



Martin Vickers MP
62 St Peter's Avenue
Cleethorpes
Lincolnshire
DN35 8HP

Route Managing Director, LNE & EM
Network Rail
Floor 4B
George Stephenson House
Toft Green
York
YO1 6JT

Tel: 01904 384195
Email: rob.mcintosh@networkrail.co.uk

13th March 2019

DEAR MARTIN,

Thank you for your letter dated 5th March in respect of the closure of Suggitt's Lane Level Crossing in Cleethorpes.

Initially can I say that I appreciate the observations in your recent correspondence, and accept that the points which you've raised are important ones to provide additional comment on ahead of the public information event which is taking place on 21st March next week.

Firstly in respect of the type and speeds of services operating on the approach to Cleethorpes, I accept that in practice passenger trains operate at a much lower speed than 60mph on this part of the network due to the proximity of Cleethorpes Station to Suggitt's Lane Level Crossing.

As I know you are aware from previous discussions with my Director of Route Asset Management on this issue, the risk associated with Suggitt's Lane arises from misuse by users when using the level crossing rather than the speed of trains using the line.

There have been numerous instances of both accidental and deliberate misuse of the crossing, many of which have been extremely dangerous. This misuse has included people walking up the tracks, using motorcycles on the crossing, teaching children to place ballast on the railway, and very young children being allowed to cross unattended.

Evidence from previous fatalities at level crossings suggests that the majority take place with trains travelling at a low speed, often under 40mph, rather than involving high speed trains. In line with this evidence Network Rail has closed level crossings with a much lower maximum line speed, an example being the recent closure of Matlock Bath Level Crossing in Derbyshire.

To address your second point, in relation to additional safety measures being put in place at the crossing, infrastructure interventions aside from closing the crossing would not eliminate the risk associated with it remaining open, and therefore isn't an option which Network Rail is able to pursue.

Historically Network Rail has reviewed the signage, considered the installation of warning lights, and the operation of the crossing gates and other infrastructure at the crossing including the decking, but none of these resolve the issues around misuse or the legal imperative to close the crossing.

I appreciate the objections expressed by both you and colleagues from North East Lincolnshire Council though, and want to confirm that Network Rail is still open to discussion in relation to anything else which we could work with local stakeholders on in order to improve alternative access arrangements to the sea front.

I hope this is helpful in addressing the points raised in your letter, but please do not hesitate to get in touch if you require anything further information in respect of the proposed closure of the level crossing at Suggitt's Lane.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob McIntosh', written over a double-lined signature line.

Rob McIntosh

**Route Managing Director, LNE & EM
Network Rail Infrastructure Limited**