The Planning Inspectorate

THE NETWORK RAIL STALYBRIDGE AND DIGGLE (SADDLEWORTH) TRANSPORT WORKS ORDER ACT (REF DPI/G4240/25/18)

INSPECTOR NOTE – 25 June 2026

This note reflects on the action points noted during the inquiry so far and advises on points to be considered moving forwards.

Action points from inquiry/further actions

The inspector notes that the applicant intends to submit responses to various inquiry action points in due course. A number of action points have been addressed by the applicant and those can be found in the submitted inquiry documents - Documents Submitted during Inquiry - Gateley

Reminder – the noted action point - Register of Environmental Actions and Commitments (REAC)/Environmental Commitments Register – should record all commitments made by the applicant to date.

Reminder – the inspector requests a response as soon as possible to the noted action point concerning whether the canal/canal towpaths, to the extent that Network Rail propose to permanently acquire land or rights, should be regarded as 'open space' for the purposes of the Order.

Ongoing action – the applicant, Oldham Council and Tameside Council should review their cases having regard to the REAC and other mitigation. Any updated suggested planning conditions should be provided (the inspector recognises this is already an agreed action point and some progress has already been made – e.g. recorded actions relating to FP244).

New action point – the inspector noted during the inquiry that the applicant would review Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) with Oldham Council and Tameside Council. This action may also address the other noted action point – the seeking of agreement that both local authorities are satisfied with the proposed Order - as well as any other relevant matters which should be included in the SoCG.

New action point – the inspector noted during the inquiry that the applicant should provide more detail on the highways working group and how that would be formed, its role, how it would be secured. That could be included in the SoCGs, or as a separate inquiry document.

New action point – given the changes made to the Order since first draft submission, the applicant should provide an updated Explanatory Memorandum (NR03) during the inquiry.

New action point - the following plots should receive greater clarity as to ownership or an explanation why this has not been identified in the book of reference:

Plots 1-038, 1-240, 1-241, 2-030, 2045, 2-046, 3-001, 3-002, 3-004, 3-006, 3-021, 3-044, 4-026, 7-010, 7-020, 7-021, 9-019, 10-035, 11-011, 12-008, 12-024, 12-035, 13-001, 14-004, 14-005, 15-005, 15-009, 16-005, 16-019.

If the applicant has any comments on these additional/clarified actions, then they can be discussed when the inquiry re-convenes on 30 June 2026.

Position Statement - Canal and Rivers Trust:

In response to the final position statement between the applicant and Canal and Rivers Trust (CRT) (this is to be assigned a INQ number in due course), the applicant is requested to:

1) Confirm when the final 'Agreement' referred to in the position statement is to be submitted and what form this will take (for example, revisions to the proposed Order). The Inspector recognises that a related action point has already been recorded and the applicant confirmed that work is 'in progress'. The inspector requests that this is actioned as soon as possible.

2) Confirm whether there will be a SoCG between the two parties which includes responses to each of the individual objections raised by CRT, including how those matters have been addressed and specifically how agreed matters have been secured and by what mechanism (amended Order, planning conditions etc).

3) In the absence of '2' above, a statement from the applicant addressing the points raised above (can be included in '1' above).

4) It would assist the inspector if the land matters raised above could be covered in evidence by Mr Billingsley (property). Any matters which fall outside the remit of Mr Billingsley could be dealt with by round table session in respect of non-land rights matters, if necessary, depending on the nature of further submissions made as detailed above (including whether CRT withdraw their objections).

Round-Table Session (RTS) update

RTS – Canal and Rivers Trust objection – non-land matters

As detailed above, subject to the submission of additional detail.

RTS – action points/inquiry documents and other matters

The inspector intends to schedule a round table session during week 4 to deal with action points, submitted inquiry documents and other matters. This will principally relate to matters which the inspector has sought further clarification on during the course of the inquiry. As a number of action points are currently

being progressed, it remains unclear whether the inspector will require further clarification on any of the inquiry documents submitted in response to action points, thus a detailed agenda will be published nearer the time.

Notwithstanding the above, and that further evidence is to be heard during the remainder of the inquiry, the inspector may including the following topics in any RTS:

- Clarity on the outline details of the proposals of various construction compounds, including the assessment of likely environmental effects. The inspector will need to be satisfied as to whether the applicant's position at the inquiry reflects the assessment of effects contained within the environmental report (including LEMP and tree protection plans). If there has been a change in circumstances, then the extent to which that may alter the findings or assessment as set out in the environmental report. If mitigation has been proposed that is not included in the environmental report, then clarity as to whether that is recorded in the REAC (which is an action point in any event).

- Linked to the above, the status of the Landscape Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) and tree protection plans.

- The REAC details and status.

- Potential highways working group details and status.

The above is provided to give parties as much notice as possible but is subject to change/amendment.

RTS – Land matters

The inspector intends to schedule a round table session during week 4 to deal with outstanding land and rights matters. The inspector notes that objections remain relating in relation to a number of plots (also, see action point above relating to ownership status of various plots).

RTS – proposed Order

A further round table session on the proposed Order is also included in the timetable.

Heritage

A heritage round table agenda has been drafted and a copy will be published on the website.

Timetable

A revised timetable will be published. This can be discussed further when the inquiry re-convenes on 30th June 2026.

Matthew Woodward

INSPECTOR
25 June 2026