



Network Rail
One Stratford Place
Montfichet Road
London E20 1EJ

27 November 2025

Dear Sir or Madam

Subject: Cambridge Resignalling – Meldreth Road level crossing upgrade

Network Rail acknowledges and appreciates the response from Cambridge County Council (CCC) (dated 21 November 2025) and that they recognise the long-term safety benefits associated with the upgrade to Meldreth Road level crossing. Our response to the points raised by the county council in their letter is as follows:

‘Complex and Fragmented Consents Process’ & ‘Lack of Effective Engagement’

We accept that the proposal to upgrade Meldreth Road level crossing is a complex process, with a number of different legal requirements that need to be followed to achieve the necessary consents to upgrade a level crossing.

In the case of Meldreth Road, this includes the initial Transport and Works Act Order submitted in 2022 (after statutory consultation took place in March 2021) to compulsory purchase parcels of land in order to facilitate crossing upgrades at several locations.

It also includes applying for local planning permission to gain approval from the local planning authority (in this case South Cambridgeshire District Council gave consent on 25 May 2023), and a Level Crossing Order from the Office of Road and Rail (ORR) under the Level Crossings Act 1983.

It is acknowledged that the consents process has become fragmented and has been confusing to our stakeholders. We have strived to keep the parish councils, community rail partnerships, highways representatives and local residents informed through attendance at council meetings and site visits, but it is clear from the feedback given that this has not been as thorough as it could have been.

We have kept statutory consultees informed through regular touchpoints (especially in the lead up to the Level Crossing order submission) with colleagues from the county council and the ORR but more engagement should have been done to keep everyone else informed at all stages of the consents journey.

We will reflect on the comments of the county council and work with them to arrange more engagement opportunities going forward to provide updates on the progress of similar consents for other level crossing upgrades as part of the C3R project, particularly Waterbeach station level crossing.

‘Local Concerns Regarding Increased Barrier Downtime and Traffic Risks’

We are aware of the concerns raised in relation to the impact of the upgrade to road users. Traffic modelling for the proposed upgrade has been a contentious issue, which was heavily scrutinised during the TWAO public inquiry of 2023.

In the Secretary of State’s TWAO Decision Notice dated 28 March 2024(Paragraph 25), the planning inspector, in respect of NR’s submitted evidence on barrier down times and delays to road traffic and pedestrians, ‘highlighted a number of important errors and a lack of explanation of some key figures in the documents.’ However, during the inquiry, Network Rail was able to correct these errors and explain the impact on traffic ‘adequately’ to the planning inspector.

Paragraph 26 of the Decision Notice concludes that ‘Having examined and fully and properly understood the modelling work presented by NR and subject to the corrections of some errors during the course of the Inquiry, the Inspector is of the opinion that it provides essentially a robust assessment of the overall likely impact of the proposed level crossing upgrades on the majority of road users, the majority of the time.’

As a result of the initial errors uncovered in the submitted evidence, and despite the work by Network Rail to correct these errors, explain the data more thoroughly during the Planning Inquiry, and the planning inspector’s opinion given in the TWAO Decision Notice, we recognise that the traffic modelling itself continues to be challenged by local groups/councils to support their local campaign against the level crossing upgrade taking place.

Throughout the development of the level crossing ground plans and level crossing order, the county council acting as Local Traffic Authority (LTA), was engaged as statutory consultees to seek endorsement prior to the formal submission of the updated level crossing order to the ORR.

In their letter, the county council states that ‘road-related risks do not appear to have been fully assessed or mitigated in the current proposal.’ As the LTA, the county council are responsible to assess the impact to road users and provide guidance on methods for improvement should they be needed. Through our consultation with the LTA we did not receive any recommendations in relation to required improvements to address road-related risks.

All comments from the county council were incorporated into the ground plans at the time of this consultation. Following this and a review of the risk assessment for Meldreth Road level crossing (2022), it was confirmed by the county council in March 2025 that they were ‘content that we will not require a separate road safety audit’ in line with the proposals.

Response to ‘Requirements from Network Rail’

We recognise that there is an increase in barrier downtime at the crossing which will have a local impact to road users. Therefore, in collaboration with the LTA, we propose to regularly meet with the county council to review the performance of the upgraded Meldreth Road level crossing once it has been upgraded.

These meetings (frequency to be agreed) can assess the performance data from the crossing and if necessary, explore additional traffic measures that may be needed (including road markings) to ease any significant impact of the upgrade on road users over and above what was assessed.

It should be noted, however, that any further major intervention to the level crossing post commissioning to resolve any significant traffic impact over and above what was assessed, would need substantial funding to be secured, either by central government or third-party funding, and lead to significant disruption to road and rail users.

As part of the suggested meetings, the progress on the other level crossing upgrades can be discussed to improve the communication between Network Rail, CCC and local councillors.

To help foster and rebuild relations with the local community, we will be writing to both Shepreth and Meldreth parish councils to invite local representatives to visit Foxton Gate Box in early 2026, to learn how we operate the new crossing. We hope that this will help to further the understanding of how we manage the operation of Meldreth Road level crossing to maintain safety.

We have undertaken Ergonomic workload assessments at Foxton Gate Box which indicates the increased workload for the operations staff is manageable. Furthermore, we have briefed the signallers and appropriate operations staff on the criticality of minimising barrier downtimes at Meldreth Road.

Further Points

We agree that grade separation is the preferred option because of the safety benefit it delivers for road and rail users. However, as grade separation comes at a significant cost and may also require large amounts of land purchase, grade separation at Meldreth and Waterbeach is not currently feasible.

As part of the risk assessment for Meldreth Road level crossing, the option for Obstacle Detection (MCB-OD) was explored, however, it was considered that a CCTV crossing would be the preferred option primarily because of the common control equipment with the nearby Shepreth level crossing and the operational efficiencies this brings to the gatekeeper based in Foxton Gate Box.

An MCB-OD crossing at this location would also require significantly more land purchase than the MCB-CCTV crossing configuration which would have been impractical owing to the space constraints and proximity of residents to the crossing.

We welcome the opportunity to learn from this level crossing upgrade process and improve our engagement with the county council in the future for the remain level crossing upgrades under the Cambridge Resignalling project.

Kind Regards



Emily Heria
Senior Sponsor
Network Rail Anglia