

THE PROPOSED NETWORK RAIL (SUFFOLK LEVEL CROSSING REDUCTION) ORDER

Responses to Questions submitted for Cross Examination of Dr Algaard by OBJ/84 (Rachel Wood)

Question 1

1. The proposed Suffolk Order submitted only includes level crossings in phase 1 and it is correct that they were chosen on the basis that users of the rights of way network could be diverted and removed through the utilisation of existing nearby infrastructure.
2. Network Rail and our highway consultants, Mott MacDonald, have undertaken extensive work to assess alternative routes for users to cross the railway. In respect of each crossing, Network Rail is satisfied either that it is not required to provide a new right of way, as a suitable alternative route exists on the current highway/public right of way network, or that if an alternative right of way is to be provided that the alternative is suitable and convenient.
3. In considering the suitability and convenience of the alternative route, Network Rail has had regard to a number of factors including the length, safety and accessibility of the alternative route, and as part of that has considered whether the people would continue to make their journeys in the same way as they do at present. Network Rail has also considered any feedback from the public consultation when deciding whether to continue to take forward level crossings within the Suffolk Order. To the extent that this is a Weatherby specific concern, it is addressed in the Rebuttal Proof of Evidence of Susan Tilbrook for S22 (NR32/4/6).

Question 2

4. Network Rail is not seeking and does not expect current users of the public footpath level crossings within this order to revert to driving instead. Furthermore, Network Rail believes that there are further benefits to the users of the PRoW network in regards to safety and accessibility that would be enhanced through the proposals in the proposed Order. It is also important to highlight that the 11th and 12th bullet points of para 17 of the NPPF do not relate solely to walking and cycling, but also to making fullest use of public transport, and that the proposals in this order will contribute to a more efficient and cost-effective rail network, in turn supporting sustainable transport.

Question 3

5. I am confident that the order has taken into account the various factors as outlined in the House of Commons Transport Committee report. There are various factors to consider at each level crossing and I cannot comment on this in regards to site specific level crossings, but Andy Kenning and Sue Tilbrook will be better placed to answer any level crossing specific questions when they give their evidence on each individual level crossing later in the inquiry.