

PUBLIC INQUIRY

APPLICATION BY NETWORK RAIL UNDER TRANSPORT AND WORKS ACT 1992

PROPOSED NETWORK RAIL (CAMBRIDGESHIRE LEVEL CROSSING REDUCTION) ORDER 200X

OBJ/12-CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

PROOF OF EVIDENCE

PETER TAYLOR

ROAD SAFETY ENGINEER

INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Peter Taylor. I am employed by Cambridgeshire County Council as a Road Safety Engineer. I have been in my current position since June 2013. Prior to this I was contracted to Halcrow /CH2M in Area 14 as a specialist consultant to assist with the preparation of Road Safety Studies and Road Safety Audits using HA's standard HD19/13 to assess the engineering safety of trunk road and motorway schemes in the region. Overall I have 20 years of active relevant experience in Road Safety Auditing.
2. I have 15 years of relevant professional experience as a Transport Planner including working internationally, nationally and for the relevant Local Highway Authorities in both Greater Manchester and Cambridgeshire before specialising in Road Safety Engineering. I have a degree in Town & Country Planning and a Master's degree in Transport Engineering. I have Chartered Membership of the Royal Town Planning Institute and I have held Chartered Membership of the Institute of Highways & Transportation since 1991.
3. I have 20 years' experience of reviewing, assessing and appraising road safety engineering schemes on both trunk road and LHA road networks throughout the UK. I worked for the Highway's Agency Safe Road Design Team in both 2004 and 2005. I am a certified Member of the Society of Road Safety Auditors (SoRSA) since the inception of the Society in 2007. Membership of the latter involves passing an annual review of competence to include providing evidence of Collision Investigation, Road Safety Research, mentored and independent learning, Collision Analysis, Road Safety Scheme Assessment & Evaluation and Highway Engineering – this membership is renewed annually.

4. Cambridgeshire County Council has a procedure for conducting Road Safety Audits on all but the most minor works that are likely to impact on the County's Highway Network. The proposed crossing closures and other restrictions identified in the current programme by Network Rail would qualify for RSA not only due to the traffic restrictions but particularly the implied changes to pedestrian and other NMU movements. The function of this process is to protect all potential users of the County's highway network against identifiable risks and, where necessary, develop appropriate measures to limit these. As a dispensation to external developers this may take the form of an Audit Review of a previously commissioned Road Safety Audit if the County determines such an Audit can/has been conducted to an appropriate level of quality. In this instance Network Rail appear to have commissioned Mott MacDonald to prepare a Stage 1 Audit for their proposals. The Review of these Audits are contained as Appendix 1 to this proof.

GENERAL CONCERNS

5. As NR had not previously worked with CCC regarding its RSAs for these works, in accordance with the practice I have outlined above, CCC requested that NR commission CCC to undertake a formal Review of Mott MacDonald's Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA). NR declined to do this. Therefore CCC took the decision to undertake its own Review for the reasons I cite at paragraph 4 above. This was completed on 31 October 2017 and is attached to my Proof as Appendix 1. A copy is also in CCC's Bundle of Evidence. Please note: any recommendations from an external audit, although they may provide useful guidance to the designer, do not carry any authority with CCC until the Audit has been approved.
6. I have grave concerns that NR in their risk assessments, although they consider multiple parties and levels of exposure, introduce a scoring system that from highways experience, has been found to offer little benefit to the overall assessment and indeed may mask issues of particular relevance to a site. The development of Road Safety Audits since the 1970's demonstrates the relative benefits of "scoring" has long since been superseded.
7. CCC's Review has identified 11 sites that included no problems or recommendations from the Road Safety Audit and several others that failed to address the identified risks. In my opinion, this demonstrates why it is important that such a Review of external RSAs is undertaken. I would highlight in particular the issues with the following crossings:-

SITE SPECIFIC CONCERNS

C04 Footpath 10 Crossing No. 20 Meldreth

8. Closure of this rail crossing is to divert pedestrians onto Station Road carriageway and an existing railway underbridge at Meldreth. This narrow carriageway (approximately 6.0m)

has incomplete footways each side of Station Road for the length of the diversion route. As noted in NR recent correspondence Obj/12/CAMB/R001 the company are seeking to address the lack of footway with a new 2.0m wide footpath in the field margin west of Station Road opposite nos. 3, 5, 7 and 9 Station Road to rectify this omission. Whilst this offers appropriate mitigation locally it does not a) improve pedestrian capacity across the rail underbridge or deal with potential issues arising from very limited pedestrian provision at the northeast of the route at the Industrial Estate access. Each of these locations present new collision risks for pedestrians from manoeuvring vehicles. Given the extensive time put aside for Consultation it is believed NR should have given more time to developing their proposal to address what will otherwise present as hazards at Stage 2 RSA.

C07 Footpath 4 Crossing No. 37 Harston

9. Closure of this crossing is to divert NMUs onto the B1368 London Road across an existing railway underbridge. At the current time neither verge on the B1368 appears wide enough to accommodate this use safely. The rail underbridge has sufficient width to accommodate this movement however given the high-speed use of the road this is about the only safe location to accommodate pedestrian crossings. The consultation plan for this proposal shows the proposed diversion being along the southbound (eastern side) of the B1368 carriageway and connecting with BOAT 3. This involves users being required to cross both London Road and Shelford Road for which no safe location has been identified. Using the eastern verge of London Road in the vicinity of Shelford Road junction is particularly fraught owing to high-speed left-turning vehicles and very limited forward visibility. It is understood that to make use of the eastern verge of London Road in this location would require not only verge widening but also additional support for the embankment.
10. Suggestions to use the northbound verge of the B1368 appears not only more expensive and less safer than using the southern verge of field boundary to divert FP4. This will require steps or ramps to move from the field boundary to the verge at the approaches to the bridge. There is no safe location for additional footway provision to be accommodated in the western verge from about 20m north of the rail underbridge due to visibility constraints. The proposal included in the latest design freeze drawings appears to use this field boundary against the northbound carriageway of the B1368 to limit these risks.
11. The northern tie-in for FP4 is shown with a crossing to the southbound verge of the B1368 close to the change in speed limit on the consultation plan. This too will need to be properly designed to ensure it is safe for all the expected users. Again failure in the RSA1

reports appear to be leaving NR open to additional problems that will need to be addressed at RSA Stage 2.

. C29 Cassells Footpath 1 Wilbraham

12. This appears to be a relatively straightforward closure of a footpath level crossing with associated diversion onto the C231 Brinkley Road to connect with FP11 and FP10. Walkers are then expected to use the westbound verge and the existing Brinkley Road rail crossing to complete their route. Identified with two separate problems in Safety Audit and a Designer's Response indicating NR will modify their provision to address the identified problems this ought to be acceptable. However, what hasn't been recorded are the restrictions both on forward visibility and the uneven verge that may introduce problems to be tackled in the design prior to Stage 2 Audit. It is understood this proposal has been modified since the consultation documentation, however CCC has not received either the documentation or a request for a Stage 2 Audit for this scheme.