THE NETWORK RAIL (LEEDS TO MICKLEFIELD ENHANCEMENTS) ORDER

RE: PECKFIELD LEVEL CROSSING

NOTE

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1. During questions to Ms Bedford on Day 4 of the Inquiry, a question was raised as to the implications for the Order/Scheme if Peckfield Level Crossing were to be removed from the draft Order. Network Rail offered to provide a note highlighting where this had been addressed in the evidence of David Vernon, Michael Westwood and Andrew Cunningham.

   David Vernon

2. Mr Vernon explained in his evidence that all necessary civil and signalling works for modern signalling on this section of the NTPR needs to be complete and installed and available for use in time for the proposed timetable change in December 2025, and that, for the level crossings in the Order, that means that they also need to be closed in advance of that date.[1] Electrification equipment is to be in place by the end of 2027, for the energising of the route in 2028 (and the proposed December 2028 timetable change).[2]

3. He also explained that modern signalling would be installed across the level crossing locations even if the level crossings remained in situ: *"... the impact would be a programme and resource impact however, as when the crossings do close, a package of works to revisit the signal sites of the crossing, and recontrol them to the modern standards would be required to be done. This would further delay the delivery of TRU benefits".*[3]

   Andrew Cunningham

4. At paragraph 2.4.1 of his PoE, Mr Cunningham sets out the action which Network Rail must take where there is a change in railway operations which could increase the risk at a level crossing:

   "*Introducing additional train services with longer, quieter trains raise the risk at all level crossings along the route. ORR requires that where there is a change in railway operations so as to raise the risk then Network Rail must undertake a new assessment and consider all options that will mitigate the risk so far as is reasonably practical. This necessitates*

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[1] DV PoE para 6.3.13 and oral evidence Day 2. In para 6.3.13 of his PoE, he referred to those works all needing to be in place by December 2024 to allow for testing and sign off to take place. He updated this in his oral evidence to 2025.

[2] DV PoE para 6.3.13 and oral evidence Day 2.

[3] PoE para 6.3.15. My note of his oral evidence on Day 2: "*When doing digital modelling for signalling you don't want the [level crossings] to be there because alters what can run / map. It can be done when they are there but it means a programming, duplication of work and slower realisation [of benefits]*"

that the risk is reduced to at least the same level of risk prior to any railway enhancements being implemented."[4]

5. At paragraph 6.7.1 of his PoE, he provides a table setting out options considered on previous Narrative Risk Assessments for Peckfield level crossing, together with a CBA (cost benefit analysis) and GDF (gross disproportionality factor) score[5], and comments on the feasibility and/or performance of the proposed options. With respect to installation of technology (Overlay MSL / Integrated MSL) he notes in respect of both, *"Unable to install due to proximity of rail junctions and station nearby"*. In respect of "Implementing low cost improvements to the Level Crossing" he notes that "*Implementing all feasible low-cost options will not reduce risk SFAIRP* [so far as is reasonably practicable][6]*"*.

   Michael Westwood

6. In section 3 of his PoE, Mr Westwood discusses the improvement works to the section of the NTPR within which the Order Scheme is situated and in particular the interface with those improvements and level crossings.

7. At paragraphs 3.2.5 and 3.2.6,[7] he sets out how the presence of level crossings can affect OLE installation:

   "*[3.2.5] In operational railway terms, the presence of certain types of level crossings materially affect the overhead electrification design as they determine the heights of the wires in the vicinity of that level crossing. The minimum height of these wires above rail is 5.2m at bridleway level crossings.*

   [3.2.6] The closure of the level crossings on the route mean that wire heights do not have to be raised to account for any of the level crossings. Although change in wire height can be accommodated by the overhead wire design, this however should be minimised for high-quality, high speed current collection between the train pantograph and the contact wire (which can increase the wear on the contact wire material). Therefore, a consistent wire height increases the reliability of the railway".

8. The interface with signalling is set out at paragraph 3.2.8:

   "*In general terms the presence of a level crossing on the railway network not only permits an interaction between members of the general public and trains, but it also introduces a potential break-point in the railway 'system' itself. If there is a safety related incident at a level crossing, or if the technology provided to protect the user (such as Miniature Stop Lights and telephones at Barrowby Lane Level Crossing) cease to work properly, train delay and/or train cancellations can be experienced. Therefore, the removal of level crossings from the rail network will greatly improve the reliability and resilience of the train service provided as well as enhancing safety"*.

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[4] See also, to similar effect, his paragraph 2.2.4.
[5] Based on an assessment inputting the December 2025 timetable changes and installation of OLE: paragraph 2.5.3 of his Proof, and oral evidence Day 3.
[6] On which, see section 3 of Mr Greenwood's PoE.
[7] Also discussed in his oral evidence, Day 3.

9. With regards to Peckfield Level Crossing specifically, paragraph 3.5.73 addresses both the proposed signalling in time for the proposed December 2025 timetable change and particular issues that would arise with MSL at this location (reflecting the issues identified by Mr Cunningham in the optioneering table of his PoE referred to above):

   "*The closure of Peckfield Level Crossing simplifies the Signalling layout. Should the level crossing remain open, Miniature Stop Lights would be required. The location of the existing Micklefield Station to the east and the existing track cross-over to the west would add complexity to the Signalling design. Both of these features fall within the 'strike-in' for a train approaching the level crossing which may actually be slowing to stop at the station or to use the cross-over. The level crossing control circuity would have to account for this variable approach speed, which may lead to misuse of the level crossing and a 'lack of willingness to wait'.*"

10. He also confirmed in his oral evidence (Day 3) that in the context of when things would need to be in place for the proposed December 2025 timetable change, if a bridge option were to be required to close the level crossing, having regard to the work and approvals involved *"the timescales wouldn't be achieved"*.[8]

[8] Day 3. My note: "*Earlier in proof talk about GRIP stages and that currently in detailed design. Going back to previous version / GRIP stage, certain length of time and approvals associated with that, AiP [approval in principle], survey land, have to get AiP through assurance process then to detailed design. The time scales involved wouldn't be achieved.*"