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### **Network Rail - Public Consultation Response to the Tameside Homes, Spaces, Places Consultation - June 2025**

Thank you for consulting Network Rail on the Homes, Spaces, Places Options and Preferences Draft Plan. Please consider this letter the formal Network Rail response to the consultation.

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, car parking, signalling systems, bridges, tunnels, level crossings and viaducts.

#### New Stations

It is noted that the consultation document includes reference to potential for new railway stations at Droylsden and Dukinfield. Network Rail's view on the potential development of new stations at these locations is that we are not aware of any formal commitment or funding to develop the stations.

At Dukinfield (presumably sited just east of Guide Bridge on the Hadfield/Glossop route), this is not an intensively utilised mainline so therefore there is no immediate blocker. However, any development of a station proposal here is subject to the usual caveats:

- Understanding the strategic case and the transport problem the station is solving in the area;
- Assessment of strategic fit including train plan assessment to ensure there is a high performing timetable output to accommodate the calls (and in which services).

The above needs to be done before infrastructure or planning development and continually refreshed.

With regard to the Droylsden proposal, the above caveats also apply. However, the line of route near Ashton is a highly utilised mainline (notably for post-TRU services including freight). Therefore, there is an immediate capacity constraint at this location. Network Rail is happy to work with TMBC and TfGM on this, but there needs to be a robust business/needs case. Capacity on the Trans-Pennine line is likely to be a major constraint to a new station, so establishing capacity could be a definite challenge.

### Consultation on development in the vicinity of the railway

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); in addition you are required to consult the Office of Rail and Road (ORR).

We fully recognise and support the role of LPAs in delivering sustainable development and housing growth. However, given the critical nature of the operational railway, it is essential that Network Rail is engaged early in the planning process when developments are located in proximity to the railway, involve works near or over railway assets, or may otherwise affect our infrastructure.

Often, where applications have an impact on the railway network, in particular on level crossings, the application is delayed or is objectionable because negotiations with developers are not agreed before a Planning Application is submitted.

Where there is an adverse impact on the operation of the railway, Network Rail will require appropriate mitigation measures to be delivered as part of the planning application process. By this stage in the process our request for further information such as a Transport Assessment (to provide detail of the suspected impact) and where necessary, the provision of planning obligations can cause significant delay. This can be highly frustrating for any developer who has undertaken pre-application advice, and invested time and money, in working through mitigation measures including Heads of Terms for Section 106 agreements.

Failure to consult Network Rail can result in missed opportunities to identify potential risks and mitigation measures at the appropriate stage, leading to delays, increased costs, or, in some cases, serious safety implications.

**A matrix has been included below to provide advice on when it is appropriate to consult Network Rail on planning applications. This should be used as a guide by the Local Planning Authority.**

We therefore respectfully request that your authority ensures all relevant planning applications are shared with us in accordance with statutory requirements, and that officers remain alert to developments that may require our input, even if not automatically referred.

This Standing Advice will give guidance on when the Local Planning Authority (LPA) should consult Network Rail (NR) and / or the Office of Rail and Road (ORR)

Development Proposed	Within 10 metres of railway land*	Development increasing the use, altering the type of users or altering the surrounding environment of a Level Crossing**
Householder development and alteration	Consult NR	May need to Consult NR and ORR (see Appendix 1)
Changes of use with no physical changes	No Consultation	May need to Consult NR and ORR (see Appendix 1)
Changes of use including physical changes to the building or land	Consult NR	May need to Consult NR and ORR (see Appendix 1)
Operational Development	Consult NR	May need to Consult NR and ORR (see Appendix 1)

\* Article 16, Part 3, The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

*"Publicity for applications for planning permission within 10 metres of relevant railway land*

*16.—(1) This article applies where the development to which the application relates is situated within 10 metres of relevant railway land.*

*(2) The local planning authority must, except where paragraph (3) applies, publicise an application for planning permission by serving requisite notice on any infrastructure manager of relevant railway land.*

*(3) Where an infrastructure manager has instructed the local planning authority in writing that they do not require notification in relation to a particular description of development, type of building operation or in relation to specified sites or geographical areas ("the instruction"), the local planning authority is not required to notify that infrastructure manager.*

*(4) The infrastructure manager may withdraw the instruction at any time by notifying the local planning authority in writing.*

*(5) In paragraph (2) "requisite notice" means a notice in the appropriate form as set out in Schedule 3 or in a form substantially to the same effect."*

\*\* Para (J), Schedule 4 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

*"Development which is 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"*

*Consultees – "The operator (Network Rail) of the network which includes or consists of the railway in question, and the Secretary of State for Transport (Officer of Rail and Road)"*

If you have any questions regarding the Network Rail response or wish to discuss any of the above matters further, then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,

**Michael Gradwell,  
Town Planning Manager.**