

TRANSPORT AND WORKS ACT 1992

**TRANSPORT AND WORKS (INQUIRIES
PROCEDURE) RULES 2004**

**THE NETWORK RAIL
(SUFFOLK LEVEL CROSSING REDUCTION)
ORDER**

SUMMARY

PROOF OF EVIDENCE

-OF-

ANDREW KENNING

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| Document Reference | NR/30/3 |
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1. I am Andrew Kenning and I work for Network Rail in a central team called the Level Crossing Development Team (the project team). I have spent 29 years working in the rail industry and for the last 9 years I have worked at Network Rail. Whilst working for Network Rail I have spent a large amount of time working on level crossings, either through projects or directly managing the active level crossing assets.
2. I have been involved with this project from its very beginning, and have been continuously involved in the project to the present day. I was involved in the original meetings & workshops that ultimately lead to the creation of a phased approach to level crossing management, which is set out in the CRD Anglia CP5 Level Crossing Reduction Strategy (NR18) – “the Strategy”. The Strategy was intended to be a means of managing the Anglia Routes level crossing portfolio. The principle was to have a phased approach to reducing the numbers of level crossings. I was tasked with writing the Strategy and the project specification, which has led to this Order.
3. The phased approach was intended to identify where opportunities were and to target efficient use of funds to achieve level crossing closures. The approach adopted was to target crossings which could be closed using low cost, uncomplicated solutions first, and working through to crossings which would require a more complex intervention, and more expensive, solution in later in the Strategy. The Strategy was split into 5 phases to allow the level crossings to be grouped according to the levels of intervention required. Whilst phases 1 & 2 were run as an inclusive project, later phases were seen as likely to be either targeted sites or embedded into wider projects, due to the higher funding required to deliver the interventions and the business case justification that would be needed for that level of funding. The thought process being that level crossings that had not been allocated to a phase were unlikely to be closed without significant 3rd party external developments happening in the area, due to there being currently no feasible options available to achieve closure.
4. The whole Anglia Route was assessed as a desktop exercise to identify where the alternative crossing points existed. The thought process applied at this point was that if there was a nearby structure, it would be cost effective to utilise this rather than provide any other provision. Where alternative level crossings were to be proposed as a diversionary route, the alternative level crossing was to be either an active level crossing (providing positive indication to the user of approaching trains) or on the best alignment (in terms of the right of way) for the remaining level crossing. The desire lines of footpaths were considered as part of this exercise as this allowed some crossing points to be further away from the current level crossing point and still be on the desire line.
5. The level crossings assessed as falling within phases 1 and 2 of the Strategy were selected for inclusion in the project on the basis of there being an alternative structure or level crossing which the users could be diverted to. In some cases, where there were existing parallel routes or where the right of way had been severed, no alternative was proposed and the

project looked at extinguishment only. It was not the intention of the Strategy phases 1 & 2 to provide new structures to cross the railway.

6. At the initial stage of the project, we were looking to use Network Rail land, where possible, to provide diversionary routes in order to reduce impacts on third parties. However, it became clear as the project progressed, that use of Network Rail land alone would often not provide an alternative which was acceptable to the highway authority or users of the existing right of way, or there were other issues arising with use of the Network Rail land (such as the ecological impact of clearing the land, or a lack of space to provide a new right of way). Therefore, alternative alignments had to be looked at which involved greater use of third party land to provide the diversionary routes.
7. Complexity of the railway infrastructure was also considered in the assessment of level crossings. For instance providing technology at level crossings close to stations is known to be complex and expensive due the varying speeds that trains would approach the level crossing. In these instances there was a positive view that nothing should be diverted to the level crossings as ultimately they would be removed from the network if at all possible.
8. Based on this assessment the project was started in early 2015. Not all the alternative structures were found to be suitable and in these instances that particular level crossing was removed from the project and moved into a later phase for further assessment. The reasons why alternative structures were not suitable ranged from physical features, such as reduced head room, to the extent of alterations required to the structure. In some instances it was demonstrated through consultation that the proposed alternative was not suitable and that there were genuine reasons why the crossing point of the railway needed to remain at (or very close to) its current location. In these cases the level crossing was removed from the project and deferred into a later phase for further assessment.
9. Phase 1 of the Strategy (mainline crossings) is being progressed in the Suffolk Order. Proposals relating to crossings falling within Phase 2 in the Suffolk area (branchline crossings) were 'paused' at the end of the GRIP1 process (February 2016) for funding reasons.
10. Throughout the project there have been open discussions with the highway authorities affected by the project. These discussions have been a two way process of each understanding the needs of each other and the limitations / constraints that both were working to, and have informed the development of the proposals which are now contained in the draft Order.
11. There have also been discussions with Local Access Forums and with MPs and local counsellors, as well as consultation with members of the public, and engagement with affected landowners. There have been 2 rounds of informal public consultations with consultation events held in Bury St Edmund, Stowmarket, Bacton and Ipswich. I attended almost all of the events. The events were well attended and generated much discussion, which has been taken into account in the development of the project.

12. Land owners that are affected by the project were contacted with details of the project and where ever possible we have taken on their suggestions of routing of the new routes through their land. Unfortunately it has not always been possible to take on every suggestion as it is a balancing of needs between the land owners, the users and the highway authorities, given that Network Rail has to provide alternative routes (where required) which are suitable and convenient for those using them.
13. I discuss in **Section 4** of my Proof the works which are likely to be involved in implementing the Order, including the likely duration of any works and the access required to facilitate those works.
14. I have been involved in the order documentation and objection responses, providing detail of the projects position on these matters.
15. With regards to the individual level crossings, I refer you to my detailed proof of evidence as follows:

| Code | Name | Section |
|------|-----------------------|---------|
| S01 | Sea Wall | 5 |
| S02 | Brantham High Bridge | 6 |
| S03 | Buxton Wood | 7 |
| S04 | Island | 8 |
| S07 | Broomfield | 9 |
| S08 | Stacpool | 10 |
| S11 | Leggetts | 11 |
| S12 | Gooderhams (footpath) | 12 |
| S13 | Fords Green | 13 |
| S16 | Gislingham | 15 |
| S17 | Paynes | 16 |
| S18 | Cow Pasture Lane | 17 |
| S21 | Abbotts | 18 |
| S22 | Weatherby | 19 |
| S23 | Higham | 20 |
| S24 | Higham Ground Frame | 21 |
| S25 | Cattishall | 22 |
| S27 | Barrels | 23 |
| S28 | Grove Farm | 24 |
| S29 | Hawk End Lane | 25 |
| S30 | Lords No.29 | 26 |
| S31 | Mutton Hall | 27 |
| S69 | Bacton FPS | 14 |