

NETWORK RAIL-Operations Risk Advisor (Level Crossings): Clarification on Issues of Concern

- Can you confirm whether there have been any recorded incidents with cyclists being involved in incidents on the level crossing because their tyres have been caught in the tracks
Cyclist using crossings where the railway does not run at 90degrees to the highway have a greater risk of their wheels going in to the flange way. I have no recorded incidents of this being the case at this level crossing.
- Does Network Rail consider that this is an unsafe crossing for children to use? The crossing gives both visual and audible warnings when trains are approaching the crossing; the addition of Pedestrian Red lights at the crossing will be another visual warning for pedestrians when it is unsafe to cross. Children of all ages use railway crossings around the country in their day to day activities of getting to and from school, some of these crossings have no audible or visual warning of a train approaching, instead users are reliant on signage and prior education to cross safely . We have a programme of awareness events being prepared for the affected schools and at the crossing, to help children understand the dangers of the railway and how to use the crossing safely. Improving safety at level crossings is not only the responsibility of Network Rail, the traffic authority and other relevant organisations such as planning authorities also have a responsibility and should be consulted with when decisions on safety improvements are to be made. Road Rail Partnership Groups give all parties the opportunity to discuss short and long term plans for level crossings in their area ; we are working with the local authority currently to reduce risk at this level crossing.
- A statement has been made that “The Network Rail Area Manager publicly stated at the meeting that this crossing is classified as a high risk crossing by Network Rail and not suitable to be used as part of a walking route to school”. Can you confirm whether this is the view of Network Rail, your own personal view or neither? My title is Operations Risk Advisor (Level Crossings) and yes the crossing is one of our high risk crossings due to a number of factors; as an automatic half barrier crossing it is not protected by the signalling system, the train activates the crossing on approach and will reach the crossing within less than a minute; having just the one barrier allows anyone trapped on the crossing at the time of activation an opening in which to exit, however this also leaves the off side open to the railway; there is also a high volume of vehicle and pedestrian traffic over the crossing and a regular train service. I did not state that it was unsuitable to be used as part of a walking route to school. School children already use this route to get to school.
- A further statement has been made that ‘The Network Rail Area Manager stated that she would not let her own children cross this crossing as part of a walking route to school’. Can you confirm that this is either your personal view or the view of Network Rail If I made that statement it was not specific to this crossing and would have been personal; with this crossing there is audible and visual warning of a train approaching, at some of the crossings school children use to get to school, there are no warnings of a train approaching at all and instead users are reliant on signage and prior education to ensure safe crossing .
- A further statement has been made “Network Rail have stated that although this crossing is ‘safe enough’ for current use, it is not safe in the context of an increase of potentially 100 vulnerable users.” I’m not sure where that statement came from; there are already a number of children using the crossing daily to get to school and of the children who usually travel on the school bus it has not been determined/confirmed how many will use this particular route to school.