

LEICESTERSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM – 17 NOVEMBER 2011

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

RAILWAY CROSSING UPDATES

Purpose of Report

1. To update members on proposals relating to two rights of way crossings of the Midland main line and the temporary closure of a path at Shackerstone Station.

Midland Mainline

2. The County Council has received a request for the temporary closure of two at grade Rights of Way (ROW) rail crossings in the county. Network Rail state they would like to bridge both sites in the longer term. The first is Cooks Lane, (Z12) near Wigston Harcourt, shown on the attached plan. This is a footpath crossing in conjunction with a private farm accommodation crossing. The second is Allsopp's Lane (K51) just east of Loughborough shown on the attached plan, which was a byway open to all traffic that has recently been downgraded to a bridleway.
3. NR has a long term goal to eliminate at grade ROW crossings and the Midland Mainline is currently being upgraded to reduce train journey times. Following an accident elsewhere in the country, safety was re-evaluated at all crossings along the Midland Mainline. As a result, both sites have had new phone links installed to allow users to contact the signal box to check when it is safe to cross. In addition both are subject to temporary train speed restrictions.
4. At Cooks Lane the former speed limit of 100mph has been reduced to 70mph. A speed limit at Allsopp's Lane of 80mph limit has been applied, although most trains are running much slower due to the proximity of Loughborough station.
5. NR has given an undertaking to seek long term solutions at both sites with bridges (subject to permissions) and have stated that the finance is in place. The County Council and Network Rail are working together to develop proposals to resolve the situation by replacing crossings with bridges.
6. Currently, no temporary closures have been initiated owing to the safety measures carried out by NR and it is hoped that the crossings can remain open until suitable alternatives are in place.

Shackerstone Station Footbridge

7. Following a request from the Shackerstone Railway Society, an emergency closure was granted for footpath S68 at Shackerstone Station. This was due to concerns about the state of repair of the bridge over the station site. The structure has now been inspected by a structural engineer and he has recommended that it remain closed. The bridge is owned by the Railway Society. A plan is attached.

8. The County Council is now processing a temporary closure order for a period not exceeding 6 months whilst a programme is put in place to effect repairs. There have been concerns expressed about the current alternative route which also uses a section of roadway. Currently other options for an alternative route are being explored to see if it is possible to provide a shorter route that does not involve road walking.

Recommendation

9. That members note the contents of the report.

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