

TRANSPORT AND WORKS ACT 1992

**THE TRANSPORT AND WORKS (APPLICATIONS AND OBJECTIONS PROCEDURE)
(ENGLAND AND WALES) RULES 2006**

THE MID-SUFFOLK LIGHT RAILWAY ORDER

APPLICANT'S PROPOSALS FOR FUNDING

THE COST OF IMPLEMENTING THE PROPOSED ORDER

1. The proposed order would provide for the statutory authorisation of approximately 936 metres of the former Mid-Suffolk Light Railway ("the Middy") which was closed in 1952 and has been reinstated in recent years in accordance with planning consent. Importantly, the order would provide authority for the crossing of a public footpath on the level.
2. As the proposed Order does not authorise the acquisition of land or construction of works, there are no costs directly associated with its implementation. The reinstatement of track and the provision of footpath level crossing infrastructure have already been delivered. The cost of these works has been met from revenue from visitors to the museum, subscriptions from members of the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway Company ("MSLR"), charitable donations (including from the Middy Trading Co Ltd, a legacy of £145,000, and fund-raising. The line was constructed using good quality sleepers that will last for at least 20-30 years and track rail that will last indefinitely.
3. Delivery of the new halt at the eastern end of the railway is expected to be completed by Easter 2025 and will be funded from a mix of charitable donations and fund-raising.
4. MSLR is managed by a board of trustees elected by its members. There are currently 8 trustees and 502 members, including 18 honorary life members. No trustees receive any remuneration, payments, or benefits from the charity.
5. The Middy Trading Co Ltd (company registration number 03532918) referred to above, is a separate retail company that carries out commercial operations to raise funds for the charity. Its primary objective is to support the MSLR. For example, it operates a shop, the Kitchener's Arms bar and sublets the Museum's café. It also markets the Santa Specials under licence from MSLR (which are special train rides (stopping) short of footpath 46, that include a visit to "Santa's grotto"). The Middy Trading Co Ltd is non-profit-making and donates its surplus income to MSLR.

6. MSLR is financially sound. It has identified an amount of £50k to meet the costs of obtaining this order and has reserve funds available to provide additional support to the costs of this application if required.
7. The use of good quality materials in the construction of the railway means that no substantial works of maintenance or refurbishment are anticipated in the foreseeable future, and ongoing costs associated with the operation and maintenance of the railway, including the crossing, will mainly comprise consumables such as fuel, oil, and grease. All relevant works will be carried out by unpaid volunteers.
8. Costs associated with the ongoing maintenance and operation of the railway will be met by the revenue from visitors to the museum, subscriptions from members of the MSLR, charitable donations (including from the Middy Trading Co Ltd) and fund-raising. Existing revenues would be adequate for this purpose. Indeed, outgoings in the last financial year were covered by revenue from entry ticket sales, the Santa Specials, and other commercial activities of the Middy Trading Co Ltd without taking MSLR's other revenue sources into account. However, it is reasonably expected that the enhanced railway offering will attract more, and repeat, visitors to the museum.
9. A newly formed Events Committee is re-shaping the MSLR's future events programme so as to enhance the visitor's experience while visiting the Middy. As a result, this year's events programme has different attractions booked for each event day and record numbers of visitors attended the first three events of 2024. MSLR now has attractions contacting the company to ask if they can be included in the future events programme list.
10. MSLR recently allocated space for the USAAF 34th Bomb Group to curate a display alongside the museum exhibits. The MSLR has also built up a working relationship with the Eastern Counties Bus Preservation Group who provide a shuttle bus service from the main line railway station at Stowmarket using vintage buses and on certain dates provide trips around local villages and other attractions such as Stonham Barns.
11. Even without the enhanced railway offering, but in anticipation of it, these steps have seen an increase in visitor numbers and therefore an increase in revenue.
12. MSLR has recently formed an Outside Events Team which travels around the model railway shows all over East Anglia. The team is made up of volunteers. The team sells on donated model railway related products. The team also buys job lots of model railway layouts, which are then cleaned and checked to ensure they are either operational or in good condition for onward sale. The Event Team's stand advertises the museum and railway and the team hand out the event season brochure. This new venture is proving successful and is anticipated to be a profitable money stream.
13. MSLR currently hires in steam locomotives which on average costs £250 per event running day. In recent years, however, MSLR volunteers have been restoring its own steam locomotive, known as 1604. Completion of the

restoration is expected in late 2025. When 1604 is operational, there will be no need to hire in locomotives, making event days even more profitable. The 1604 restoration project is already fully funded with the money ring fenced.

14. The shop is looking at ways to increase its range. By way of example, it now sells short lengths of our old stock rail which are used as door stops, these are proving to be very popular and of course very profitable.
15. The Kitchener Arms bar has an increasing customer base, both people using it as their local and visitors to the Museum and increasing turnover. Consideration is being given by its operator, the Middy Trading Co, to the introduction of live music on Friday nights and other types of attractions, in keeping with the Middy time period.
16. The locomotive restoration shed has skilled machinists and MSLR has recently been commissioned to manufacture certain parts for other locomotive owners that are otherwise unobtainable. This is expected to provide a new valuable income stream.
17. The Permanent Way department of MSLR has a good stock of vintage rail, and everything needed for vintage track assembly including turn outs. It is often contacted by other Heritage railways needing these types of parts and, again, this is quite profitable.
18. As referred to above, there are no direct costs associated with the implementation of the proposed order, as the works have already been carried out with planning permission from the local planning authority. The applicant is well-placed to meet the ongoing expenses associated with the operation and maintenance of the railway.