

TRANSPORT AND WORKS ACT 1992

TRANSPORT AND WORKS (INQUIRIES PROCEDURE) RULES 2004

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE OF JOHN PREST

LEVEL CROSSINGS

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 My name is John Prest, I am the Route Level Crossing Manager (West Anglia) for Network Rail Anglia Route, based at Ely Network Operations Depot, Station Road, Ely, Cambridgeshire. Since joining Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (**Network Rail**) in 2011, I have worked in various roles within Anglia Route, including that of Level Crossing Manager (**LCM**) from 2013 to 2018, becoming a Route LCM in 2018.
- 1.2 I am responsible, so far as is relevant to this public inquiry, for the day-to-day safety and management of six LCMs who have separate portfolios of various types of level crossings comprised within the West Anglia area of the Anglia Route. This includes a responsibility of the Narrative Risk Assessments carried out for, and Asset Inspections, of those six LCMs and the level crossings within their areas of control. In total, I am responsible for 332 level crossings within my portfolio of West Anglia.
- 1.3 This summary Proof of Evidence (**Summary**) provides an overview of my main evidence in relation to the proposed upgrade of the following level crossings:
- a. Milton Fen Level Crossing (**Milton Fen LX**) upgrade from the Automatic Half Barrier Level Crossing (**AHB**) to the Manually Controlled Barriers Level Crossing monitored by Obstacle Detection (**MCB-OD**);
 - b. Dimmock's Cote Level Crossing (**Dimmock's Cote LX**) upgrade from AHB to MCB-OD;
 - c. Six Mile Bottom Level Crossing (**Six Mile Bottom LX**) upgrade from AHB to MCB-OD;
 - d. Dullingham Level Crossing (**Dullingham LX**) upgrade from the Manned Gate Level Crossing (**MGH**) to MCB-OD;
 - e. Croxton Level Crossing (**Croxton LX**) upgrade from AHB to MCB-OD;
 - f. Waterbeach Level Crossing (**Waterbeach LX**) upgrade from AHB to MCB-OD;
 - g. Meldreth Level Crossing (**Meldreth LX**) upgrade from AHB to the Manually Controlled Barrier Level Crossing with Closed Circuit Television (**MCB-CCTV**); and
 - h. new relocatable equipment building (**REB**) at Foxton (Hauxton Road) Level Crossing (**Foxton LX**)
- which are proposed to be undertaken as part of the Cambridge Re-Signalling Project (**Project**), which the Order relates to.
- 1.4 My Proof of Evidence explains how the risk assessments are undertaken in respect of level crossings and sets out risk information for each crossing.

2 THE RISK OF LEVEL CROSSINGS

- 2.1 My Proof of Evidence sets out the risks that level crossings can pose to users generally, as well as particular risks posed by the AHB crossings and MGH crossings.
- 2.2 AHB crossings were originally designed for use on roads with infrequent or low traffic volume and are now considered to be a legacy type of level crossings. They would not usually be considered suitable when a level crossing is being considered for upgrading as they are not integrated into the signalling system and are, therefore, considered to be less safe than the other types of crossing available today.
- 2.3 MGH crossings are legacy crossings which are locally operated by a signaller or other railway staff. They no longer meet current safety standards and are being renewed with more modern barrier crossings, which remove the need for people and are, therefore considered to be safer.
- 2.4 The main types of risks associated with AHB crossings are:
- a. barrier weaving;
 - b. blocking back over the crossing; and
 - c. pedestrians demonstrating poor behaviours at the crossing (either mistakenly or deliberately).
- 2.5 The main types of risks associated with MGH crossings are:
- a. staff risk;
 - b. physical or verbal abuse towards members of staff; and
 - c. pedestrians' poor behaviours.
- 2.6 Upgrading the crossings in the proposed way will address risks mentioned above and will help seriously reduce risks to Network Rail's members of staff in accordance with Network Rail's obligations under the health and safety framework described in detail in my Proof of Evidence.

3 LEVEL CROSSINGS POLICIES AND RISK ASSESSMENTS

- 3.1 My Proof of Evidence sets out legal framework and policies relating to Network Rail, as an owner and operator of the rail infrastructure in Great Britain.
- 3.2 My Proof of Evidence explains how risk assessments are undertaken on level crossings and documented in Narrative Risk Assessments (**NRA**) by the LCMs. The assessment is based on two elements: a quantitative one (calculated risk model) and qualitative one (structured expert judgment). Both elements are described in further detail in my Proof of Evidence.
- 3.3 The frequency of routine NRAs at each level crossing is based upon the kind of level crossing and its current level of risk. In general, the risk of an AHB level crossing requires it to be assessed between every 1.25 years for higher risk crossings and 3.25 years for the lower risk crossings. MGH level crossings need to be assessed between on average every 2.25 and 3.25 years, dependent on their risk score.

4 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE CROSSINGS

- 4.1 My Proof of Evidence describes each of the affected level crossings in detail and provides the current risk scores, which are as follows:
- a. Milton Fen LX has an ALCRM score of D2 with the collective risk rating of 2 (very high risk crossing);
 - b. Dimmock's Cote LX has an ALCRM score of E2 with the collective risk rating of 2 (extremely high-risk crossing);
 - c. Six Mile Bottom LX has an ALCRM score of H4 with the collective risk rating of 4 (medium to high-risk crossing);
 - d. Dullingham LX has an ALCRM score of K7 with the collective risk rating of 7 (moderate risk crossing);
 - e. Croxton LX has an ALCRM score of G3 with the collective risk rating of 3 (very high-risk crossing);
 - f. Waterbeach LX has an ALCRM score of D2 with the collective risk rating of 2 (extremely high-risk crossing);
 - g. Meldreth LX has an ALCRM score of D2 with the collective risk rating of 2 (very high-risk crossing).
- 4.2 My Proof of Evidence also provides details of the safety events that have occurred at the affected level crossings.

5 OBJECTIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

- 5.1 My Proof of Evidence deals with the objections submitted in relation to the proposed upgrades of Meldreth LX and Waterbeach LX and sets out why these are considered to be necessary from the safety perspective. My Proof of Evidence does not address the objectors' concerns raised in relation to any traffic impacts and this is dealt with in Mr Contenin's Proof of Evidence.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 My Proof of Evidence concludes that the crossings, which are proposed to be upgraded in the Project are, with the exception of Dullingham, all automatic half barrier crossings, which have a number of common risk factors (as described in my proof of evidence).
- 6.2 Network Rail is both under a legal duty and a moral duty to reduce or eliminate any such risks when a reasonable opportunity presents itself. The Project is considered to be that opportunity.
- 6.3 The proposed upgrades represent significant safety improvement for the general public as a whole and for persons travelling on trains. The existing AHB level crossings are legacy crossings that have no signalling interfacing. Therefore, once a treadle is activated, the oncoming train passes over such crossings "coming on what may". With the proposed upgrades, the crossings will be signalling or signaller protected and no train will be able to pass over them unless it is absolutely safe to do so. What this means is that the risk of vehicle or pedestrian interface or collision with a train is virtually entirely removed.
- 6.4 Dullingham level crossing, as it operates now, also carries a significant (albeit not easily quantifiable) risk to the staff members who operate the manned gates and the Project represents a reasonable opportunity to improve safety and reduce risk at that crossing.

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- 6.5 I accept that upgrading the crossings will increase the downtime of the barriers and that, on average, crossing users will wait longer to cross. I also note that traffic impacts of some of the proposed upgrades may be significant, as further described in Mr Contentin's Proof of Evidence. However, the safety improvement far outweigh those downsides and there is, therefore, in my opinion, a compelling case for the proposed upgrades.

Dated 15 March 2023

I believe that the facts stated in this Summary are true.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JPrest', with a stylized flourish at the end.

John Prest