

Subject: Public Footpath P5/8/1 known as Station Terrace Level Crossing

The level crossing serves as a right of way which traverses 2 lines on the South Wales Main Line (SWM2) with a maximum permissible line speed of **75mph** with approximately **236 train movements per weekday, with a slight reduction on weekends.**

The crossing is a passive footpath crossing equipped with telephones and signage, requiring users to contact the signaller before crossing due to insufficient sighting in three of the four directions. Users are requested to use the telephones to get permission from the signaller before crossing, with the onus on them to call back informing the signaller that they have crossed safely. There is no active, visual or audible warning systems at this location.

The user groups primarily consist of leisure walkers, dog walkers, families, and organised walking groups. The route is therefore mainly used for recreational purposes rather than as a key commuting or strategic link within the local rights of way network.

Why is the Crossing Currently Closed?

Whilst completing the Narrative Risk Assessment (NRA) in summer of 2025, the Level Crossing Manager (LCM) placed cameras at the crossing to observe the usage and patterns at the crossing over a 7-day period.

Analysis of the census data in October 2025 and supporting evidence highlights a significant behavioural safety concern. During the monitored period, a substantial proportion of users failed to comply with the requirement to use the lineside telephone to obtain permission before crossing, despite clear signage and instructions. Of the seven days during which pedestrian movements were recorded, full compliance was observed on only one day, equating to approximately 15% compliant use and 85% non-compliance.

As there is no other mechanism in place to ensure the safe traverse across the railway, Network Rail (NR) sought the permission from the Vale of Glamorgan - Council to close the crossing temporarily whilst a permanent solution is investigated.

Options now available to Network Rail

It is important to firstly consider what options are available and feasible which could, and should, be implemented against any major construction works.

Reopen the Crossing as is.

This is not possible as NR cannot reopen a level crossing where there is a known serious safety concern for any users.

Diversion of Footpath

When NR seeks to close a public right of way crossing, the first option tends to be to create a new / diversion route to ensure the public of way network is kept as open as possible.

As there is not enough room on NR land to create such a route to link into Station Road, especially when linking onto Station Road by the underbridge where the step down to the road would require a vast amount of engineering work.

NR, therefore, contacted several local landowners seeking their agreement to create a route, all of whom unfortunately have declined the opportunity to create a diversion route due to concerns over privacy and the effect on their land, on the multiple route ideas put forward, NR has to respect these concerns and their decision. NR has no powers to forcibly create a public right of way over 3rd party land.

Unfortunately, the creation of a diversion route cannot be achieved, leaving either railway options such as technology or a complete extinguishment of the length of footpath P5/8/1 as the only available options.

Installation of Whistle-boards.

Options such as installing whistle boards have been considered. Whilst these measures can provide an audible indication of approaching trains, they are not considered to provide an effective or reasonably practicable mitigation at this location.

Whistle boards would need to be positioned approximately 400 metres on either approach to the crossing, near lineside residential properties, please see approximate location plan further in this pack. With 236 train movements per weekday, with a slight reduction on weekends over this section of railway, this would result in a significant and sustained increase in noise levels, giving rise to considerable noise pollution and likely adverse impact on local residents amenity and quality of life. Please see the accompanying plan showing the approximate location

In addition, whistle boards are inherently reliant on human factors, as activation depends on the train driver consistently sounding the horn. This introduces the potential for error or inconsistency in application.

Audible warning systems also rely on users correctly recognising and responding to the warning. Given the demonstrated pattern of user non-compliance at this crossing, there is no assurance that users would respond appropriately to audible warnings alone.

It should also be noted that whistle boards are not considered a preferred long-term mitigation measure, and their installation is generally discouraged in favour of more robust and reliable control measures. As such this option is discounted.

Engineering Controls (Active Warning Systems – Miniature Stop Lights)

The installation of Miniature Stop Lights (MSLs) has been considered as a potential mitigation measure. Whilst MSLs can provide an active warning to users and reduce reliance on sighting, there are several significant constraints at this location.

The crossing is in very close proximity to residential properties on Station Terrace. The introduction of MSL equipment would result in significant visual intrusion (red and green lights) and audible alarms, which would have a direct and ongoing impact on nearby residents. Given this proximity, it is likely to give rise to concerns regarding residential amenity, disturbance, and overall quality of life.

MSL systems also rely on correct operation and appropriate user response. In the event that the system enters dark mode (failure state with no lights displayed) or becomes defective, there is no secondary mitigation available at this location due to deficient sighting in three out of four directions. In such circumstances, users may assume it is safe to cross when it is not, significantly increasing the risk of a serious incident.

Furthermore, given the demonstrated pattern of user non-compliance at this crossing, there is a risk that users may not correctly interpret or respond to MSL indications, reducing the overall effectiveness of this control measure.

Taking all factors into account, the installation of MSLs is not considered to be a reasonably practicable solution to reduce risk to an acceptable level.

As such, the proposed measure does not provide a positive safety or business benefit and cannot be justified as a reasonably practicable option when considered against alternatives, including extinguishment.

Stepped or Ramped footbridge

The provision of a bridge would remove the risk associated with crossing the railway on the level. However, a footbridge would require a substantial physical footprint to accommodate either stepped access or compliant ramped approaches.

Due to the constrained nature of the site, any such structure would extend into adjacent land, particularly on the northern side of the crossing. This would directly impact land owned by a third party who has already formally objected to proposals for a diversion through the same area. As such, there is a high likelihood that the required land could not be secured, making the scheme undeliverable.

In addition to land constraints, the introduction of a bridge structure and associated approaches would have a significant visual impact on the surrounding area. This includes the potential for elevated walkways overlooking neighbouring residential properties,

raising concerns relating to privacy, overlooking, and overall amenity. Given the proximity of properties, this would likely be strongly opposed to by local residents.

Furthermore, assessment through the Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) process indicates that the provision of a footbridge is not cost-beneficial. The significant capital costs, typically in the order of several million pounds, combined with ongoing maintenance requirements are disproportionate to the relatively low levels of usage at this crossing and the level of risk reduction achieved.

As such, the scheme does not provide a positive safety or business benefit.

Conclusion

Therefore, for the reasons above, the only option for NR to pursue an extinguishment / stopping up of the entire length of footpath P5/8/1 as demonstrated by the accompanying plan using the powers of the Highways Act 1980.

The length of footpath to be extinguished would be 720m from the junction of footpaths P5/8/1, P5/8/2 and P5/13/1 to the southern level crossing gate leading onto road known as Station Terrace. Please see the last page of this pack for an extinguishment plan

The entire length is to be stopped to not only close the level crossing under safety, but also to assist the landowners with their privacy concerns and to follow guidance of DEFRA so not to create cul-de-sac public rights of way.

Station Terrace Level Crossing

Potential Whistle Board locations – 400m either side of the level crossing



Station Terrace Level Crossing – Extinguishment Plan

