

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: [REDACTED]
To: _WEB_Local Plan
Subject: Stroud District Local Plan Review

Categories: Consultation response

Dear Sir or Madam

Network Rail would like to make comment on the Stroud District Local Plan Review, Emerging Strategy Paper. This email forms the basis of our response.

As Network Rail is a publicly funded organisation with a regulated remit it would not be reasonable to require Network Rail to fund rail improvements necessitated by commercial development. It is therefore appropriate to require developer contributions to fund such improvements. With this in mind I would like to point out that the residual surpluses available to support s.106 infrastructure costs could include any mitigation required where development has an adverse impact on the railway infrastructure. The cost of mitigating any impact may have a bearing on the viability and deliverability of any such proposed site.

Network Rail is a statutory undertaker responsible for maintaining and operating the country's railway infrastructure and associated estate. Network Rail owns, operates, maintains and develops the main rail network. This includes the railway tracks, stations, signalling systems, bridges, tunnels, level crossings and viaducts. The preparation of development plan policy is important in relation to the protection and enhancement of Network Rail's infrastructure.

Level Crossings

Any development of land which would result in a material increase or significant change in the character of traffic using a rail crossings should be refused unless, in consultation with Network Rail, it can either be demonstrated that the safety will not be compromised, or where safety is compromised serious mitigation measures would be incorporated to prevent any increased safety risk as a requirement of any permission.

Network Rail has a strong policy to guide and improve its management of level crossings, which aims to; reduce risk at level crossings, reduce the number and types of level crossings, ensure level crossings are fit for purpose, ensure Network Rail works with users / stakeholders and supports enforcement initiatives. Without significant consultation with Network Rail and if proved as required, approved mitigation measures, Network Rail would be extremely concerned by the impact the proposed site allocation would have on the safety and operation of these level crossings. The safety of the operational railway and of those crossing it is of the highest importance to Network Rail.

Councils are urged to take the view that level crossings can be impacted in a variety of ways by planning proposals:

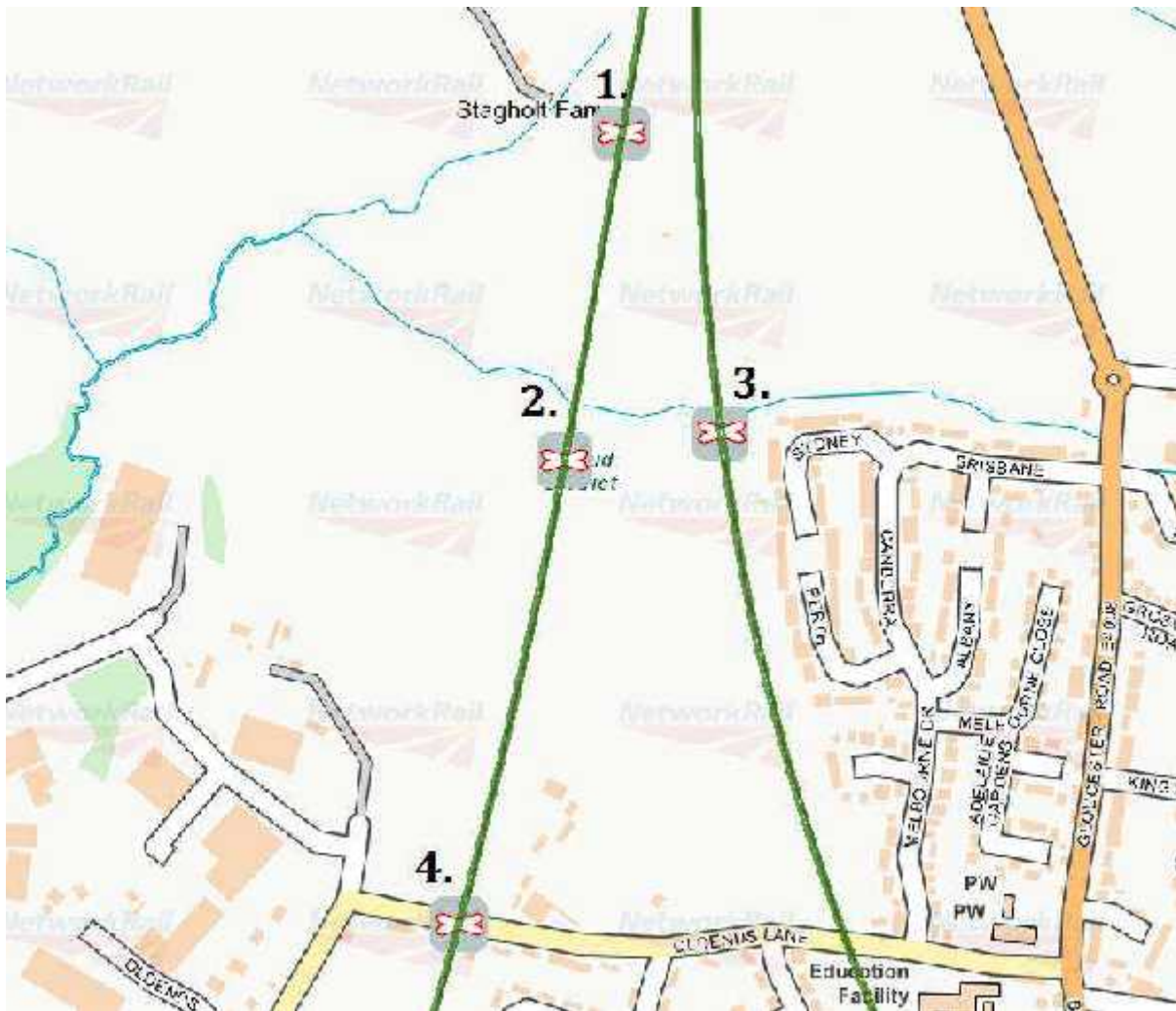
- By a proposal being directly next to a level crossing
- By the cumulative effect of development added over time
- By the type of crossing involved
- By the construction of large developments (commercial and residential) where road access to and from site includes a level crossing
- By developments that might impede pedestrians ability to hear approaching trains
- By proposals that may interfere with pedestrian and vehicle users' ability to see level crossing warning signs
- By any developments for schools, colleges or nurseries where minors in numbers may be using a level crossing.

It is Network Rail's and indeed the Office of Rail Regulation's (ORR) policy to reduce risk at level crossings not to increase risk as could be the case with an increase in usage at the three level crossings in question. The Office of Rail Regulators, in their policy, hold Network Rail accountable under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and that risk control should, where practicable, be achieved through the elimination of level crossings in favour of bridges or diversions.

The Council have a statutory responsibility under planning legislation to consult the statutory rail undertaker where a proposal for development is likely to result in a material increase in the rail volume or a material change in the character of traffic using a level crossing over a railway.

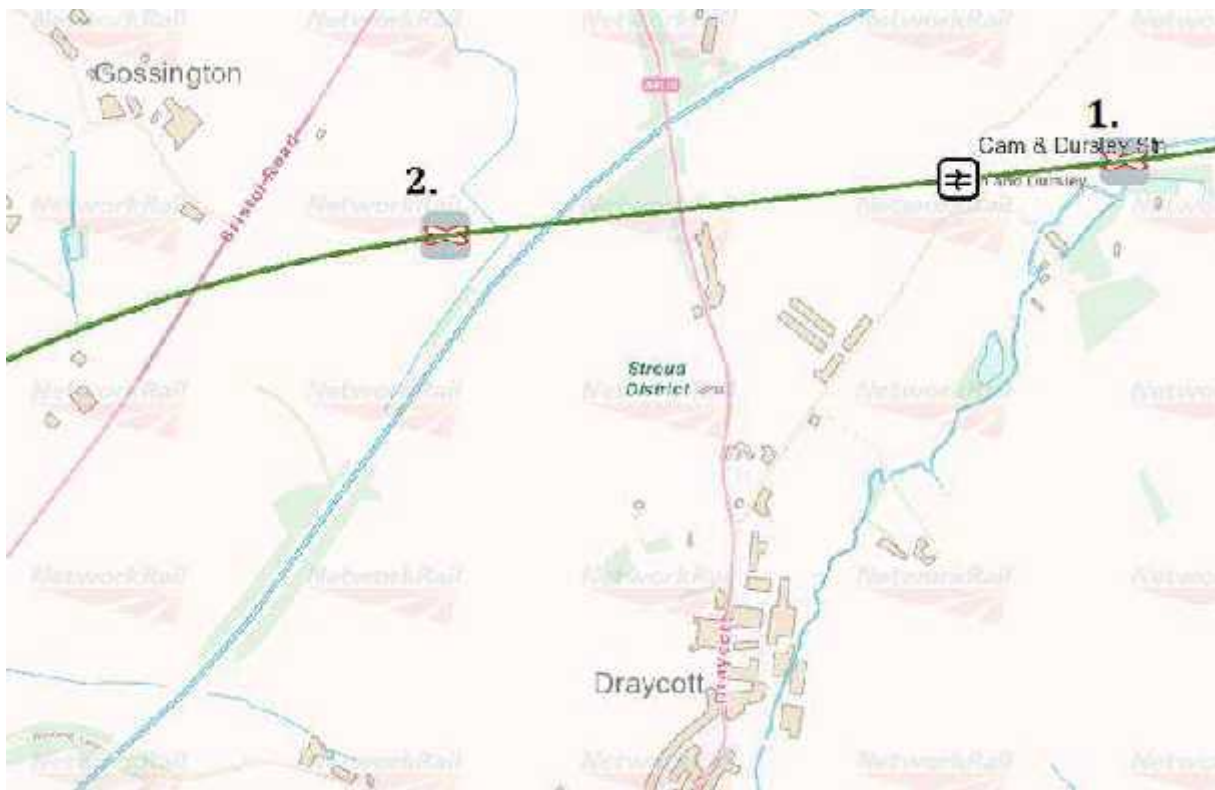
This is particularly relevant for potential sites PS19 a) and b) for up to 650 dwellings, open space and 5 ha of employment which is located close to 4 level crossings.

1. Stagholt Level Crossing – Footpath Crossing
2. Stonehouse 2 Level Crossing – Footpath Crossing
3. Little Australia Level Crossing – Footpath Crossing
4. Old Ends Level Crossing – Vehicular crossing, Manually controlled barriers with closed circuit TV



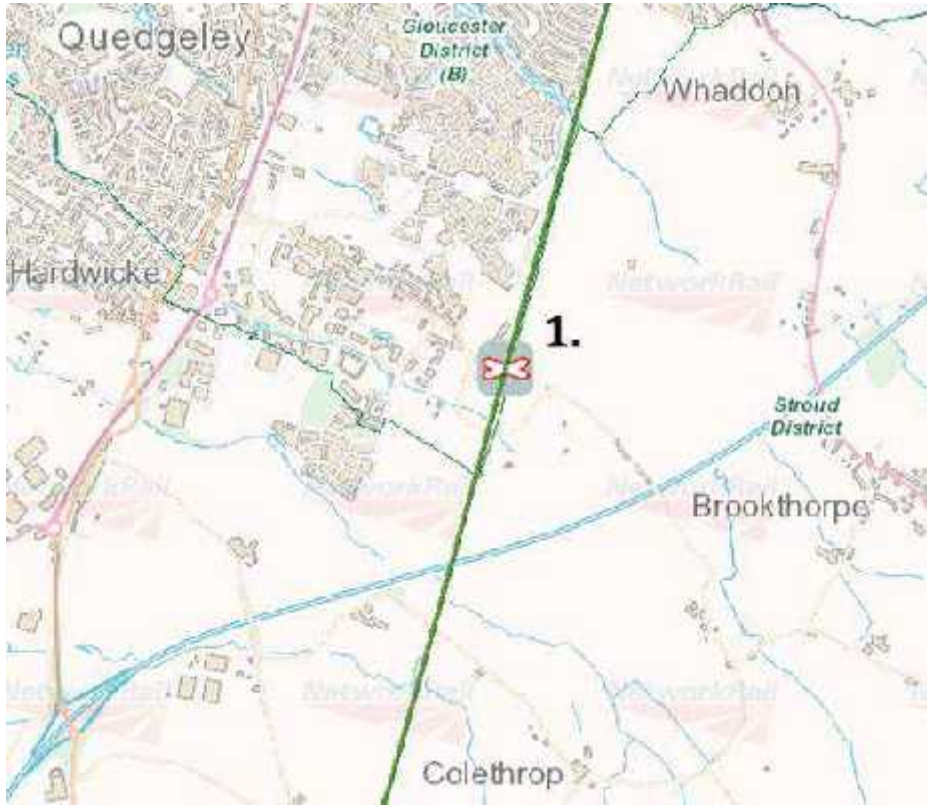
Sites PS22 and PS24 for 1ha of employment land and 700 dwellings and PS37 for 1,500 dwellings and 5 ha employment land, retail, community uses and open space are located near to 2 level crossings.

1. Dursley 28 Level Crossing – Footpath Crossing
2. Slimbridge 46 Level Crossing – Footpath Crossing



Site G2 has been identified for potential to provide housing, there is 1 level crossing that would likely be affected.

- 1. Dursley 28 Level Crossing – footpath crossing



The development sites around Sharpness, PS34 and PS36 will likely have an impact on 1 level crossing.

- 1. Oldminster Level Crossing – footpath crossing



Network Rail supports the provision of improved facilities at Cam and Dursley railway stations. We also support the Council’s continued strategy to improve public transport including rail.

We would appreciate the Council’s providing Network Rail with an opportunity to comment on any future planning policy documents as we may have more specific comments to make (further to those above). We look forward to continuing to work with you to maintain consistency between local and rail network planning strategy.

We trust these comments will be considered in your preparation of the forthcoming Plan documents.

Yours sincerely

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