



Network Rail
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Date: 5 December 2024

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (as amended)
PROPOSAL: Pembrokeshire Council Local Development Plan Deposit Consultation

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for consulting us on the Pembrokeshire Local Development Plan Deposit Consultation. This email forms for the basis of our response.

Network Rail is a statutory undertaker responsible for maintaining and operating the country's railway infrastructure and associated estate. Network Rail owns, operates, maintains and develops the main rail network. This includes the railway tracks, stations, signalling systems, bridges, tunnels, level crossings and viaducts. The preparation of development plan policy is important in relation to the protection and enhancement of Network Rail's infrastructure.

The following policies are of relevance to Network Rail.

GN 3 Infrastructure and New Development

Under this policy, development that generates a need for new or improved infrastructure on or off site, is required to be funded by the development with contributions can be sought for sustainable transport facilities. As the statutory undertaker responsible for maintaining and operating railway infrastructure across Wales, we wish to outline the critical considerations for ensuring the safety and functionality of the railway network within the framework of this policy.

Level Crossings:

Developments that is likely to increase traffic (vehicular or pedestrian) on or near a level crossing significantly impacts safety and operational efficiency. An increase in use or altered traffic patterns at level crossings can increase the risk of incidents.

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 development added over time
- By the type of crossing involved
- By the construction of large developments (commercial and residential) where road access to and from site includes a level crossing

- By developments that might impede pedestrians ability to hear approaching trains
- 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 a level crossing
- By any development or enhancement of the public rights of way

Any development of land which would result in a material increase or significant change in the character of traffic using rail crossings should be refused unless, in consultation with Network Rail, it can either be demonstrated that they safety will not be compromised, or where safety is compromised serious mitigation measures would be incorporated to prevent any increased safety risk as a requirement of any permission.

Where development necessitates the need for rail improvements, we would expect the developer to provide contributions towards such mitigation which should be secured through a S106 agreement. 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 to fund such improvements.

GN 16 Residential Allocations.

There are a number of residential site allocations which could impact on the use of level crossings. These include:

Development affecting Lamphey Level crossing:

- **HSG/052/LDP2/1 – Adjacent to Lamphey School (40 Dwellings)**
- **HSG/052/00011 – South of Cleggars Park (55 Dwellings)**

Development affecting Llanion Public LC:

- **HSG/052/00011 London Road and Ferry Lane Pembroke Dock Cluster**

Where there is an adverse impact on the operation of the railway, Network Rail will require appropriate mitigation measures to be delivered as part of the planning application process. Developers should be more specific in assessing the risk to level crossing and should be fully assessed using an appropriate method included within a transport statement to support their application. If not included we will request this information (to provide detail of the suspected impact) and if necessary, the provision of planning obligations all of which can cause significant delay to the determination of any such planning application.

Below I have included examples from other Local Authorities where the assessment of level crossing impact has been included in plan policy. The local authority should look to include something similar for level crossing assessment and mitigation requirements within their plan policy documents.

- **Sedgemoor District Council Local Plan 2011 – 2032 (Adopted 20 February 2019)**
Policy D14 - Managing the Transport Impacts of Development (page 133)
Development proposals that will have a significant transport impact should:

- Adequately assess and provide any required improvements to level crossings where development may result in a material increase in pedestrian and/or vehicular use of a level crossing, in consultation with Network Rail.

Policy D14

Managing the Transport Impacts of Development

Development proposals that will have a significant transport impact should:

- Be supported by an appropriate Transport Assessment, Air Quality Assessment, Noise and Vibration Assessment and Ecological Surveys where there are significant implications;
- Engage at an early stage with relevant bodies such as the Local Authority, Somerset County Council, Highways England and Network Rail regarding the proposal and scope of supporting information required;
- Include an appropriate Travel Plan outlining how the development will manage transport impacts and encourage more sustainable modes of travel;
- Ensure provision is made for inclusive, safe and convenient access for pedestrians, people with disabilities, cyclists and users of public transport that addresses the needs of all;
- Provide safe access to roads of adequate standard within the route hierarchy;
- Ensure that the expected nature and volume of traffic and parked vehicles generated by the development would not compromise the safety and/or function of the local or strategic road networks in terms of both volume and type of traffic generated;
- Comprehensively address the transport impact of development and appropriately contribute to the delivery of the necessary transport infrastructure;
- Not prejudice existing and new safeguarded transport infrastructure (sites and routes) as shown on the Local Plan Policies Map;
- Enhance and develop rights-of-way as a means of managing transport impacts of development and should not reduce the convenience and safety of existing rights-of-ways, bridle paths and cycle paths, unless suitable alternative routes are provided;
- Ensure car parking and vehicle servicing at levels appropriate to the development and in accordance with the parking standards detailed within the Somerset County Council Parking Strategy; and.
- Adequately assess and provide any required improvements to level crossings where development may result in a material increase in pedestrian and/or vehicular use of a level crossing, in consultation with Network Rail.

Under Policy GN1 of the Pembrokeshire LDP it would be beneficial to include similar wording to ensure level crossings are adequately assessed.

We trust these comments will be useful in the preparation of the forthcoming plan documents.

Yours Sincerely,

Grace Lewis

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