger station, the OxRFI scheme will improve the capability of the Chiltern Main line to accommodate freight trains, thereby enhancing its role as part of the strategic freight network and increasing opportunities for other new freight services.

6. Wider OxSRFI 'access' benefits

6.1 In addition to the above, OxSRFI will make a substantial contribution to the future potential delivery of an Ardley passenger station by addressing existing road-based vehicle access and congestion issues, and providing sustainable travel connectivity.

Vehicle access

6.2 The Ardley passenger rail station note (Document 5.4C) (AS-050) sets out the physical interfaces with the OxSRFI scheme, and identifies that the existing station access onto the B430 has poor visibility and would need enhancement or realignment to comply with appropriate highway design standards. The OxSRFI scheme would remove B430 traffic past the access (as a result of the Ardley Bypass), making a future station access easier to provide.

6.3 The TA (Document 6.3A.01) (AS-055)[3] describes the congestion issues at M40 Junction 10 ('J10'), including specific issues at Ardley Roundabout. The assessments[4] show that there would be significant congestion at the junction complex in the future baseline scenario without OxSRFI. The congestion would adversely impact access to a potential reopened Ardley passenger station via M40 J10 and would likely increase the risk of drivers using surrounding local roads to access a station with likely adverse impacts on local communities.

6.4 The proposed OxSRFI Highway Works at M40 J10 and A43 Baynard's Green will deliver substantial operational improvements and resolve existing capacity constraints. The improved operation of the junction complex would have a direct beneficial impact on the highway accessibility of a future Ardley passenger station.

Sustainable travel connectivity

6.5 OxSRFI will provide new high-quality pedestrian and cycle links between the Main Site and Station Road which is the likely location of a passenger entrance and exit to a reopened Ardley station. OxSRFI will also provide a bus stop at the Principal Access, a short walk from the location of the potential Ardley station, along with a mobility hub within the northern part of the Main Site that will provide secure covered cycle parking. Should the station plans come to fruition, these measures would facilitate multi-modal journeys between the Main Site and the station.

6.6 More generally the significant package of OxSRFI connectivity improvements would improve and enhance overall pedestrian and cycle links to a reopened station from surrounding locations, where currently there are very limited facilities. The OxSRFI scheme will enhance connections with the former station site by:

- Downgrading of the existing B430 via the provision of the Ardley Bypass[5];
- A dedicated shared use cycle track heading south from the likely station access over the railway, connecting into OxSRFI and beyond via the wider significant network of new cycle routes being provided[5];

[3] Paragraphs 3.10 to 3.14 of the TA, AS-055.

[4] Detailed assessments at Chapter 11 of the TA – these are agreed with NH and OCC Highways.

[5] As shown on the Highway Plans, APP-045.

- A dedicated shared use cycle track through the Main Site connecting with the western perimeter bridleway improving connectivity with the Heyford Park development proposals[6];
- A new bridleway connection via Quarry Cottages into the northern part of the wider Heyford Park development proposals[7];
- Speed limit reduction on Quarry Cottages which will improve the environment for cyclists heading to Ardley from a future Heyford Park development[6]; and
- A S106 contribution for OCC to deliver accessibility improvements to bridleway 109/20 north of the railway line adjacent to the former Ardley railway station site, and to deliver surface and accessibility improvements to footpath 148/3 to facilitate cycling and equestrian use.

7. Concluding remarks

7.1 It is the Applicant's view that, as set out in the preceding sections, the OxSRFI proposals will make numerous direct and significant contributions to the multi-party efforts being made to deliver improved public transport and connectivity improvements in the area. This contribution can be considered both with regards to the financial investment proposed in local bus service improvements, as well as through a wide range of physical works and infrastructure. This includes not only rail infrastructure improvements of direct relevance to the potential future delivery of a new passenger station, but also significant highways improvements which would deliver improved accessibility (with improved reliability and resilience in the local network) which would directly support the operation of a new passenger station in this locality.

[6] This is being formalised within the application Change Request ss set out within PDA-001.
[7] As shown on the Access and Rights of Way Plans, APP-031.