

East Road Level Crossing Vehicle Access

Public Consultation

What is the project at East Road level crossing?

East Road level crossing is located at East Road in the village of Langford, Bedfordshire. It connects Bridleway 9 to East Road and provides a private means of vehicular access for houses and farmland to the east of the railway. The crossing includes a gate for bridleway users and a separate manually operated private vehicle barrier gate used by residents and businesses that have a legal right to take vehicles over the railway.

Network Rail is proposing to close the private vehicle access element of East Road Level Crossing due to the antiquated nature of the existing manual pump action barrier equipment which requires individual users to raise and lower the barriers.

We are progressing plans to provide an alternative private access for residents, businesses, and landowners east of the railway via a new road connecting the east side of east Road to Edworth Road, approximately 1.4km to the south.

Why is this project required?

Network Rail is responsible for maintaining the railway network, and this includes making it as safe as possible for passengers and the public.

The current pump-action vehicle barriers on the crossing are becoming obsolete. Network Rail no longer installs this type of infrastructure and its ability to maintain the asset is constrained by availability of replacement parts. If the barriers fail to close, users and residents are exposed to greater risk of straying onto a live railway. In the event that barriers do not open, residents to the east of the railway are unable to access their properties.

Intervention is therefore required to ensure a safe vehicular access east of the railway can be maintained.

Removing vehicular level crossings enables improvements to services on the East Coast Main Line, which is a key rail route, carrying over 20 million passengers a year, connecting London and Edinburgh via Peterborough, Doncaster, York, Darlington, Durham and Newcastle. If we were to maintain a vehicle crossing at this location, it is very likely we would need to remove it in the future to enable upgrades to the line.

What Network Rail is doing

Network Rail intends to submit a Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) that would provide the legal powers to build a private access road east of the railway that would remove the need for vehicles to cross the railway at East Road.

The TWAO would enable Network Rail to acquire the land and rights to construct an alternative private vehicle access. It will also contain powers to make changes to the highway on Edworth Road that would make this access safer.



Why we are contacting you.

We are contacting organisations and lineside neighbours who may be affected by the new private access road to seek views on the TWAO proposals.

Should you wish to provide feedback please review the project description below and answer the survey questions which can be found at www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/our-routes/east-coast/east-road-level-crossing-downgrade/ from Thursday 16th November 2023.

A Public Consultation drop-in event providing information about the project has been arranged and will be held at Langford Village Hall, Mill Lane, Langford, Bedfordshire, SG18 9QB on Monday 27th November 2023 between 1:30pm until 5pm.

Project Description

New access route to Edworth Road

Network Rail are seeking powers to provide a new private access road from Edworth Road for landowners, businesses, and the residents of 99 and 101 East Road. This will allow us to permanently close the vehicle crossing over the railway at East Road while maintaining access for landowners and businesses operating in the area.

By preventing vehicle use of the level crossing, the alternative access road will improve safety on the railway.

The proposal extends an existing private access road from Edworth Road northwards to link with East Road and incorporates safety improvements where it connects with Edworth Road.

Access to the bridleway will not be permanently affected as part of the project and a walking route into Langford will be retained via East Road, so local journeys can still be made on foot or by cycle to and from properties east of the level crossing.

Edworth Road safety improvements

To improve the safety for vehicles entering and exiting the new access road, as well as the property next to the access road, we will be submitting highway safety improvement proposals for Edworth Road as part of the TWAO.

As shown in the figure 1 below, we are proposing to extend the existing 30mph speed limit to the east of the access road and introduce a new 40mph transitional speed limit for 100 meters prior to the extended 30mph zone. New road markings, like those in figure 2 below, are also being proposed to alert road users to the change in speed limit.

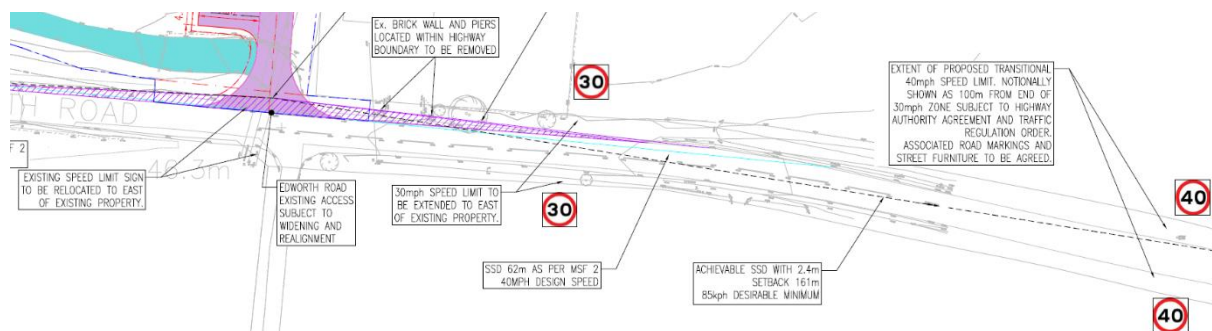


Figure 1



Figure 2

Map of East Road level crossing and proposed new access

It is proposed to use the existing access road from Edworth Road as far as possible. This reduces the amount of agricultural land required for the scheme.

At point A in Figure 3 below, where the existing access road joins Edworth Road, the following safety improvements are proposed:

- To improve the ability for vehicles to turn in and out of the junction it is proposed to remove the sharp 90° bend and straighten the access, so it runs perpendicular to Edworth Road over the first 25m. The access road will be 4.8 metres wide at this point.
- The junction bell-mouth will be increased with 10 metre radii each side to improve visibility along Edworth Road and accommodate turning movements by larger vehicles.
- A turning head will be included to the west of the junction so that vehicles can safely turn back onto Edworth Road if necessary.
- Additional traffic calming measures are proposed on Edworth Road (described above)

Between points A and B, the existing access road will be resurfaced with additional passing places installed to allow residential and agricultural vehicles to pass.

Between points B and C, approximately 470m (500yds) of new access road will be laid over arable fields to connect with nos. 99 and 101 East Road. The new road will curve out at points to avoid an electricity pylon and to preserve mature trees in front of the houses.



Figure 3



Have your say

You can share your views on the proposed alternative private access route and speed limit proposals for Edworth Road by filling out our online survey found on the project website: www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/our-routes/east-coast/east-road-level-crossing-downgrade/

Comments can be submitted between Thursday 16th November and 11:59pm on Wednesday 13th December 2023.

Next Steps

Following the consultation process we will consider all the feedback received and aim to finalise the design and conclude the consents and approvals to deliver the scheme, in the first quarter of 2024.

We will then go back to the community to provide further information and project timescales.

For further information visit: www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/our-routes/east-coast/east-road-level-crossing-downgrade/ or email EastRoadLevelCrossing@networkrail.co.uk

You can also call Network Rail's 24-hour national helpline: 03457 11 41 41