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From: TownPlanning LNW
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To: Spatial Planning
Subject: Wycombe - Delivery and Site Allocations Plan: Consultation on Proposed Main Modifications Network Rail Response
Attachments: 20130325-LNWLevelCrossings-Zone2.pdf; ATT00001..txt

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FAO Sarah Morgan, Planning Policy Officer
Wycombe - Delivery and Site Allocations Plan: Consultation on Proposed Main Modifications

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to the proposed policy.

Network Rail is the “not for dividend” owner and operator of Britain’s railway infrastructure, which includes the tracks, signals, tunnels, bridges, viaducts, level crossings and stations – the largest of which we also manage. All profits made by the company, including from commercial development, are reinvested directly back into the network.

With regards to the proposal Network Rail has the following comments to make.

1) Level Crossings

Within the council area are the following level crossings – I have also attached a map showing their locations.

ELR	Crossing Name	Alternative Name	M	CH	Grid Ref	Postcode	Type
PRA	Great & Little Kimble No.2C		44	45	SP818057	HP179TW	FPS
PRA	Great & Little Kimble No.29B		45	62	SP823075	HP225XS	FPS
PRA	Apsley Manor Farm No.1		46	41	SP824087	HP225YA	FPS
PRA	Dodds Farm		46	70	SP824094	HP225YA	UWCT
PRA	Westmead		43	31	SP807043	HP279HS	FPK
PRA	Princes Risborough No.31		43	71	SP810050	HP279PT	FPS
PRA	MARSH LANE		47	0	SP823095	HP225YA	ABCL(T)
PRA	Great & Little Kimble No.27		44	32	SP816056	HP279LT	FPS
PRA	North Bucks Way FP No.2B		44	49	SP819058	HP179TW	FPS
PRA	Great & Little Kimble No.3B		44	55	SP820059	HP179TW	FPS
PRA	Great & Little Kimble No.38A		44	79	SP822063	HP170XP	FPK
PRA	Apsley Manor Farm No.2		46	58	SP824091	HP225YA	UWCT
NAJ2	Ridgway Path (Down line only)		23	27	SP800009	HP279NX	FPK
NAJ2	Bledlow Cum Saunderton (D/L only)		23	70	SP798017	HP279GN	FPS
PRA	Mount Way FP No.2		42	58	SP802034	HP279BQ	FPK
PRA	Church Path FP No.41		43	2	SP804038	HP279HL	FPS
NAJ2	Severalls Farm No.2		27	54			FPG

Councils are urged to take the view that level crossings can be impacted in a variety of ways by planning proposals:

- By a proposal being directly next to a level crossing
- By the cumulative effect of developments added over time
- By the type of level crossing involved e.g. where pedestrians only are allowed to use the level crossing, but a proposal involves allowing cyclists to use the route
- By the construction of large developments (commercial and residential) where road access to and from the site includes a level crossing or the level / type of use of a level crossing increases as a result of diverted traffic or of a new highway
- By developments that might impede pedestrians ability to hear approaching trains at a level crossing, e.g. new airports or new runways / highways / roads

- By proposals that may interfere with pedestrian and vehicle users' ability to see level crossing warning signs
- By any developments for schools, colleges or nurseries where minors in numbers may be using the level crossing
- By any development that alters a primarily agricultural use level crossing to residential usage (e.g. from use by a farmer to proposed use by a residential development).

As a result of increased patronage over crossings, Network Rail could be forced to implement measures such as linespeed reductions, crossing upgrades and occasionally diversion. This would have severe consequences for the timetabling of trains and would also effectively frustrate any future train service improvements. In addition, safety issues can arise as increased numbers of pedestrians and vehicles use the crossings.

As the **Wycombe - Delivery and Site Allocations Plan: Consultation on Proposed Main Modifications** supports railway improvements for the area, there should also be support given to removal of the level crossings (Moors Gorse is effectively closed already once the footbridge is constructed).

By integrating the Network Rail level crossing policy into the **Wycombe - Delivery and Site Allocations Plan: Consultation on Proposed Main Modifications** – the areas of concern for the council (safety and security of the transport network, safety for all road users, safer routes to school) can be addressed where a future development may include within its boundary a level crossing or impact upon a level crossing outside its red line boundary, and this in turn may affect the areas of concern leading to a potential reduction in the safety of road users, or increasing the risk of children walking to school over a level crossing (e.g. should a residential proposal include building increased numbers of dwellings on one side of a level crossing whilst the schools are on the other side).

In this regard, we request that the potential impacts from development effecting Network Rail's level crossings are specifically addressed through the **Wycombe - Delivery and Site Allocations Plan: Consultation on Proposed Main Modifications**. There have been instances whereby Network Rail has not been consulted as a statutory undertaker where a proposal has impacted on a level crossing.

As such, we strongly believe that the importance of Level Crossing safety warrants a specific Policy included in the **Wycombe - Delivery and Site Allocations Plan: Consultation on Proposed Main Modifications** which will help to elevate the importance of Level Crossings within the development management and planning process. We request that the policy confirms that:

1. **Wycombe** Council have a statutory responsibility under planning legislation (**Schedule 5 (f)(ii) of the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order, 2010**) to consult the statutory rail undertaker where a proposal for development is likely to result in a material increase in the volume or a material change in the character of traffic using a level crossing over a railway;
2. As a first principle, Network Rail would seek to close Level Crossings where possible.
3. Any planning application which may increase the level of pedestrian and/or vehicular usage at a level crossing should be supported by a full Transport Assessment assessing impact and mitigation measures including assessment of closure; and
4. The developer is required to fund any qualitative improvements required to the level crossing identified as a direct result of the development proposed.

Whilst the **Schedule 5 (f)(ii) of the Town & Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order, 2010** is a statutory obligation for the council, by including the Network Rail Level Crossings Policy into the **Wycombe - Delivery and Site Allocations Plan: Consultation on Proposed Main Modifications**, this would ensure that developers (who would consult the policy as part of the preparation of their planning application submission) would also be aware of the statutory obligation and consider the potential impact of their proposal upon the relevant level crossing(s). This would result in earlier consultation with Network Rail, where safety and access issues can be addressed.

Early awareness of this issue through policy will allow the council and developers to factor in costs associated with the impact on a level crossing at an early stage.

(2) Developer Contributions

Where growth areas or significant housing allocations are identified close to existing rail infrastructure it is essential that the potential impacts of this are assessed. Many stations and routes are already operating close to capacity and a significant increase in patronage may create the need for upgrades to the existing infrastructure including improved signalling, passing loops, car parking, improved access arrangements or platform extensions. As Network Rail is a publicly funded organisation with a regulated remit it would not be reasonable to require Network Rail to fund rail improvements necessitated by commercial development. It is therefore appropriate to require developer contributions or CIL contributions to fund such railway

improvements; it would also be appropriate to require contributions towards rail infrastructure where they are directly required as a result of the proposed development and where the acceptability of the development depends on access to the rail network.

The National Planning Policy Framework states that councils should, “*work with...transport providers to develop strategies for the provision of viable infrastructure necessary to support sustainable development...or transport investment necessary to support strategies for the growth of ...other major generators of travel demand in their areas.*” Also, “*encouragement should be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion. In preparing Local Plan, local planning authorities should therefore support a pattern of development which, where reasonable to do so, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport.*”

The likely impact and level of improvements required will be specific to each station and each development meaning standard charges and formulae may not be appropriate. Therefore in order to fully assess the potential impacts, and the level of developer contribution required, it is essential that where a Transport Assessment is submitted in support of a planning application that this quantifies in detail the likely impacts on the rail network.

To ensure that developer contributions can deliver appropriate improvements to the rail network we would recommend that the **Wycombe - Delivery and Site Allocations Plan: Consultation on Proposed Main Modifications** include provisions for rail. The policy should include the following:

A requirement for developer contributions to deliver improvements to the rail network, including any development that occurs as a consequence of the **Wycombe - Delivery and Site Allocations Plan: Consultation on Proposed Main Modifications**.

- A requirement for Transport Assessments to take cognisance of impacts to existing rail infrastructure to allow any necessary developer contributions towards rail to be calculated.
- A commitment to consult Network Rail where development may impact on the rail network and may require rail infrastructure improvements. In order to be reasonable these improvements would be restricted to a local level and would be necessary to make the development acceptable. We would not seek contributions towards major enhancement projects which are already programmed as part of Network Rail’s remit.

Improvements to rail transport contribute to the public good and railway developments should not be expected to support other public projects. Our infrastructure projects and station developments and improvements support regeneration, increase the attractiveness of settlements and benefit communities.



Regards

Diane Clarke

LNW Level Crossings Zone 2



Client: Asset Management
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