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Dear Sir / Madam,

Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan Submission consultation

Thank you for consulting Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd on the Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan Submission consultation. We have the following comments to make.

Policy Wiv 10 states:

The Goods Shed, Station Yard, Wivenhoe

Development proposals for commercial, residential or leisure uses will be supported subject to the historical features of the building being respected otherwise the remains of this building must be removed and the space be used for additional car parking.

It is understood that previous redevelopment proposals from Network Rail have been looked upon unfavorably at the pre-application stage due to the demolition elements of the scheme. In the interests of redeveloping the site in future it is suggested that at the end of this policy the wording 'subject to viability' is added. This is to ensure that the site is not blighted from redevelopment in future.

Level Crossings

In general the need to close level crossings should be considered where any development is likely to increase or change the nature of usage at a crossing. Closure of level crossings will help improve safety, reduce the number of accidents and also help to increase capacity of the network and maintain a robust railway timetable.

In the nineteenth century, when the railways were constructed, many level crossings were provided

because they were the cheapest form of making good the interruptions in land and public highways that resulted. Level crossings were acceptable on a low speed steam-powered railway, but trains have become faster, quieter, and more frequent, and the law and society have rightly become more concerned with safety.

Level crossings collectively pose the greatest risk to safety on the railway network. That is to say, almost half of non-suicide deaths (or injury equivalents) on the railway network are attributable to level crossings.

It is widely acknowledged that closure of level crossings is the most effective way to remove the risk. It is therefore Network Rail policy to close level crossings where possible, and this is set out in the document Transforming Level Crossings 2015–2040 (attached). It is Office of Rail and Road (ORR) policy that Network Rail must work to reduce level crossing risk by 25% by 2018, including through closure of crossings.

As a result, to aid in achieving the Governments targets of level crossing closures Network Rail would welcome a policy to support level crossing closures within the Local Plan. We are happy to discuss specific level crossings further if this would aid policy formation and justification.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely

Katie Brown MRTPI
Senior Town Planner