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Anita Seymour – Senior Planning Officer  
Suffolk County Council  
Endeavour House  
8 Russell Road  
IPSWICH  
Suffolk IP1 2BX

13 January 2012

Dear Ms Seymour

**Re: The use of the Hawkes Lane Level Crossing by Felixstowe Academy Students**

Further to recent discussions with regard to the above and as an amendment to our previous letter of 30 September 2011 regarding the same, the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET) and Felixstowe Academy have reviewed again their position with regard to student use of the Hawkes Lane level crossing in response to the objection issued by Network Rail on the 23rd December 2011 in relation to the ongoing planning application for the erection of a new Academy on the Maidstone Campus site.

Our understanding is that the objection relates to the misuse of an existing unmanned pedestrian crossing as a result of the Academy development and seeks a solution to this issue through the planning process. It is our understanding that failure to address this issue increases the risk of the planning application being dismissed or, if granted, done so with a condition that would prohibit the Academy from being built within the required timescale.

While we are aware that currently some students based at the Maidstone Campus use the level crossing to walk to the Academy, we also understand that the Planning Authority and Network Rail wish to reduce such use and, more importantly, negate any increase in use when the Academy as a whole moves on to the Maidstone Campus on completion of the new building, currently programmed for September 2013.

To reinforce our commitment to securing this significant investment for the community of Felixstowe, the AET and Felixstowe Academy will commit to provide the following measures that will address the misuse of the level crossing by Academy users:

- 1) A home-school contract in which parents agree to the crossing not being used.
- 2) Management of the crossing by Academy staff to prevent students using it at start and end of day.

- 3) Provision by the Academy of alternative transportation to avoid the need for crossing the railway line for the small numbers of students involved. This could be a school minibus, hired bus or a bus pass if an appropriate route is available.

The above further enhances the fencing improvements to the site boundary adjacent to the railway line, which will serve to prevent people from using this route as a short cut.

Our additional measures remain in place to prevent students leaving the Academy site during lunch times as follows:

- The implementation of a policy to retain students on site during the Academy day. This will be enforced through an inner fence line that will contain students with the Academy and its associated external play areas.
- Enhanced catering facilities provided in the new building, encouraging students to stay on site during lunch times.

All the above measures will be reinforced by the Academy's Travel Plan and associated management processes in line with Suffolk County Council's Planning Policy. To reinforce our commitment to implementing these measures, the Academy will commence preparation of a revised Travel Plan for the single site this academic year, some 12 months in advance of occupation of the new buildings. This will involve consultation with parents and continued education of students and their parents on the dangers of the misuse of level crossings.

We believe that this revised strategy will not only prevent misuse of the crossing by the Academy but will in fact reduce overall levels of use, thus dealing successfully with the concerns raised by various third parties through the Planning Consultation process, all the while maintaining public access to an existing public facility. Our preference therefore would be that no further action, over and above the mitigation set out in the letter, is required.

Fundamental to the whole project is that planning permission be granted, as it has been previously, which will allow the scheme to progress subject to any 'reasonable' conditions. On this basis, we would respectfully request that further correspondence be issued in respect of the planning application setting out Network Rails latest position.

Yours Faithfully,



Stephen Chamberlain  
**Executive Principal, Felixstowe Academy**



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To make our best better

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Anita Seymour – Senior Planning Officer  
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8 Russell Road  
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10 February 2012

Dear Ms Seymour

**Re: The use of the Hawkes Lane Level Crossing by Felixstowe Academy Students**

As requested, we are please to provide further clarification and assurances with regard to the proposed mitigation measures set out in our letter of 13 January 2012 in relation to the impact of the new Academy development on the use of the Hawkes Lane level crossing by Felixstowe Academy students.

These measures are intended to ensure there is **no increase** in use of the crossing, and associated risk to young people, as a result of the Academy development.

For clarity, we will use the number references in your email to Phil Houghton of 01 February 2012.

**1. For what length of time would the Academy offer the mitigation measures?**

We can confirm that it is our intention to **actively reduce** the numbers of students using the crossing through the proposed mitigation measures as long as the Hawkes Lane level crossing remains in operation in its current form.

As a sign of our commitment we can confirm that AET, as the Academy Trust responsible for Felixstowe Academy, would enter into a unilateral agreement that commits us to providing the mitigation measures outlined in this and previous letters.

While these measures carry financial implications for the Academy, these are underwritten by the AET, as the Academy Trust responsible for Felixstowe Academy.

**2. Over what time periods would they intend to offer the bus service?**

It is intended that a school minibus or hired bus would be provided at appropriate times at the start and end of the Academy day. A (reasonable) number of options would be available at the start of the normal Academy day and various options would be provided



at the end of the day to correspond with the completion of after-school clubs and / or activities.

**3. How would the service operate i.e. timed pick ups at designated stops / shuttle bus?**

It is intended that the service would operate timed pick-ups, corresponding to the periods outlined in 2. at one or more designated stops, to be determined following the outcome of the process outlined in 4. below.

The Academy would also consider providing a bus pass to individual students if an appropriate route is available.

**4. Who would be offered the bus service how would they be selected?**

Eligibility for the bus service will be determined in conjunction with Suffolk Admissions Team, which currently administers the Academy's admissions. The Academy will work with SCC to compare pedestrian journey times using the crossing or using the shortest alternative route and thus identify postcode areas in which students would be eligible; i.e. those whose journey via the Hawkes Lane crossing is shorter than any reasonable alternative route.

As the Planning Committee date of 1<sup>st</sup> March 2012 falls outside the normal Suffolk Admissions Consultation (running from 3<sup>rd</sup> January to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2012) these arrangements would need to form part of a separate consultation process. Pending the outcome of the Planning Committee on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2012, we anticipate commencing any such consultation in April 2012 in readiness for the anticipated occupation of new buildings in September 2013.

**5. How would [the crossing] be managed i.e. times / who would be managing the crossing (staff with authority or someone specially employed) how would sickness / absence be managed?**

The Academy would employ security personnel, ideally Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) or police officers identified through the Safer Schools Partnership, whose duty it is to prevent students entering the pathway that gives access to the crossing at either end of the site. The Academy already pays for the services of a PCSO and would therefore include the management of the crossing as a duty within their contract.

This is a proven approach that works well in managing a similar road crossing at Clacton Coastal Academy.



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We note that the Academy would not position staff at the level crossing itself; as it is not our intention to assist students crossing, rather prevent them using the crossing.

The pathways would be manned from the earliest time students are likely to be arriving to the latest time the Academy is running extra curricular activities. This would ensure that times of bulk inward and outward migration of students are managed.

While the Academy is absolutely committed to the safety and well-being of its students and users of the Academy, it is not our intention to eradicate use of the crossing, but to reduce overall levels of use at peak times, all the while maintaining public access to an existing public facility.

In addition to the above, we can confirm that in the event of any third party application for the stopping up of the public right of way that forms the Hawkes Lane crossing, the AET would offer its full support.

We reinforce again the importance of planning permission being granted, as it has been previously, which will allow the scheme to progress subject to any 'reasonable' conditions in the timescale intended. Any significant delay will greatly impact on the effective operations of the Academy and the safety of students currently travelling to access facilities across the two sites.

Yours Faithfully,

Stephen Chamberlain  
**Executive Principal, Felixstowe Academy**