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Planning
Suffolk County Council
Endeavour House
8 Russell Road
Ipswich
IP1 2BX
23rd December 2011
Ref: C11/

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for consulting Network Rail regarding to application

The proposed Felixstowe academy will see the amalgamation of two secondary schools and an increased number of pupils onto a single site. The academy grounds will border a single track portion of the Ipswich to Felixstowe railway including Hawkes Lane foot level crossing. The crossing is located between a densely populated residential area and the school and provides a convenient link for residents of Runnacles Way to the academy playing field and school.

Hawkes Lane level crossing is a public footpath level crossing with stiles either side. The crossing is open meaning users approach the stiles, look out for a train and cross when it is safe to do so. The crossing was downgrade from a vehicular crossing by Deed of Release dated 12/11/1987. The crossing is part of a right of way that serves the south west of Felixstowe with the North West of Felixstowe over the Ipswich to Felixstowe branch line. Recent surveys undertaken by the applicant confirm the crossing's busiest period is around 8-9 am and 3-4 pm and is mostly used by students of the current Orwell High School and the creation of the academy will see the numbers of users using the crossing increase by 20%, more than Network Rail predicted with its figures taking into account population growth within Felixstowe. As a result Network Rail's risk score of Hawkes Lane crossing has increased from a C4 to a C3 and would make Hawkes Lane one of the highest risk foot crossings within East Anglia. The problem is further exacerbated by the planned increase in the number of freight trains from Felixstowe to Ipswich and beyond.

Therefore Network Rail wishes to object to the application on the grounds that the level of risk to users of Hawkes Lane level crossing will become unacceptable.

Following a discussion with Suffolk County Council and Network Rail several alternative options were devised

1. Diversion of the footpath towards the North along the boundary of the railway, the footpath will then proceed down towards the A14 turning left underneath the railway bridge, left again up the embankment and into the housing estate. Once the diversion is complete the level crossing will be closed.
2. The erection of a footbridge over the railway. Once the bridge was open and commissioned the crossing would close.

3. Closure of the level crossing forcing members of the public to use Grange Road overbridge

Following analysis of the above options Network Rail recommends the impletion of either option no.1 or no.2 on the grounds that the crossing would be closed eliminating the interface between users and trains, and avoids an application extinguishment.

Network Rail would be happy to offer it's full support and guidance with regards to the above solutions and is pleased with the applicants and Country Councils engagement with regard to Hawkes Lane level crossing and is confident can be reached that will satisfy all parties concerned.

Yours sincerely

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