

Public Inquiry : Network Rail proposed closure of E41 crossing (Paget Road)

Order 201X

Statement of Case :

Ann Clarke, [REDACTED]

I am a regular user of the Paget Road crossing in Wivenhoe. It enables me as an elderly resident without a car living south of the railway line to make the essential journey easily on foot between my house and the Coop . This is our only supermarket and the location of buses in all directions.

The route via the Paget Road crossing for a large part is level, lying close to a brook which runs through the Valley Road Estate and under the railway line to the river. The gradient is a real consideration when carrying shopping. The route incorporates a footpath, and three cul de sacs so it is virtually traffic free until one reaches the uphill part before the Coop. It avoids the High street completely. It is a pleasant, peaceful route and I have felt no anxiety using the crossing in the 13 years I have lived here. The view along the rail track in both directions is good and the warning sound is more than adequate. A warning system of lights could be added in this time of advanced technology. Users know what time the trains pass - between 15 and 25 minutes past the hour in both directions leaving most of the hour train free. Network Rail's vague mention of increased traffic in the future is not a serious consideration. The alternative route proposed involves walking along one of two narrow roads with blind corners, unmade sections, no pavements, poor lighting at night and two way traffic. From both of these roads the pedestrian emerges into the High Street at a tight corner with considerable traffic and sometimes traffic jams. I have had narrow misses with cars at these junctions as have others I know. Damage to buildings and the bollards put to protect them occurs frequently in these narrow roads where delivery vans and brewery lorries struggle to pass and often have poor rear vision.

Also, the attractiveness and importance of the Paget Road crossing for the people of Wivenhoe is that going south it leads directly to a pedestrian route to the river, the sea wall path and the popular Quay with its pubs. The route is,

of course, favoured by dog walkers and enhances the quality of life in Wivenhoe, giving people an optional relaxing way to the beautiful Colne waterside avoiding the busy, car dominated High Street.

There is much talk of health and well being. Keeping mobile is acknowledged to be fundamentally important. It was borne out by my own experience last year when, at the age of [REDACTED]. My recovery was rapid and complete, and the hospital attributed this to the place of walking in my daily life. I don't wish to be forced to be a car owner because journeys on foot are too difficult or to be subjected to the stress of traffic every day. As for well being, the natural world is known to be beneficial. Easy paths to our beautiful waterside should be increased not reduced. Network Rail is setting the quality of life in this small riverside town against a couple of minutes off a railway journey.

Wivenhoe is basically a one road town which at times is reaching traffic saturation since the housing developments on the two old shipyard sites where still more remain to be completed. The traffic situation in the High Street, already difficult, will inevitably worsen when the 250 homes scheduled for this parish are built. The new doctors' surgery, situated just North of the High Street bridge will serve a wide area beyond the town bringing more people to lower Wivenhoe when it opens in a few months' time. Also there is a current local plan to build 2500 homes North of the A133 while the eventual capacity of the area is expected to be achieved in 30 years, making a total of 7000 to 9000 houses. Inevitably traffic as a result of all stages of housing development will increase in Wivenhoe, some as residents and many for the station, the surgery, the restaurants, the sailing and the pleasures of lower Wivenhoe and the river. In this context the level crossing at Paget Road is an even more important breathing hole for beleaguered pedestrians, those living here today and those in the future when it will be even more valued.

