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**24 hour National Helpline
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Dear Nick

West Berkshire Local Plan Review to 2037

As you review your Local Plan for West Berkshire, I wish to put on the record our outline support for the closure of Thatcham level crossing.

There are around 6,000 level crossings in Britain; which we have a duty to assess, manage and control their risk. However, they are a feature of a bygone age; creating additional risk for passengers, road users and our colleagues. Therefore, we look to increase the safety of all level crossings and, where possible, close them with a new route being provided.

In line with our submission to the last Local Plan review, on 26 March 2018, we advise that the council should undertake viability testing for any proposed allocated site which it considers would have an impact on the railway infrastructure, so that any mitigation required would be provided for. This could be for:

- a proposal being directly next to a level crossing
- the cumulative effect of development added over time
- the type of crossing involved
- the construction of large developments (commercial and residential) where road access to and from site includes a level crossing
- developments that might impede pedestrian's ability to hear approaching trains
- proposals that may interfere with pedestrian and vehicle users' ability to see level crossing warning signs
- any developments for schools, colleges or nurseries where minors in numbers may be using a level crossing.

There have been several sites put forward for allocation in and around Thatcham level crossing as part of this Local Plan review. The Rainsford Farm and former Colthrop Paper Mill site in the Local Plan review being put forward by Colthrop Village Consortium includes the provision of a bridge over the railway, so that Thatcham level crossing can be closed.



We support the closure of Thatcham level crossing, therefore fully support any development that includes mitigation in the form a bridge that can replace the existing road.

I hope this helps clarify our position, but if you need anything else, please contact our town planner, Lisa Bullock, at [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Mike Gallop
Interim Wales and Western managing director