

FAIRWEATHER, Thomas

From: Wivenhoe Town Council <wivenhoe_council@btconnect.com>
Sent: 13 April 2017 16:06
To: JENKIN, Bernard
Cc: PERRY, Cathy
Subject: Wivenhoe Level Crossing Closures query and meeting 19th April 2017

Importance: High

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Dear Bernard,

RE: Proposed Closure of Network Rail Level Crossings

Wivenhoe Town Council wish to make a formal objection to the proposed closure of the foot crossings E41 Paget Road and E42 Sand Pit.

A detailed submission was made at the Network Rail Consultation Exercise in June 2016, and Wivenhoe Town Council feel that none of comments and observations made by the Town Council at that time have been acknowledged by Network Rail.

It is also considered that there should be a public inquiry into these proposed closures impacting on residents who regularly use the crossings involved, which was suggested by Network Rail at the time of the original consultation (Under the Highways Act 1980 procedures for extinguishing footpaths (which closing these crossings would involve), a public inquiry would be required if there were any outstanding objections, which there are in this case from Wivenhoe residents).

Please could you therefore send a response to the following points?

Would you be able to attend a meeting with members of Wivenhoe Town Council to discuss these proposed closures on 19th April 2017 at 7.30pm in the Council Chambers?

Would you be able to write to the Secretary of State for Transport to request a public inquiry into these closures?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

Hazel Humphreys

*Wivenhoe Town Clerk
Wivenhoe Town Council*

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

30th April 2017

Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP LONDON SW1A 0AA
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR



Our ref: tf/PagetRoadCrossing

Dear Chris

I am writing regarding the proposed closure of the Paget Road railway foot-crossing in Wivenhoe, Essex by Network Rail.

You will be aware of Network Rail's plans to close crossings across Essex in a bid to improve the safety of the public. The proposed closure of this particular crossing is a contentious one, and the way Network Rail have approached the closure has caused a great deal of local upset.

It is important that I make clear the uniqueness of this particular crossing compared to others in Essex. There is a clear split, made by the railway, through the heart of Wivenhoe. There are five methods of crossing between the top and bottom half of Wivenhoe. This is a restrictive amount for a town with a population above 7000. The closure of this crossing would enforce and underline the divide in the town and goes against the vast majority of public opinion.

This is a well utilised crossing, which historically has not seen any incidents, and which is relied upon by many members of the community. There has been a distinct feeling in the town that Network Rail have approached the proposed closure with a view that the crossing was to close, no matter what the outcome of the public consultation, and that the intention of Network Rail has always been to secure public support for a suitable and convenient alternative. These efforts have failed, and the public, including their local representatives and public organisations, remain overwhelmingly against the closure.

I enclose a copy of concerns from Peter Hill, which reflect the views of the majority of the town. As you will see, there is a lack of any consensus with Network Rail, and there is little public trust that a fair consideration is being given to the impact a closure would have on the town. For the reasons stated, I would be most grateful if you would give me your assurances that the proposed closure of this crossing will be subject to a public inquiry to ensure the impact on the town and the level of public concern is taken fully into consideration before any decision is reached.

Yours ever
Bernard Jenkin

Encl.

cc. Peter Hill Esq

Local interest groups, representatives and media outlets

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FAIRWEATHER, Thomas

From: Peter Hill <peter@toadhall2.co.uk>
Sent: 20 April 2017 11:27
To: JENKIN, Bernard
Cc: FAIRWEATHER, Thomas
Subject: Re Wivenhoe - NR's proposal to close Paget Road crossing

Dear Bernard

Would you be willing to write to the Secretary of State for Transport to press for a Public Inquiry into Network Rail's proposal to close the foot crossing at Paget Road?

Wivenhoe Town Council, County and Borough Councillors, The Wivenhoe Society are all united in opposing this move by NR. There is another round of consultations currently under way which NR are holding with the closing date of 12th May 2017.

We are putting the finishing touches to our response to this closure proposal. It is one of only 5 ways which allow people to get from the top half of Wivenhoe to the bottom and is surprisingly well used as NR's own survey shows. You are being copied on our formal response to the SoS which will be sent in the next few days.

I understand that the SoS then has 28 days to decide whether to hold a public inquiry or not.

It appears to us that the papers NR have submitted to the Department fail to present a rationally argued case for the closure of each crossing individually – they merely put forward general aims and imply that all of these will apply at each crossing, which of course is not necessarily the case. It is vital that the pros and cons be fully investigated at an Inquiry.

The Inquiry need deal only with those few cases where there are unresolved objections. We understand that Paget Road Wivenhoe has the highest number of unresolved objections in the whole county.

Throughout the consultation process NR has repeatedly been stating in writing that there WILL be a public inquiry under an independent inspector. It is somewhat unclear on what basis they have been saying this, given that it is for the SoS and not the applicant to decide whether there will be an inquiry or not! – nevertheless this undertaking HAS been given, and if the SoS were now to decide not to hold an inquiry, the public would quite reasonably consider that they had been lied to, from which the Department would get the flak.

We are hoping that you would add your weight by personally asking the Secretary of State for Transport that an inquiry be held to consider the Wivenhoe case at least.

With thanks

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Wivenhoe

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