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Dear Martin,

I wanted to write following the meeting which Andrew Jones hosted on Monday, initially to acknowledge how important I recognise the issue of Suggitt's Lane level crossing continues to be for many of your constituents.

I also wanted to provide an assurance that the decision to close the crossing was not taken lightly, and that in advance of it taking place my team reviewed a series of alternatives before establishing that it was necessary to permanently close the crossing.

The meeting earlier this week, at which Network Rail was represented by Andrew Murray and Allan Spence, reinforced the strength of public feeling in Cleethorpes. I want to firstly provide an immediate assurance that we will follow up on further engagement with North East Lincolnshire Council and community representatives, as agreed to at the meeting.

These discussions will involve consideration of how access over the railway for the whole community can be improved, including for users who are currently unable to use the existing footbridge on Fuller Street. This was an important point that came across earlier this week.

There was wide-ranging discussion at the meeting about the alternatives Network Rail considered before taking the decision to close the crossing. I wanted to provide a summary of these as follows:

Option	Cost (£Million)	Evaluation
Close	0.03	Eliminates risk. Duty to eliminate risk where practical (ALARP) Very low Cost. Only feasible option.
Whistle Board and warning system	0.06	Does not address risk of level crossing misuse. Will not prevent trespass, loitering or help those who cross late. Does not account for Night Time Quiet Period. Would also lead to neighbour complaints of noise pollution.
Permanent Speed Restriction	0.9	Does not address risk of level crossing misuse. Will not prevent trespass, loitering or help those who cross late. Increases risk due to difficulty in perceiving train movements at low speed. Would cause train delays and ongoing compensation costs, which is against our Licence Conditions for efficiency.
Miniature Stop	0.1	Does not address risk of level crossing misuse. Will not prevent trespass, loitering or help those who cross late.

Lights (overlay design)		Variable waiting times due to station proximity and stop signal mean users would anticipate delay and not wait.
Miniature Stop Lights (integrated with signalling)	0.8	Does not address risk of level crossing misuse. Will not prevent trespass, loitering or help those who cross late Much longer waiting times than above, further raising the risk of pedestrians not waiting.
Signaller Controlled Locked Gates (with and without interlocking)	0.25 – 0.8	Would help with trespass and crossing late, however not practical due to the high number of crossing users who would need to phone to have the gates unlocked. The increase in signaller workload required to operate increases operational risk, train delays and would lead to ongoing compensation costs. Failure of pedestrians phoning back would mandate CCTV protection. This increased operational risk and cost is not acceptable.
Signaller Controlled Unlocked Gates	1	Would help with crossing late but not trespass. Not practical due to the high number of crossing users. The increase in signaller workload required to operate increases operational risk, train delays and would lead to ongoing compensation costs. Gates would also be locked for longer periods. Would require significant investment in signalling systems and CCTV monitoring. This increased operational risk and cost is not acceptable.
Stepped or Ramped bridge with closure/diversion	3	There are land constraints with a bridge at the crossing. However Network Rail is committed to work with Council on aspiration to establish accessible route for all, over Fuller Street footbridge. Closure remains the preferred option.

The legal grounds for the closure were also discussed and I can confirm that Suggitt's Lane level crossing is not a public right of way, having been established in the 19th Century as a private access for a previous business that operated in the area.

Network Rail's position is that this is not a right of way that can be passed down, and that the only private access that currently exists is for North East Lincolnshire Council to carry out maintenance to the sea wall, something that will be retained following the closure.

Reducing the safety risk at Suggitt's Lane has always been the primary reason for closure of the crossing. The lack of a public right of way, combined with our legal responsibility to address risk through the most effective means available, has led to this decision following consideration of the options above.

As I said above, I know this will have a significant impact for your constituents, so I am happy to have further discussions with North East Lincolnshire Council and other local stakeholders to consider options to improve access across the railway. I will make sure that senior members of my team are available to progress these talks quickly as appropriate.

Yours Sincerely,



Rob McIntosh
Route Managing Director, LNE & EM
Network Rail Infrastructure Limited

Cc Andrew Haines and Andrew Murray