

Response to Network Rail's Consultation on Cambridge re-signalling

Response to be sent to: CambridgeC3R@networkrail.co.uk by 11 April 2021 at the latest

1.	What is your name?
	<p>Julian Sykes</p> <p>Please note that this response is send on behalf of the Greater Cambridge Planning Service (Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council) and is aligned with the Cambridgeshire County Council and East Cambridgeshire District Council and Greater Cambridge Planning Service (Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council) response.</p>
2.	What is your email address?
	Transport.Plan@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk and Jack.Eagle@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk
3.	What is your postcode?
	CB3 0AP
4.	How do you feel about our proposals to upgrade the signalling in the Cambridge area?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly support • Support • Undecided • Do not support • Strongly do not support • No response
5	How do you feel about the safety improvements to the proposed level crossings?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly support • Support • Undecided • Do not support • Strongly do not support <p>No response</p>
6	Do you have any other comments you wish to make about the C3R proposals?
	<p>We are strongly supportive of any improvements to the rail network and those that benefit Cambridgeshire and Peterborough residents. Whilst we note that this scheme is a renewals rather than improvement project we wish to highlight the need to make sure that anything that is proposed caters adequately for future demand and that every opportunity is used to increase capacity and improve reliability. Several key projects in the area need to be considered within this context namely, Ely Area Capacity Enhancement, East West Rail and Cambridge South Station.</p> <p>Level Crossings</p> <p>We are supportive of improving safety at level crossings for all users but have several points below. There is a need to take a holistic view of transport safety to ensure that improvements to rail safety do not result in a reduction in road safety. Attention to should be paid to the vision zero partnership, https://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/police-crime-plan/communities/cambridgeshire-and-peterborough-vision-zero-partnership/ Consideration should also be taken as to how people will behave towards the increased barrier downtime. It</p>

is possible that with increased barrier downtime people may take more risks to avoid being delayed and this may lead to greater issues with trespass and crossing misuse.

There is not enough detail regarding the level crossing upgrade to provide details comments. No information is provided on barrier down time now compared with what it is predicted to be in the future. No information regarding the impacts on traffic and pedestrian flows is provided. A full level crossing census with barrier downtime now and in the future would be needed to make a more detailed assessment. Quantifiable information on the relative level of risk at all the level crossing before and after the proposed improvements would be useful.

There is also a need to consider accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians as well as those with reduced mobility affected by the proposed level crossing changes and their needs have to be catered for. Through negotiation and in accordance with its Rights of Way Improvement Plan, the County Council will seek to protect and, where possible, achieve enhancements to the public right of way and non-motorised user network in the affected area. The County Council will be pleased to enter discussions with Network Rail to secure positive outcomes for local residents and rights of way user groups affected by the scheme.

When making improvement to level crossing it is important to considered both the potential change to air quality of potentially and carbon emissions. With the potential for more vehicles to be queuing these could get worse.

From the drawing provided it is hard to tell how the level crossing proposals will impact on future rail infrastructure improvements, but it is key to ensure that none of these proposals will jeopardises other future improvements. Consideration of future upgrades is required to ensure passive provision is provided.

Meldreth Road, Shepreth Level Crossing

It is noted that the Meldreth Road, Shepreth crossing is included in the list of crossings to be replaced by a full barrier. This particular crossing is about 500m west of another in the same village which was recently converted from half to full barrier. The conversion of that crossing caused significant issues on the highway network within the village of Shepreth due to the very significant increase in downtime of the barrier. This led to queuing in the village which resulted in the blocking of properties and a junction. At its worst, the barrier was observed to be down continuously for some 17 minutes.

Regarding the proposal for the conversion of the Meldreth Road crossing to full barrier, it is not clear from the information and data provided firstly, what the impact of this will be in the immediate vicinity of the crossing and secondly, what the combined impacts of both barriers will be on the village of Shepreth and neighbouring villages in terms of the redistribution of traffic.

The number of properties is fewer in the vicinity of this crossing than the Station Road crossing meaning that the impact of queuing traffic is likely to be a less of an issue. Signing and lining should be included from the outset as part of this upgrade to ensure that properties aren't blocked by queuing traffic, however, a lack of traffic data provided in the consultation combined with no information on maximum barrier downtimes makes it impossible to advise on how far into the village this needs to be extended.

Of greater concern is the combined impact on the village of both barriers being down at the same time. With two barriers affecting the village, the severance already affecting the village is likely to be exacerbated, especially as Shepreth looks to its neighbouring villages of Meldreth and Barrington for some services, schools, for example. Again, a lack of data provided as part of this proposal makes it impossible to quantify the scale of this.

Finally, there is a concern about what and where the impacts of any redistribution of traffic are likely to be felt on the wider highway network. Traffic bound for Cambridge from the eastern end of Meldreth is likely to currently pass through Shepreth before joining the A10 either at Frog End or at the Fowlmere crossroads. If the current proposal causes a marked increase in downtime at the barrier as was seen at Station Road, then this could cause traffic to travel back to the Melbourn junction to join the A10, causing issues within that village, or to take a more circuitous route through Malton and Barrington in order to avoid all the level crossings including Foxton. Without an effort having been made to quantify the scale of this in drawing up this proposal, it is difficult to understand whether this is likely to be a problem and whether further mitigation measures are required to offset this.

In addition to having a better indication of the likely downtime, it would also be helpful to better understand how the operation of the crossings can be improved, given that this will be undertaken manually and remotely. It is understood that some of the issues currently experienced at the Station Road crossing stem from priority being given to Foxton level crossing in an effort to minimise traffic build up on the A10. With another crossing in close proximity being added into the mix, there is a danger that the adverse effects seen in Shepreth will be exacerbated. Consideration should be taken as to the overall risk particularly if a vehicle takes an alternative trip using the A10 to avoid increased delays at this level crossing.

Meldreth Road is the boundary of L-Moor Site of Special Scientific Interest has the environmental impacts. It is important that the correct organisation are consulted on this change.

Waterbeach Level Crossing

On the eastern side of the railway line, the Definitive (legal) line of Public Footpath Waterbeach 21, will be permanently obstructed by the proposed changes to upgrade the level crossing. It will be necessary to regularise the actual footpath route used, which is outside the works area, by diverting the Definitive line of the Public Footpath to the route used. Network Rail will need to apply for a Public Path Order under Highways Act 1980, section 119. It should be noted that the Definitive line is already obstructed by existing railway fencing and infrastructure so a TTRO should be applied for from the Streetworks team to manage the issue of the obstruction at present.

Six Mile Bottom Level Crossing

Although it is hard to tell from the material provided it look as though the proposals at this level crossing may impeded future track doubling in this area. Passive provision for this should be included at the very least.

Cambridgeshire County Council's Highways Authority Role

As the Highways Authority the County Council will have to be fully engaged. As it is likely that proposals will affect highways, various teams at the County Council will have to be involved and there will be a requirement for Network Rail to cover costs through this process.

	<p>Team included but are not limited to are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset Management • Transport Management • Transport Strategy • Transport Assessment • Rights of Way • Bridges (if applicable) • Historic Environment Archaeology • Street lighting • Street works • Floods and Water • Traffic signals (if applicable) • Highways Development Engineering <p>As Highway Authority, the County Council will require that it is consulted upon any changes to the existing highway network. If there are any resultant increased highways maintenance liabilities imposed upon the Council as a result of changes to the existing highway network or the adoption of new highways infrastructure, the Council will require appropriate compensations, via the provision of commuted sums and/or other means.</p> <p>Public Health Implications</p> <p>There is a requirement that the Public Health Team are involved in the scoping of the Environmental Impact Assessment to ensure the health impacts are adequately addressed and mitigated.</p> <p>Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Comments</p> <p>Greater Cambridge Shared Planning would like to reiterate the comments it submitted in response to your Consultation Strategy, namely that Network Rail should seek pre-application advice, and provide detailed information to the service under the works that require planning consent.</p>
7	<p>Are you happy for Network Rail to contact you via email to find out more about your views?</p>
	<p>All the organisations included in this response are very happy to work with Network Rail on this project going forward and there several teams that will need to be involved as the project progresses.</p>