

082/60

Transport & Works Act Orders Unit
General Counsel's Office
Department for Transport
Zone 1/18
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR

By email only, to transportandworksact@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Dr Chris Gibson



2 May 2017

Dear Sir

ESSEX LEVEL CROSSINGS ORDER

As a resident of Wivenhoe, who regularly uses the Paget Road crossing as the direct route from my home to our only supermarket, the Co-op, and other services, I wish to OBJECT to the proposals to close the Paget Road pedestrian level crossing. My objections relate to the fact that it is UNNECESSARY, in relation to the stated reasoning from Network Rail; that it is UNACCEPTABLE, in respect of the impact it will have upon users, and disproportionately so upon less-able users; and that Network Rail has acted UNREASONABLY in deploying intimidation tactics in pursuit of its objectives.

Further detail is given below about these issues. Given the widely-held concerns in Wivenhoe about this proposed closure, in support of my objection I wish to request that the matter be subject to a formal Public Inquiry.

1. UNNECESSARY

Given that the stated justification for the closure is pedestrian safety, the fact that there has never been an accident or incident involving pedestrians using that crossing over the past 150 years since the railway was constructed provides no evidence at all in support of the proposed closure.

If Network Rail were to argue that train speeds have increased, or are likely to increase, thus posing a greater risk to pedestrians, it should be noted that the proximity of

Wivenhoe Station, at which all services stop, precludes a significant increase in train speed at this location.

2. UNACCEPTABLE

Closure of the Paget road crossing would necessitate a substantial foot diversion to cross by either the Anglesey Road or High Street bridges. Quite apart from the regular nuisance factor experienced by all users, the uphill route to either of these crossings (Paget Road being at the bottom of a valley) will prove particularly difficult to pedestrians with limited mobility.

Furthermore, the two alternative crossings both have their own inherent difficulties and risks. Anglesey Road is unmetalled, rutted, and with patches of loose gravel upon which anyone could have an accident, but again perhaps especially those of limited mobility. I understand that the residents of Anglesey Road have always resisted the road being adopted and improved by the Highways Authority, so that even if Network Rail proposed improving the surface there is no guarantee that this could be delivered.

Similarly, the High Street bridge is risky. The eastern footway, which those diverted from Paget Road would have to use to avoid having to cross the busy carriageway twice, is exceptionally narrow; even at present buses turning in or out of Station Road must use the whole of the carriageway (occasionally even mounting the pavement), so widening of the eastern footway would not be practicable.

Given the Network Rail focus on pedestrian safety (see point 1), have they factored into their decision the likelihood that pedestrian safety will be compromised in using either of the two bridge crossings? Will Network Rail assume responsibility and legal culpability for any such accidents on the alternative crossings? In my view, they should be held responsible and accountable for both their actions and the consequences of their actions.

3. UNREASONABLE

We have lived in Wivenhoe for some six years. Over that time, but particularly since the closure plans were made public, the frequency, volume and period of the day when trains sound their horn on approach to the crossing has increased markedly. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this is a cynical, deliberate, intimidation tactic on the part of Network Rail to 'persuade' the people of Wivenhoe to accept the closure.

In 2016, a 'horn sounding unit' was installed by the crossing. This seemed to be an admirable solution, alerting those in close proximity to the impending arrival of a train, without having to sound a horn several hundred metres down the track, the consequences of which were to alert most of the residents of Wivenhoe, practically all of whom did not need to be alerted. Unfortunately (and again it is difficult not to assume deliberately) the trains have continued to sound their horns, in addition to the sounder unit operation.

As a public authority, such intimidation tactics by Network Rail should not be considered acceptable, and on this point alone I believe this closure should not be permitted.

In summary, I OBJECT to the closure of the Paget Road, Wivenhoe crossing and REQUEST that the matter be considered at PUBLIC INQUIRY.

Thank you for considering my response.

DR CHRIS GIBSON

Angela Foster

OBJ/60

From: Chris Gibson
Sent: 02 May 2017 19:04
To: TRANSPORTANDWORKSACT
Subject: ESSEX LEVEL CROSSINGS ORDER
Attachments: Paget Road objection.docx

Pleased find attached my OBJECTION to the above order

Dr Chris Gibson FBNA
Wivenhoe

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