

Smiths level crossing Wokingham

I met with local residents, the main authorised user of the crossing and Network Rail today. Local residents find the warning noise made for each of the 123 trains a day using this piece of track very disruptive, along with bright traffic style lights on the crossing and spoken warnings when more than one train is involved.

Safety is rightly the priority. I queried again the high speed limit of 70 mph given that this is a bend in the track close to the merger of the Waterloo and North Downs lines and close to Wokingham station to the west. Network Rail confirmed that in practice a train is likely to be travelling at half the speed limit on the bend to be safe, especially in wet and slippery conditions. The speed rating of the track affects the style of warnings needed.

Two of the local residents put their case well to Network Rail, who have promised to go away and see if they can work up proposals to keep the 4 authorised users safe but tackle the intrusive noise. The lights also need adjusting to reduce glare into homes whilst still be clearly visible to users on the ground near the crossing. I will follow up to see what solution is proposed.