

From: [REDACTED]
To: LTP Local Plan
Subject: Warrington - Local Plan and Transport Plan - Network Rail response
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Thank you for consulting Network Rail on the Warrington Local Plan and Transport Plan, we have the following comments to make.

Network Rail is a statutory consultee for any planning applications within 10 metres of relevant railway land (as the Rail Infrastructure Managers for the railway, set out in Article 16 of the Development Management Procedure Order) and for any development likely to result in a material increase in the volume or a material change in the character of traffic using a level crossing over a railway (as the Rail Network Operators, set out in Schedule 4 (J) of the Development Management Procedure Order).

Network Rail owns and operates most of Britain's railway infrastructure, including tracks, signals, tunnels, bridges, viaducts and level crossings. We also manage rail timetabling and 18 of the largest stations in England, Scotland and Wales. Our aim is to provide a safe, reliable and efficient railway for passengers and freight trains. The company manages and delivers thousands of projects every year which form part of the Railway Upgrade Plan, to grow and improve the railway network in response to increased demand – a doubling of passenger journeys over the past 20 years. Further details about us can be found on our website via this [link](#).

(1) Strategy

Network Rail welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Warrington Local Plan & Local Transport Plan. We have been working closely with Transport for the North to develop the now approved and published Strategic Transport Plan (STP) and thinking on the new Northern Powerhouse Rail line, the supporting strategic development corridor workstreams, & Investment programme which can be found online [here](#). We will continue to work with TfN to develop thinking relating to the development of the railway, including Northern Powerhouse Rail, therefore we would encourage you to have regard to the content and broad intent of transport policy set out within the STP.

The railway has also developed a number of strategic planning documents. The rail industry considers the future through the Long Term Planning Process / Continuous Modular Strategic Planning Process and in the Warrington area, and is working to understand future thinking for the Cheshire Lines Committee corridor out to the year 2043. Warrington Borough Council have been represented in these conversations as the work has developed and it will be published in the summer of 2019. We would encourage thinking as a result of this work on this line to be included within the local plan in due course. Potentially, increased use of the railway can contribute to better air quality and a reduction in highway use and congestion, contributing to reducing Warrington's high levels of car dependency (2.1.57) from above the national average (81% in Warrington compared to the 74% national average). We would welcome a conversation on how the railway can play its part in the context of future transport, housing & employment land supply policy in the Borough, particularly the Warrington Waterfront development & Garden Village, including any funding opportunities for rail, or access to rail, which could be delivered as part of these developments via section 106 funding, or the proposed community infrastructure levy (3.3.32).

We would welcome an opportunity to discuss whether the current stations in the Borough are fully meeting your expectations and whether there are any actions that, through the local plan, could deliver stations which work better for you, in terms of any future plans for improved or rapid transport links, access, passenger demand or service provision. For example, could consideration of housing or employment land provision in the vicinity of a station contribute to reducing the Borough's noted high car use, in the future?

Policies to support the retention of disused transport corridors for future transport use are broadly supported, but will require discussion with the rail industry, as well as external funding, for rail based interventions to be progressed. In addition, policies related to improved freight transport provision should adequately consider the contribution that rail freight could make noting the need for any proposed intervention to work for the private sector (Policy INF1). In both of these areas there will be a need to consider 'strategic fit', including the ability of other parts of the rail network to be able to accommodate a proposed intervention and this will need to be taken forward via the 'Rail Network Enhancement Process' for funding to be obtained.

(2) Level Crossing

The NPPF states:

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108. In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:

- b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; and
- c) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.

109. Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

110. Within this context, applications for development should:

- c) create places that are safe, secure...which minimise the scope of conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles...

"182. Where the operation of an existing business or community facility could have a significant adverse effect on new development (including changes of use), in its vicinity, the applicant (or 'agent of change') should be required to provide suitable mitigation before the development has been completed."

In order to comply with the NPPF, developments within the Neighbourhood Area should include assessment of the impact of development proposals upon the level crossings.

The council, developer(s) and the neighbourhood forum are advised that assessments should include consideration of:

- The individual and cumulative impacts of proposals.
- Increase in the volume **and** a change in the character of users, including vulnerable users (definition in Appendix 1).

Assessments should be undertaken with Network Rail.

As a publicly funded organisation, Network Rail is not funded to mitigate the impact of new development proposals on its infrastructure. Therefore, mitigation measures to prevent an increase in risk at the level crossings should be fully funded by the developer(s), including, where applicable, closure and diversion.

From

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